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Disgrace and Agency: Pompeian Gladiators and *Infamia* in the Julio-Claudian Period

by

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Abstract

Roman gladiators have received no shortage of scholarly and public attention over the last few decades. However, many contradictions remain in our understanding of these individuals. More specifically, the legal term *infamia* has been central to recent scholarship, yet the focus of these studies does not emphasize the extent to which the concept impacted gladiators. Instead, *infamia* is generally discussed as a static term that is primarily based on literary evidence as opposed to considering variables like time, location, and the ample material culture from Pompeii, for example. In this study, I question how *infamia* played out in material culture pertaining to Pompeian gladiators during the Julio-Claudian period (14-68 CE), a time when the popularity of gladiator spectacles rises. Additionally, Pompeii is an important consideration for this study, not only because of the abundance of material culture (graffiti, epigraphy, and physical representations) pertaining to gladiators, but also because of the local connections to the origins of gladiatorial combat.

Additionally, the gendered aspects of *infamia* require attention since gladiators were subject to *infamia* partially because of their failure to adhere to Roman society's gendered expectations for men (*viri*). Most importantly, graffiti authored by gladiators themselves will be considered as a potential avenue for gladiators to gain agency over their marginalized position in society and as a means of gaining insight into their own subjectivity. I also use other examples of Pompeian material culture (funerary monuments, advertisements, and physical representations) as supporting evidence to understand the position of gladiators in Pompeian society and to show how *infamia* potentially impacted them. Finally, I address the implicit contradictions that arise when studying Pompeian gladiators. My intention is to provide voices to this group of individuals to gain a deeper understanding of how gladiators themselves may have experienced *infamia* in their daily lives.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Erica A. Lodermeier.

Acknowledgments

I would like to take the time to express my deepest gratitude to the many people who helped me throughout the writing of this thesis. First, I wish to extend many thanks to my supervisor Dr. Lisa Hughes who has been instrumental to my success throughout this project. I must also thank my fellow graduate students at the University of Calgary who provided me with invaluable feedback and advice. Finally, I wish to thank my family for providing me with encouragement and support over the course of this project. This thesis would not have been possible without everyone's help and support.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Preface	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
Introduction	1
Chapter One: <i>Infamia</i> and Gladiators	6
Chapter Two: Gendered Aspects of <i>Infamia</i>	33
Chapter Three: Agency and Pompeiian Gladiators	55
Chapter Four: The Contradictory Nature of Gladiators	88
Conclusion	115
Bibliography	119
Appendix	127

Introduction:

Marginalized individuals have traditionally been overshadowed by other topics in Roman history. Even when marginalized individuals like sex workers or gladiators are given direct attention, current scholarship still often overlooks key points. Additionally, many marginalized individuals in Rome shared a common identity because they were subject to *infamia*. *Infamia*, as will become more apparent, is a relatively elusive term. It is generally analyzed as a broad legal term with little mention of how it impacted *infames* (those subject to *infamia*) in a given time or location during Roman rule. Or, scholars focus on *infames*, like gladiators, but they give little attention to how *infamia* may have impacted gladiators in their daily lives as opposed to what was intended by Roman law. However, these perspectives largely centre on viewpoints of the ancient author or the spectator, as opposed to gladiators themselves. *Infamia* has also largely been discussed in relation to literary sources, and the laws associated with the term, as opposed to considering how it played out in society and impacted various groups of *infames*. These issues can be addressed by considering Pompeian gladiators during the Julio-Claudian period (27 BCE-68 CE). The city of Pompeii provides a unique set of evidence, specifically material culture, that pertains to gladiatorial combat that other cities in the Roman world do not. This evidence from Pompeii not only provides insight into *infamia* through the analysis of material culture, but also provides direct evidence from gladiators themselves that counters traditional narratives. The Julio-Claudian period is also a time where gladiatorial combat transitioned to the fully developed spectacle that is emphasized today and shifted away from associations with dinner banquets and funeral contexts. Additionally, considering the Julio-Claudian period specifically also aligns with the dates that are attributed to the material culture under consideration. However, as a result of analyzing the evidence from Pompeii during this time period, only male gladiators will be studied as there are no existing sources of evidence to support an analysis of female gladiators at this time.

Upon examination, the material culture and physical representations of gladiators do not initially appear to align with the literary sources on *infamia* and the marginalization of gladiators. This is specifically reflected in evidence from the Julio-

Claudian period in Pompeii when gladiatorial combat gained popularity. That is not to say that *infamia* did not impact gladiators in Pompeii, but instead suggests that more factors may be at play within the city. This raises the question of how does *infamia* play out in material culture pertaining to Pompeian gladiators during the Julio-Claudian period? I intend to address this question throughout the following four chapters where I will first consider the current understanding of *infamia* as it pertains to gladiators. Second, I aim to emphasize the influence that Roman gendered expectations had on gladiators during the Julio-Claudian period, and how this contributed to their labeling as *infames*, despite similarities they shared with Roman men. Then I will address the ability of gladiators to gain agency over their position in society, despite the limitations that *infamia* imposed on them. Finally, I intend to suggest that current scholarship on gladiators and *infamia* are filled with contradictions that hinder modern understandings of these individuals and their experiences in society. These questions will be considered from the perspectives of gladiators themselves with the intention of providing these marginalized individuals with a voice and an emphasis will be placed on material culture due to the traditional focus on literary sources. In order to carry out my study, I organize my thesis in the framework that follows.

Chapter One:

Before an understanding of how *infamia* played out in the material culture of Pompeian gladiators can be considered, an understanding of the term *infamia* itself requires attention. The first chapter will discuss the current understanding of *infamia* and how this pertained to Pompeian gladiators during the late Republic and early Empire. The legal texts that address and comprise the concept will be evaluated in terms of dating, location, and whom they were directed at. Most importantly, the reasons why gladiators were included in the list of *infames* will also need to be considered. By considering the various legal texts that pertain to *infamia*, it will be shown that term was not a completely coherent concept from the beginnings of gladiatorial combat, nor were there coherent categories of *infames* at that time. Furthermore, the laws that regulated *infames* and outlined which penalties and restrictions they faced, originated in the city of Rome itself.

It has largely been assumed that they equally applied to various regions under Roman control. However, this does not consider the possibility that a city such as Pompeii, due to its cultural ties to gladiatorial combat, may not have felt the direct effects of these laws and restrictions as Rome may have. Nevertheless, it remains important to consider how the laws in literary sources were designed to implement *infamia* in society when considering if material culture can reflect this. This is intended to demonstrate that certain laws related to *infamia* may not have had as great of an impact on gladiators during the Julio-Claudian period compared to gladiators in the later Empire. Additionally, Pompeian gladiators specifically may have also had differing experiences with *infamia* due to their location and the cultural history of the city, since it remains unclear how laws enacted in Rome impacted other cities and regions.

Chapter Two:

Chapter One discusses the complex nature of *infamia* and its impact on gladiators and other *infames*. Gladiators were partially given the status as *infames* due to Roman society's understanding that gladiators were incompatible with the behaviours and attributes that represented ideal Roman *viri* (men). This also included Rome's conceptualization of gladiators as sexually transgressive individuals due to their profession of performing on stage and their apparent sexual appeal to Roman women. This labeling of gladiators as *infames* due to their failure to adhere to society's gendered expectations of men requires its own analysis. This proposes the question of how the gendered aspects of *infamia* impacted Pompeian gladiators in the Julio-Claudian period and did they truly represent the antithesis of a Roman *vir* (man). First, an analysis of the gendered expectations placed upon Roman *viri* will require attention, in order to understand what behaviours and traits gladiators were seen to lack. Secondly, the evidence to suggest that gladiators were in opposition to Roman *viri*, will be considered as evidence that supports a gladiator's ability to display desirable behaviours and traits. Lastly, the idea that gladiators were sexually transgressive individuals due to their profession requires attention, as do ideas of what constituted transgressive sexuality in *viri* more broadly in Roman society. I aim to suggest that similar gendered expectations

were placed upon gladiators and Roman *viri*, despite the former group being marginalized and stigmatized by *infamia*. Additionally, both gladiators and Roman *viri* also faced similar negative accusations surrounding ideas of effeminacy, or a lack of masculinity, when they failed to adhere to these gendered expectations. These considerations also contribute to the frequent contradictions that arise when discussing gladiators, gender, and *infamia*, which will be further explored in Chapter Four.

Chapter Three:

The third chapter will directly attempt to provide marginalized gladiators with voices through an analysis of possible avenues that were available for them to gain agency over themselves. Since current scholarship tends to focus on overall larger themes of gladiatorial combat, such as *infamia*, spectators, or gladiators as a group and their position in society, an analysis dedicated to individual gladiators and how they may have experienced their time in the barracks, arena, and their time as *infames* requires attention. The question whether gladiators were able to gain agency over their marginalized position in Pompeian society during the Julio-Claudian period also requires attention. Following the methodology used by Levin-Richardson to consider similar questions regarding sex workers and the Purpose-Built Brothel in Pompeii, various categories of evidence from Pompeii will need to be considered to address these questions. For example, the numerous graffiti likely authored by this group of *infames* will not only provide insight into potential pathway to achieve agency, but it will also provide valuable insight into the subjectivity of gladiators or how they perceived themselves in society. However, there are also other potential avenues for agency that may have been open to gladiators but were unavailable to sex workers due to the public nature of gladiatorial combat and gladiators' overall popularity in society. These categories of evidence include epigraphy, funerary monuments, and physical depictions of gladiators throughout Pompeii that not only emphasize the popularity of gladiatorial combat in the city, but also suggest additional means for gladiators to achieve agency over themselves and provide insight into their potential subjectivity. This analysis infers that gladiators were able to gain agency over their own position in society and suggests that material culture

pertaining to Pompeiian gladiators does not highlight *infamia* as significantly as literary sources would suggest. It also sheds light on to how Pompeiian gladiators during the Julio-Claudian period may have experienced *infamia* and provides a voice to a group of traditionally marginalized individuals in Roman society.

Chapter Four:

Throughout the first three chapters many contradictions are present. Current scholarship has acknowledged these contradictions. Due to the original question posed in this paper, however, these contradictions can at times, hinder more definitive conclusions. For example, on the one hand, gladiators are presented as *infames*, slaves, heavily marginalized, and exploited by society. They represent the antithesis of a Roman *vir* and as a result are relegated to their lowly status and remain on the fringes of society. Yet, on the other hand, gladiators are presented as capable of displaying admirable qualities by their contemporaries and are sometimes compared by modern scholars as celebrities or athletes due to their apparent popularity in Roman society. Furthermore, gladiators are admired by their contemporaries for demonstrating behaviours and characteristics that are to be desired by Roman *viri*, and the frequent use of gladiatorial imagery by other individuals in society, showcases their popularity despite their status as *infames*. A breakdown of how gladiators are presented in literary evidence compared to material culture is necessary, as is a consideration of both sides of each contradiction. Although a complete consolidation of these contradictions may not be possible, an evaluation of *infamia* and material culture pertaining to Pompeiian gladiators, would be inadequate without acknowledging the contradictory evidence. The fact remains that the conclusions that have been made or those that have been inferred in each chapter are dependent upon how gladiators are presented and perceived. This raises the need for addressing these contradictions directly with the intention of gaining a better understanding of how *infamia* impacted Pompeiian gladiators in the Julio-Claudian period and how to consolidate the various presentations of these individuals throughout literary sources and material culture.

Chapter One: *Infamia* and Gladiators

Introduction

The Roman concept of *infamia* remains a prevalent concept in Roman law, but also is limited by the lack of examples of how this played out in society. The legal texts from Cicero, Justinian's *Digest* and other edicts issued over time are clear on how *infamia* was meant to be implemented in Roman society, whom it was targeting, and what the legal and social penalties associated with the status were.¹ The main secondary scholarship that is, to this day, referred to as the definitive work on the subject is A. H. J. Greenidge's 1894 work, *Infamia: Its Place in Roman Public and Private Law*.² More recently scholars such as Edwards, Gardner, and Richlin among others have also contributed to the subject, but none are as exclusively dedicated to the concept as Greenidge.³ However, what is less clear, is how this idealized legal concept played out in Roman society during the early Empire, and what impact this had on the day-to-day lives of *infames* (those who were subject to *infamia*). Two considerations must be taken into account. The first considers the idea of regional differences in history, customs, and culture, which could potentially contribute to variances in the treatment of *infames*. The second revolves around whether *infamia* can be considered as uniformly implemented across all territory controlled by the Julio-Claudian emperors. Specifically, areas in

¹ Including the *edictum perpetuum* (c. 135 CE) under Hadrian, the *Tabula Heracleensis* under Julius Caesar (sometimes referred to as the *lex Iulia municipalis*), and the *lex Acilia repetundarum* of 122 BCE.

² A.H.J. Greenidge, *Infamia: Its Place in Roman Public and Private Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894).

³ Catharine Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions: Public Performance and Prostitution in Ancient Rome," in *Roman Sexualities* ed. Judith P. Hallet and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997); Jane Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen* (London: Routledge, 1993); Amy Richlin, "Not Before Homosexuality: The Materiality of the Cinaedus and the Roman Law against Love between Men," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3, no. 4 (April 1993).

Other secondary scholars, particularly those who discuss gladiators also discuss *infamia*, but generally they limit the conversation in relation to the concerned group of individuals rather than discussing the concept directly. See Roger Dunkle, *Gladiators: Violence and Spectacle in Ancient Rome* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Luciana Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2003); Donald G. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (London: Routledge, 1998); Thomas Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators* (London: Routledge, 1992).

For *infamia* and sex workers see Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions"; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*; Sarah Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii: Sex, Class, and Gender at the Margins of Roman Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

For *infamia* and actors see Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions,"; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*; Mirosław Kocur, *The Power of Theater: Actors and Spectators in Ancient Rome*, trans. David Malcom (Frankfurt, Germany: Pater Lang GmbH, internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2018).

Campania, such as Pompeii, had a history with gladiators one of the three large groups of individuals subject to the consequences of this concept.⁴ Campania's connection with the origins of gladiatorial combat prior to its rise in popularity in Rome itself raises the possibility for regionalism when discussing how *infamia* was enforced on *infames*, like gladiators.⁵ Not only did Campanian cities like Pompeii have a richer tradition of gladiatorial combat, they were also distanced from the scrutinizing eyes of the city of Rome itself. Additionally, the question arises, as to why gladiators were subject to *infamia* and what specifically made them infamous. Finally, the question remains as to how this concept played out in society, specifically in a city such as Pompeii, where connections to gladiators and spectacles ran deep. Did the restrictions, limitations and marginalization associated with *infamia*, actually play out in Pompeii as intended by law, or should this terminology be considered as one that differed depending on location?

In order to thoroughly address these questions an understanding of the legal aspects of *infamia* will need to be conducted with the examination of the remaining legal references found in Cicero, Justinian's *Digest*, and the edicts. An explanation and breakdown of the various types of *infamia* including *Censorian* and *Praetorian infamia* will also be analyzed with the intention of addressing whom *infamia* impacted, why did it impact these specific individuals, what the limitations and restrictions were, and when did they come into effect. Subsequently, a theorization of how *infamia* was intended to play out in society, not only through legal restrictions, but also through social marginalization, will demonstrate how *infames* were theoretically stigmatized. Afterwards the inquiry as to why gladiators were subject to this concept can be conducted, in addition to an analysis of how gladiators in Pompeii may have been impacted both legally and socially by this Roman terminology. I will do so through the analysis of material evidence such as graffiti, epigraphy, and epitaphs, all while considering the regional and cultural differences that may have impacted Pompeii due to the possible origins of gladiatorial combat in the area. Finally, it will be tentatively suggested that *infamia*, due to regionality and the timeline associated with the term, did not impact *infames* in Pompeii

⁴ Pompeii also has a unique relationship with sex work and actors, both groups combined with gladiators make up the three main professions subject to *infamia*.

⁵ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 6-7; Katherine Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre: From its Origins to the Colosseum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 11-14.

during the Julio-Claudian period, as greatly as it was intended to play out according to Roman law.

***Infamia* in Roman Law**

The current and ongoing issues when considering *infamia* in Roman law are the variations of how the term is studied and analyzed. Overall, scholars treat *infamia* very broadly and tend to emphasize the legal aspects of the term. In doing so, there is a broad application of the term to groups of *infames* as opposed to considering variations in its application.⁶ Others who study individuals that *infamia* impacted like gladiators rarely provide detailed information about the legal sources and their applicability both spatially and temporally.⁷ Although this terminology is widely referenced by legal scholars and those who study *infames*, both groups neglect to truly consider the variations that are present and instead lump all *infames* together or view restrictions and impacts too broadly as opposed to considering the dates of these laws and who they regionally affected. This of course greatly hinders the ability to consider how this term impacted a specific group of individuals in a given period of time and location, which further inhibits the ability to provide voices to these marginalized people. The current scholarship on *infamia* has created gaps in how these individuals were impacted by the label in practice and largely fail to consider how variables would also change this answer. Some of the legal sources on the concept apply directly to Rome, which raises the question of whether this was reflected in regions outside of the city. The sources also come from later dates which would also impact how they may have actually been applied to the Julio-Claudian period. Additionally, the restrictions of *infamia* and how greatly *infames* would have felt them also is presented in vastly different ways. On the extreme end of the spectrum, scholars like Knapp suggest *infames* would not have been concerned with this status at all, yet

⁶ Greenidge, for example, treats *infamia* relatively broadly, outlining the laws pertaining to *infamia* and the types of *infamia* but does not consider the actual individuals this term impacted. See Greenidge, *Infamia*.

⁷ For example, Dunkle and Kyle do address in *infamia* and how it impacted gladiators, but really only emphasize the legal and political restrictions associated with *infamia*. Furthermore, neither truly consider the timeline of *infamia* and how its impacts would have changed depending on the period in question. See Dunkle, *Gladiators*; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*.

others like Edwards highlight their lowly status in society.⁸ Lastly, gladiatorial combat served different purposes in the early Republic versus the Empire and was clearly impacted by regional differences. This will, therefore, need to be considered when viewing the impact of *infamia* on these individuals. If the goal is to provide voices to these marginalized individuals who were subject to the restrictions of *infamia*, then these questions need to be considered.

Censorian and Praetorian Infamia

The concept of *infamia* originated with the censors of Rome whose duties broadly included matters of morality and maintaining the official list of Roman citizens (census).⁹ In the Republic, censors would compile the list of Roman citizens and had the ability to censure individuals if they found their actions in public or private life to be dishonourable or immoral. By giving this “*nota*” next to the name of the immoral individual, the censor essentially removed this person from citizenship thus limiting or prohibiting them from participating in political life.¹⁰ During the Republic, the censors, through this process, were responsible for imposing *infamia* on individuals they considered guilty of misconduct, which could have included disgraceful professions like gladiators.¹¹ However, Greenidge points out that the mark of the censor was not necessarily permanent as the role of censor was held between four and five years (depending upon what years of the Republic we are considering), therefore, a new censor could remove the *nota* from a person’s name, depending upon the severity of the misconduct.¹² Greenidge also points out that at this time, it would have been unlikely that any misconduct warranted more

⁸ Knapp states: “Prostitutes, actors, gladiators and *bestiarii* would have cared little about being designated as *infames*.” Robert Knapp, “Legally Marginalized Groups – The Empire,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Law and Society*, ed. Paul J. Du Plessis, Clifford Ando and Kaius Tuori (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 368.

⁹ J.A. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1984), 83-84.

¹⁰ The reasons for earning a “*nota*” appear to have been up to the individual censor, since future censors could remove the mark if they saw fit. Additionally, the backgrounds and social standings of these individuals could be wide ranging apart from the fact that they had to have been citizens. If these individuals were not Roman citizens, the censors would not have been responsible for such moral oversight.

¹¹ Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*, 83; Paul Du Plessis, *Brokowski’s Textbook on Roman Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 107.

¹² Greenidge, *Infamia*, 177.

than five years of punishment.¹³ The fact that *Censorian Infamia* is presented in the scholarship as more temporary does not appear to align with those who maintained their status of *infames* for extended periods of time, like gladiators, actors, and sex workers. Instead, this type of *infamia* appears to be more aimed at individual actions taken by people that required a “*nota*” temporarily as opposed to permanently as is presented when considering how *infamia* impacted gladiators. Therefore, when considering gladiators and the role of the censor some inconsistencies arise. Since gladiators were considered disgraceful because of their profession, the likelihood of a new censor removing the *nota* from their name is unlikely, perhaps unless they were no longer an active gladiator when the new censor entered the office. A further question remains as to how gladiators who were not citizens (meaning they were not under the responsibility of the censors who maintained citizenship lists) were handled during the Republic in regard to *infamia*. Additionally, Sulla greatly reduced the power of the censors and by 22 BCE censors were no longer elected, and the responsibilities shifted to that of the emperor or other officials he appointed for the role.¹⁴

The praetors on the other hand were active during the Julio-Claudian period and were broadly responsible for civil jurisdiction and overseeing the criminal courts.¹⁵ Greenidge suggests that compared to the censors, praetors were responsible for more specific cases of *infamia* and addressed these through their edicts as it was the purpose of Praetorian *Infamia* to maintain the dignity of the praetors court and to prevent anyone of disreputable reputation from appearing in the court.¹⁶ Crook also adds that “the praetor in his edict deprived persons judged guilty of certain civil law offences of the rights of appointing representatives in litigation or acting as representatives of others.”¹⁷ From the *Digest*, (Ulpian, Julian and Gaius in particular) we see that it was the praetors who created the lists of those who incurred *infamia* which includes those who perform on

¹³ Greenidge, *Infamia*, 177.

¹⁴ Andrew Linttot, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 115-116.

¹⁵ Linttot, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic*, 108-109.

¹⁶ Du Plessis, *Brokowski's Textbook on Roman Law*, 107; Greenidge, *Infamia*, 116, 178.

¹⁷ Crook, *Law and Life of Rome*. 83.

stage (this can be assumed to include gladiators).¹⁸ Greenidge does not believe that *Censorian Infamia* and *Praetorian Infamia* were independent from one another but, instead that *Praetorian Infamia* was based on the *Censorian Infamia*. Since the job of the praetor was to uphold the court, this required the aid of the censors who were responsible for censuring individuals who were barred from the army, senate and the *comitia*, due to their acts or their professions.¹⁹ Furthermore, Greenidge suggests that the decision of one praetor may not necessarily have been upheld by the next person who held the position.²⁰ Once again, Greenidge's explanation of *infamia* both Censorian and Praetorian seem to emphasize those who could potentially and eventually escape the mark of the status not those who were given their mark on a more permanent basis. While *Praetorian Infamia* was present during the Julio-Claudian period and clearly began to be implemented through law the question remains as to how these rules impacted specific groups of *infames* like gladiators outside of Rome.

Who Was Subject to *Infamia*?

Infamia was inflicted upon a variety of individuals in the Julio-Claudian period for numerous reasons. Some of the individuals were subject to the penalties because of their profession. This concerned primarily gladiators, actors, and sex workers, whereas other individuals may be subject due to their own personal actions. Infamous and improper actions were also criticized at this time, resulting in the shaming of these individuals as “bringing about *infamia*” but do not appear to have brought about the legal or social penalties and restrictions of *infamia*, and instead were a moral chastisement by their contemporaries.²¹ Although Edwards suggests that a true and proper legal category of *infames* may not have been in place until the second or third century CE, there were still clearly individuals in society who were subject to penalties and restrictions because

¹⁸ Dig. 3.2.1 (Julian, *Edict, book 1*); Dig. 3.2.2.5 (Ulpian, *Edict, book 6.5*); Dig. 3.2.3 (Gaius, *Provincial Edict, book 1*).

¹⁹ Greenidge, *Infamia*, 114-115.

²⁰ Greenidge, *Infamia*, 178.

²¹ See Cicero *De Legibus*, 1.50-51; Seneca, *Epistles*, 87.9; Greenidge, *Infamia*, 19, 187.

of their actions and their professions during the late Republic and early Empire.²² Those who were burdened with *infamia* due to their profession will be discussed in further detail below, but it is important to understand that these groups of individuals are distinct from those who brought about *infamia* due to specific actions. All gladiators, actors, and sex workers were subject to the penalties of *infamia* upon the start of their professions regardless of their personal actions or behaviours. Individuals who were subject to *infamia* and had no connection to any of these professions incurred *infamia* in other ways, generally through actions that were considered criminal, shameful, or deviant.²³ Those convicted of certain civil crimes and all criminal crimes were given the status of an *infames* as were individuals who accepted bribes while in office.²⁴ Furthermore, soldiers who were dishonorably discharged from the army could also incur *infamia*, as could sexually deviant individuals such as women caught committing adultery or men who allowed themselves to be penetrated by other men would also receive the status of *infames*.²⁵ These actions were considered shameful and deviant which resulted in their punishment through the legal, political and social restrictions placed upon them by society. However, these individuals, unlike gladiators, actors, and sex workers, typically committed one specific shameful or dishonorable act as opposed to consistently engaging in professions that were considered infamous. Therefore, although the individuals were still subject to the political, legal, and social penalties of *infamia*, their experience as *infames* were not equal to those of gladiators, actors, and sex workers as they did not constantly engage in actions considered infamous.

²² Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 67. Edwards cites Greenidge's opinion that "This review is unfavorable to the belief that a definite and uniform conception of *infamia* existed in the Republic or even in the Principate." Greenidge, *Infamia*, 35. Edwards furthers this stance by noting that the *edictum perpetuum* (c. 135 CE) under Hadrian officially connected the disqualifications associated with *infamia*. Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 70; Mary T. Boatwright, *Lives of the Caesars* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008), 16. Prior to this edict, praetors could modify how they choose to follow rules and procedures, but the edict prevented this from continuing, thus codifying those who were subject to *infamia*. Du Plessis, *Brokowski's Textbook on Roman Law*, xi.

²³ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 69.

²⁴ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 67-69.

²⁵ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 69.

***Infamia* and Gladiators**

Gladiators, among other *infames*, namely sex workers and actors, were subject to the restrictions, marginalization, and the social stigma associated with *infamia* for similar reasons. These three professions were considered infamous, dishonourable, and disgraceful because they each opposed Roman ideas of gender, sexuality, honour, and *dignitas*.²⁶ Gladiators, sex workers, and actors all, in one way or another, sold their bodies in public for the enjoyment or pleasure of other people.²⁷ In theory the shame and disgrace associated with such professions resulted in their labeling as *infames* which included several legal and social penalties. In an idealized sense of the term, this limited these individuals politically, economically, and physically by prohibiting them from enjoying the rights, freedoms, and social mobility allowed to Roman citizens. On top of these legal restrictions, came the social marginalization and stigmatization imposed on these individuals due to their status. Although these restrictions are not as clearly written in legal sources, they can be deduced based on the treatment of other lowly individuals in society like slaves, in addition to comments and claims made by authors that are not political or legal in nature. However, when considering the legal and social restrictions that were forced onto gladiators in theory, it is important to remember the variations of gladiators among themselves. While this section will focus on how these impacts were felt by gladiators in an idealized scenario and in theory, it would be negligent to not consider the variations found within gladiators as a group. This is in reference to the variety of types of gladiators and their origins, whether they were a volunteer, condemned to the barracks, a novice, or a veteran. Each of these variations would likely have impacted the extent to which *infamia* dictated their lives in and out of the arena and barracks. An area that required further consideration though is when exactly did gladiators become *infames*? Since the origins of gladiatorial combat is within funerary and banquet contexts that later evolved mainly to a spectacle or entertainment function, were *infamous* individuals contracted to perform at funerals during the early stages of the combat? If gladiators during the early empire were a mixture of slaves, criminals, and

²⁶ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 76-77; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 135; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 83-84.

²⁷ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 35-36; Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 67; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 135; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 83.

free volunteers, were slaves, or criminals, or free volunteers used for funerary events at the origins of the combat? Questions about the evolution of gladiatorial combat from funerary and banquet contexts to mass spectacles will need to be considered in conjunction with the evolution of *infamia* and its implementation in society. Furthermore, if *infamia* did not impact gladiators immediately from the conception of the spectacle, what caused Roman lawmakers to create such a legal concept and category, and why were gladiators included in this selection?

Why Were Gladiators Subject to *Infamia*?

Infamia was enforced on those who had committed some offence or crime under Roman law, although these crimes could be wide ranging, they often allowed for the perpetrator to avoid the fullest effects of *infamia*. Crimes like desertion from the army, women who committed adultery, or elected officials who accepted bribes while in office, for example, were indeed subject to *infamia*, but these individuals had the ability to remove themselves from public scrutiny and avoid some of the social penalties that came with *infamia*.²⁸ However, arguably the main people who were subject to *infamia* were those who were considered infamous strictly based on their profession. In comparison, not every single soldier was subject to *infamia*, only those who were dishonorably discharged due to crimes like desertion were subject to the restrictions. Individuals who participated in professions such as sex work, acting, and gladiatorial combat though were all considered *infames* regardless of their personal actions or character.²⁹ These individuals were subject to the full extent of restrictions and marginalization that came with this status and did not have the ability to remove themselves from their station while still active in their given professions. Along with other *infames*, gladiators for example stood as an example to Romans of what not to do, and of how not to live their lives.³⁰

²⁸ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 67-69.

²⁹ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 67; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 135-136.

³⁰ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 67; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 84.

They represented the exact opposite of the Roman ideals of honour and *dignitas* (social standing), the antithesis of the traits that were required of those who ruled Rome.³¹

Gladiators specifically also were infamous because they made their living in public enjoyment by selling their bodies and through violence.³² Not only was this seen as a dishonourable way to make one's living, but it was also seen as threatening to the ideals of the Roman elite male. Overindulgence and excessive pleasure were a threat to the ruling class (elite Roman male citizens) of Rome during the Republic and the early Empire.³³ An individual who was overindulged or pursued pleasure too excessively was viewed as someone who lacked self-control, which in turn made them unable and unworthy of ruling Rome.³⁴ Additionally, the people in society who were seen to have an uncontrollable pursuit of pleasure were women, slaves, and the poor, all individuals who were required to be controlled by others (elite Roman male citizens) because they lacked the ability to do this themselves.³⁵ Gladiators were also viewed as sexually transgressive due to their apparent sexual appeal to Roman women, but also because of their sexual availability due to their performance on stages. Both traits were in opposition to Roman understandings of gender and sexuality which will be further explored in the following chapter.³⁶ Therefore, gladiators, as the individuals who provided pleasure and enjoyment to the masses, were threatening to Roman society and their ideals of those who ruled. Not only were they a threat to elite Roman male citizens, but they represented everything that Romans should aspire not to be, resulting in their subjugation to *infamia* and its restrictions.

³¹ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 67; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 135.

³² Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 67; Richlin, "Not Before Homosexuality," 559.

³³ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 67; Kathryn Mammel, "Ancient Critics of Roman Spectacle and Sport," in *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity* ed. Paul Christesen and Donald G. Kyle (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 605.

³⁴ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 67-68; Mammel, "Ancient Critics of Roman Spectacle and Sport," 607.

³⁵ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 68; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 135.

³⁶ Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 134-135; Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 22-23.

Legal Impacts of *Infamia* in Theory

Infames were subject to legal and political restrictions imposed on them due to their status. In theory these restrictions stripped these individuals of any rights, freedoms, and status they held prior to their entrance into the arena and barracks. These restrictions and prohibitions included many connected to privileges associated with Roman male citizenship. For example, *infames* were forbidden to:

1. Speak on behalf of others in court³⁷
2. Bring accusations against others in court³⁸
3. Sit on juries³⁹
4. Be elected as a magistrate⁴⁰
5. Be a soldier in the Roman army⁴¹
6. Be given state honours⁴²

Additionally, *infames* also lacked protection from corporal punishment, a further staple of the rights given to those who held Roman citizenship.⁴³ This lack of protection from being beaten by others equated gladiators and other *infames* with other lowly individuals in Roman society, such as slaves, who were also permitted to be beaten.⁴⁴ This restriction in particular had repercussions when it came to the social restrictions imposed by *infamia*, as *infames* were grouped together with other lowly and marginalized individuals.

³⁷ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 66; *Tabula Heracleensis* under Julius Caesar (sometimes referred to as the *lex Iulia municipalis*).

³⁸ *Dig.* 47.23.4 (Paul, *Edict*, book 3); *Dig.* 48.2.4 (Ulpian, *Adulteries*, book 2); Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 71; Greenidge, *Infamia*, 163.

Dig. 48.2.4 (Ulpian, *Adulteries*, book 2)

³⁹ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 71; *lex Acilia repetundarum* of 122 BCE.

⁴⁰ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 72; Greenidge, *Infamia*, 67-68; *Tabula Heracleensis* under Julius Caesar (25).

⁴¹ *Dig.* 48.19.14 (Macer *Military Law* book 2); *Dig.* 49.16.4.1-9 (Arrius Menander, *Military law*, book 1); Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 71.

⁴² *Dig.* 1.7.5.1 (Celsus, *Digest*, book 39); Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 72. Additionally, see Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 35; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 128-130, 135-138; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 82-84; Richlin, “Not Before Homosexuality,” 554-561.

⁴³ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 73-74; Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 24.

⁴⁴ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 73-74. The oath that was taken by gladiators upon their entrance in the arena included the endurance of being physically beaten while in the arena and barracks. Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 24. See Seneca, *Epistles*, 37. Even those that were volunteers and are citizens prior to their time in the area, lost this status and protection from corporal punishment and thus could be beaten.

However, not every gladiator or *infames* were the same, nor would they have all felt the exact same impacts of *infamia*. It should not be assumed that the impacts of *infamia* was a blanket of restrictions on all *infames* due to these variations. For example, women gladiators or sex workers (who were predominantly women) were already restricted from certain rights given to Roman citizen men. The right to be elected as a magistrate or the ability to be a soldier in the army were already prohibited to women, regardless of their status as an *infames*.⁴⁵ Male gladiators were also not all eligible for these rights prior to their careers as gladiators either, since by the time of the Julio-Claudian period, gladiators consisted of a mixture between condemned criminals, slaves, and volunteers.⁴⁶ Those who volunteered, for example, likely would have had more rights taken away from them because of their position prior to the entrance in the arena, as opposed to a slave or a prisoner of war who would not have enjoyed the benefits of Roman citizenship in the first place.⁴⁷ However, thus far these legal restrictions and limitations that have been discussed are what would have happened in theory and may not entirely reflect what played out when we consider additional evidence.

Social Impacts of *Infamia* in Theory

The social impacts of *infamia* are more difficult to pin down with certainty. The legal restrictions and rights that were taken away from *infames* are largely written in legal codes or provided by contemporary authors. These social implications are largely the result of the political and legal restrictions that were enforced. *Infames* were allowed to be subjected to corporal punishment, which equated them with other lowly individuals like slaves and held social ramifications due to society's perception of slaves and their status.⁴⁸ Since gladiators were equated with slaves legally, they presumably received similar social treatment such as the assumption that all gladiators and slaves for that matter were untrustworthy individuals. This went so far as to cause a jurist to advise that

⁴⁵ Gardner, *Being A Roman Citizen*, 128.

⁴⁶ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 30, 35; Valerie Hope, "Gladiators as a Class," in *The Oxford Handbook of Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World.*, ed. Alison Futrell and Thomas F. Scanlon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 558; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 79, 81.

⁴⁷ Du Plessis, *Brokowski's Textbook on Roman Law*, 89; Knapp, "Legally Marginalized Groups," 364.

⁴⁸ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 73-74; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 83-84.

the word of gladiators (and other *infames*) should only be trusted if provided under torture.⁴⁹ The belief that gladiators represented a threat to those who ruled Rome because of their profession of providing pleasure and enjoyment to the crowd also carried over to the social repercussions they faced. Spending too much time in an amphitheatre viewing gladiatorial combat was threatening to the philosophical well-being of Romans who should have been spending their leisure time on more worthwhile activities.⁵⁰ Additionally, contemporary authors like Cicero and Pliny the Younger referred to gladiators in negative ways, especially when referring to their social status.⁵¹ Words like “barbarian”, “criminal”, and “slave” are frequently used to describe gladiators, which likely reflects society's treatment of gladiators which resulted in their marginalization.⁵² Similarly to the political and legal repercussions *infames* faced, the extent to which they felt the impacts of certain social repercussions may have varied depending on each individual gladiator. Each gladiator had a different background prior to their entrance into the arena and barracks which may have altered how the social repercussions impacted them once they became gladiators and *infames*. Their marginalization and stigmatization by society, may not have changed drastically, or it could have impacted their lives significantly, however measuring this or arguing how individuals felt social repercussions of *infamia* remains different to determine with certainty.

When Did *Infamia* Come into Play?

In order to determine how *infamia* actually played out in a city like Pompeii, the origins of *infamia* and its implementation in society need to be considered. The issue with

⁴⁹ *Dig.* 22.5.21.2 (Arcadius Charisius, *Witnesses, sole book*). Arcadius Charisius states “If the matter is such that an arena-fighter or similar person has to be called as a witness, his evidence should not be believed without torture.”; Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 73.

⁵⁰ Cornelius Nepos, *Lives* preface, 5; Seneca, *Epistles*, 87.9; Mammal, “Ancient Critics of Roman Spectacle and Sport,” 606-608; Zara Martirosova Torlone, “Writing Arenas: Roman Authors and Their Games,” in *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity* ed. Paul Christesen and Donald G. Kyle (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 416.

⁵¹ “*Gladiatores, aut perditii homines aut barbari*” Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 2.41; “*cum in servorum etiam noxiorumque corporibus amor laudis et cupido victoriae cerneretur*” Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*, 33.1-2.

⁵² For as many negative comments there are in reference to gladiators, there are equally just as many positive ones – see Chapter Four, Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 83.

much of the primary source material that refers to the laws associated with *infamia* come from Justinian's *Digest*. The difficulty with this source material lies in the probability of amendments made by those who compiled the *Digest*, as well as the time in which the jurists Ulpian, Paul, and Gaius were writing after the period in question.⁵³ Additionally, scholars like Greenidge and Edwards suggest that an actual *Praetorian Infamia* did not become concrete until the time of emperor Hadrian, nearly forty years after the eruption of Vesuvius.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the location of Pompeii itself provides additional questions to consider because of the city's close ties to the origins of gladiatorial combat in the region.⁵⁵ These considerations do not override *infamia* to suggest that *infamia* did not matter as much during the late Republic and the early Empire, but instead potentially suggests that regionality and time affected the impacts of *infamia* on *infames*. Perhaps gladiators in the time of Hadrian or later were impacted by *infamia* more significantly than those under the Julio-Claudian emperors, not only because *infamia* had not been officially codified until Hadrian, but also because the transition of gladiatorial combat from funerary contexts to spectacles was more recent in the memories of those living under the late republic and early empire. Furthermore, the variations of *infames* themselves, especially amongst gladiators owing to background and status differences within the barracks also likely impacted the effects of *infamia*, more so than what the current scholarship suggests.

Origins of Gladiatorial Combat

The origins of gladiatorial combat, while still debated, are important to consider when viewing gladiators in Pompeii during the early Empire. Following Ville's conclusions, gladiatorial combat originated in the Osco-Samnite culture in the south of

⁵³ Ulpian, Paul, and Gaius represent over half of the excerpts from the *Digest*. Paul and Gaius were prominent under the Severan dynasty, and Gaius under the Nerva-Antonine dynasty, including working in government positions under Hadrian. This could support Greenidge's conclusion of *infamia* not being officially categorized until this time. Additionally, although this was after the Julio-Claudian period in question, there remains the probability that precedents were in place prior to the writings of these jurists, but still further supports the questionability of the application of *infamia* during this time. Du Plessis, *Brokowski's Textbook on Roman Law*, 58.

⁵⁴ Edwards. "Unspeakable Professions," 70; Greenidge, *Infamia*, 35

⁵⁵ Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 11-14, 78-79.

Italy, specifically in the Campanian region.⁵⁶ Livy, Strabo, and Silicus Italicus refer to gladiatorial combat as taking part of dinner banquets, emphasizing the secular nature of these events, in direct opposition to the later Romans who did so in religious or funerary settings.⁵⁷ For example, Livy states “...while the Campanians, in consequence of their pride and in hatred of the Samnites, equipped after this fashion the gladiators who furnished them entertainment at their feasts, and bestowed on them the name of Samnites.”⁵⁸ Strabo further explains how the Campanians featured more gladiators depending on how important the banquet was⁵⁹ while Silicus Italicus suggests a darker side of the dinners suggesting that “...often the combatants fell dead above the very cups of the revelers, and the tables were stained with streams of blood.”⁶⁰ The Romans either directly inherited these traditions from the Osco-Samnites, or as Ville suggests the Etruscans inherited gladiatorial combat from the Osco-Samnites in the third century BCE, then passed it on to the Romans by the mid-third century BCE.⁶¹ Both Etruscan and Osco-Samnite tombs contain evidence for depictions of gladiatorial combat during funerary games and rituals.⁶² Welch points out though, that just because Etruscan tombs contained depictions of gladiatorial combat does not ensure that they invented the tradition but, does ensure that they were aware of it by this point.⁶³ The original context

⁵⁶ Livy, *History of Rome*, 9.40.18-20; Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 11.51-54; Strabo, *Geography*, 5.13. Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 11. See Georges Ville, *La gladiature en Occident des origines a la mort de Domitien* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome), 1981. Similar conclusions are also discussed by Alison Futrell, *Blood in the Arena: The Spectacle of Roman Power* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), specifically see Chapter One.

⁵⁷ Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 12.

⁵⁸ “While the Campanians, in consequence of their pride and in hatred of the Samnites, equipped after this fashion the gladiators who furnished them entertainment at their feasts, and bestowed on them the name of Samnites.” Livy, *History of Rome*, 9.40.18-20. (*Campani ab superbia et odio Samnitium gladiatores, quod spectaculum inter epulas erat, eo ornato armarunt Samnitiumque nomine compellarunt.*)

⁵⁹ “For they were so extravagant that they would invite gladiators, in pairs, to dinner, regulating the number by the importance of the dinners.” Strabo, *Geography*, 5.13. (*ἐπι τοσοῦτον γὰρ ἐξετρέφθησαν ὥστ’ ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἐκάλουν πρὸς ζεύγη μονομάχων, ὀρίζοντες ἀριθμὸν κατὰ τὴν τῶν δεῖπνων ἀξίαν.*)

⁶⁰ “Then too, it was their ancient custom to enliven their banquets with bloodshed, and to combine with their feasting the horrid sight of armed men fighting; often the combatants fell dead above the very cups of the revellers, and the tables were stained with streams of blood.” Silicus Italicus, *Punica*, 11.51-54. (*quin etiam exhilarare viris convivias caede mos olim, et miscere epulis spectacula dira certantum ferro, saepe et super ipsa cadentium pocula respersis non parco sanguine mensis.*)

⁶¹ Georges Ville, *La gladiature en Occident des origines a la mort de Domitien* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1981), 35-42; Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 14-16.

⁶² Campanian tombs include Tomb 53 from the Andriuolo Necropolis and Tomb X from the Laghetto Necropolis. Etruscan tombs include Tomba degli Auguri and Tomba delle Bighe. See Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 11-18.

⁶³ Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 15.

in the Osco-Samnite tradition depicted gladiatorial combat in banquet contexts, which was later frowned upon by Roman writers.⁶⁴ However, by the time this tradition had become prevalent in Roman traditions, gladiatorial combat was largely performed in honour of the dead during funerary games and rituals.⁶⁵ Since the Romans adopted gladiatorial combat as opposed to it originating in their culture, this could suggest that the Romans may have viewed the combat in a different light compared to those who had a richer history with the spectacle such as those in Campania, and specifically Pompeii. Considering that the original context of gladiatorial combat was within banquets in Campania, as opposed to funerary and eventually spectacle contexts in Rome, this could further suggest the variations of opinions regarding gladiators in Rome versus Pompeii. If Pompeii, and Campania more broadly, had a richer and longer history with the combat, this may suggest that Pompeians were more open to the individuals who participated in the event and could explain the abundance of depictions, epigraphy, and graffiti pertaining to gladiators. This could further explain why the social implications of *infamia* do not appear to negatively affect gladiators in Pompeii as extensively as the laws, and Roman literary authors would suggest.

Infamia in Pompeii

In theory, *infamia* impacted individuals in many aspects of their daily lives. The political and legal restrictions of this status are more clearly defined in Roman law, whereas the social implications remain harder to pin down with complete certainty. Laws clearly state that *infames* were prohibited from participating in certain aspects of political life, such as being forbidden to sit on juries or be elected as a magistrate.⁶⁶ Where some

⁶⁴ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 7; Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 11.

⁶⁵ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 6; Lisa A. Hughes, "Centurions At Amiternum: Notes on the Apisius Family," *Phoenix* 59, no. 1/2 (2005): 87-88; Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 12.

⁶⁶ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 71-72; Greenidge, *Infamia*, 67-88, 163; *Lex Acilia repetundarum* of 122 BCE. Although this may not have been applicable to Pompeii during the Julio-Claudian period, other sources from Ulpian point to other political limitations that could have been in effect in Pompeii, such as the prohibition of bringing accusations against others in court. Ulpian states "A person condemned in criminal proceedings has no right to bring an accusation, unless he is pursuing the death of his children [or parents], or of his patrons in that trial, or matters touching himself. Furthermore, the right of accusation is taken away from those who are branded with calumny, as also from those who have been sent to the arena to fight with the beasts, from stage players and pimps, or from anyone adjudged in criminal proceedings to

legal rights they were restricted from, such as protection from corporal punishment, not only represent the loss of a legal right, but are also reflected negatively in the social lives of these individuals. In theory, these social implications of legal and political restrictions can be inferred based on understandings of Roman social life and treatment of other lowly status individuals. For instance, the equation of gladiators to other individuals that were allowed to be beaten like, foreigners and slaves, suggests how society may have treated gladiators and other *infames*. Or the fact that *infames* lost their former status as full Roman citizens upon their entrance into the barracks, can infer that they were stripped of their former identity, belonging to a social group, and any status or power they held in society.⁶⁷ However, how these social and political restrictions played out in the gladiatorial barracks in Pompeii may suggest a different reality. Additionally, the differences between the lives of gladiators in and outside of the barracks and how these two environments may have affected *infamia* in practice should also be considered. Nor should one overlook that gladiators were unique from one another. Even those living in the same barracks would not have had identical experiences with training, combat in the arena, or the restrictions and impacts of *infamia* for example. They each had different experiences in their past life prior to their entrance into the barracks, they likely would have had varying experiences inside the barracks, and some may have enjoyed life outside of the barracks once again. Gladiators cannot be treated as one identical group of individuals who felt *infamia* in the exact same way, therefore, how *infamia* played out, even within the city of Pompeii, should be seen as multifaceted and not as a blanket experience felt by all. Lastly, the impacts that the region surrounding Pompeii and their cultural and historical traditions held in society may also reflect region differences during the Julio-Claudian period compared to gladiators housed in barracks in Rome for example.

have done anything by way of praevaricatio or calumny, or found to have accepted money for the purpose of bringing an accusation or of causing trouble for someone.” *Dig.* 48.2.4 (Ulpian, *Adulteries*, book 2).

⁶⁷ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 67.

How Did the Dynamics of the Barracks Alter the Impacts of *Infamia*?

Within Pompeii, both the Old Barracks (House of the Gladiators V.5.3), and the New Barracks (Quadriporticus of the Theatre VIII.7.16), provide insight into how gladiators lived, trained, and interacted in the city. As will be discussed in chapter three, gladiators often celebrated their number of victories in the arena, bragged about their personal prowess, or identified themselves as belonging to a category of gladiators.⁶⁸ However, the same graffiti can also offer insight into the dynamics in the barracks, including social hierarchies, groupings by type, and origins of individual gladiators. A significant social implication of *infamia* was the loss of identity and belonging. When gladiators entered the barracks, they faced a dramatic environmental and social change and lost any status, rights, and freedoms that they previously held during their lives.⁶⁹ The discussion of the loss of identity and social standing that these individuals faced when entering the barracks also needs to consider their varying backgrounds and social standing they held prior to this time. Gladiators are traditionally considered to be criminals, slaves, or prisoners of war who had done something to warrant a condemnation to the arena. This is not entirely false, but nor is it entirely accurate. Some individuals who were convicted of lesser crimes, could be sentenced to spend a period of time in the barracks, or some individuals who were captured during battles could indeed wind up in the barracks, but this is not an accurate representation of how all gladiators came to be.⁷⁰ In fact, a law in 38 BCE, had to be created to prohibit any senator from volunteering to enter the arena. This law, moreover, had to be extended under Augustus in 22 BCE. This extension applied also to restrict the descendants of senators and equestrians too.⁷¹ Additionally, graffiti from Pompeii, such as “Oceanus, of free status, victorious 13 times, won. Aracintus, of free status, victorious 4 times, earned a reprieve” also support the idea that individuals could and did volunteer to be a gladiator as opposed to all individuals

⁶⁸ See pages 65-68.

⁶⁹ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 67.

⁷⁰ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 30; Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 20; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 79-80.

⁷¹ Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 48.43.2-3, Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 54.2.5. The fact that this law had to be created under Caesar and Augustus may also suggest that the political, legal, and social impacts of *infamia* at this time were not so great as to be the only deterrence needed to prevent Romans from volunteering in the arena. Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 36.

being forced into the profession.⁷² Other graffiti also indicates that not all gladiators were Roman in the modern sense. Examples of names of gladiators written in Greek suggest gladiators were not all local but this does not clearly explain how the Greek speaking individual came to be a gladiator in Pompeii.⁷³ What can be determined from these unique origins and variety of backgrounds is that *infamia* would have impacted them differently depending on their own personal circumstances.⁷⁴ If we consider the various means and origins of how individuals came to be gladiators in Pompeii it becomes clear that the restrictions and limitations would have been felt to varying degrees.

When it comes to the origins, on the one hand there are individuals who were “local” and could broadly be considered “Roman”, while on the other hand are those that originated from other regions of the Mediterranean world and could be classified as “non-Roman.” The reason for separating these two groups is that those who were “non-Roman” would not have been entitled to the same rights, freedoms, and protections that “Roman” born individuals would have been.⁷⁵ Going back to the idea of the subjugation of *infames* to corporal punishment, for instance, “non-Romans” would have already been subjugated to this punishment due to their status as foreigners.⁷⁶ Or if we consider legal and political rights, “non-Romans” would not have been able to participate in politics regardless of their social status at this point in time.⁷⁷ Therefore, this is not to say that *infamia* did not impact these individuals, but certain restrictions and limitations were already imposed on them prior to their time as a gladiator in Pompeii. Those who were “Roman” in origin though likely would have had these rights, freedoms, and protections taken away from them, perhaps having a greater impact on their lives. In some cases, this impact was not great enough to prevent Romans (and Romans who held political office and high social standing), from volunteering to become a gladiator which led to the creation of this law. Then if we consider why individuals came into the arena, there are

⁷² For *CIL* IV 8055a and *CIL* IV 8055b see Appendix; Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 20.

⁷³ For *CIL* IV 2432/*EDR*167575, see Appendix.

⁷⁴ Hope, “Gladiators as a Class,” 559.

⁷⁵ Knapp, “Legally Marginalized Groups,” 364.

⁷⁶ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 76-77.

⁷⁷ Legally speaking “Only a small number of non-citizens were direct, active participants in the legal system...[Roman Law] existed to serve Roman citizens.” Knapp, “Legally Marginalized Groups,” 364; Hope, “Gladiators as a Class,” 559.

again, various methods and paths to consider. First, individuals who were convicted of select crimes could be sentenced to spend time as a gladiator.⁷⁸ Second, some prisoners of war were captured and sent to spend their days as entertainment for Roman crowds.⁷⁹ Third, and finally are those that strictly wished to participate as a gladiator and volunteered on their own volition.⁸⁰ Again the justification for considering these various avenues for how individuals came to be gladiators arises from the question of how did *infamia* play out in Pompeii. This question cannot be addressed with a blanket assumption that *infamia* impacted all identically, therefore, these variations need to be identified and addressed.

For the first method of those who were sentenced to the arena for crimes they committed, it should be considered that the crime itself, regardless of punishment may have incurred *infamia* on its own. Or, these individuals may have had these restrictions only upon their time in the barracks. Secondly, those who were forced to participate because they were captured during war would have been subject to similar penalties like those associated with *infamia* while in Rome.⁸¹ However, perhaps in their own regions and cities, they could have indeed held high social status that carried many privileges, rights, and freedoms that they lost once they had been captured. Slaves, regardless of origin, who entered the barracks may not have been directly labeled an *infamis* prior to their time as a gladiator, but they did face similar restrictions, limitations, and prohibitions.⁸² The stripping of the right to participate in politics or the protection from corporal punishment were already taken away from slaves in the early Empire.⁸³ These restrictions were not solely dependent upon their role as a gladiator. Lastly, those “Romans” who still volunteered to enter the arena have created a significant scholarly debate.⁸⁴ Why would individuals who held citizenship status, rights, and protections wish

⁷⁸ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 30; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 79-80.

⁷⁹ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 30; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 79-80.

⁸⁰ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 36-37, Garrett Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena: Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 212-213.

⁸¹ As non-Roman citizens these individuals would not have been privilege to the rights, freedoms, or protections that Roman citizens enjoyed. Hope, “Gladiators as a Class,” 559; Knapp, “Legally Marginalized Groups,” 364.

⁸² Du Plessis, *Brokowski's Textbook on Roman Law*, 89.

⁸³ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 74.

⁸⁴ See Dunkle, *Gladiators*; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*; Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*; Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena*.

to disregard that for an infamous life in the arena? Although this question is beyond the scope of this research, it still suggests that since laws had to be created during the Julio-Claudian period to prevent this from occurring. The impacts of *infamia* do not appear to have completely outweighed the benefits of being a gladiator at this time. Furthermore, the next idea to consider is once all these individuals, with unique origins and pathways to becoming a gladiator, entered into the barracks, did their relationship with *infamia* become similar, or did the dynamics of the barracks create further variations?

Social Hierarchies Among Gladiators

One result of *infamia* is that those who were subject to it were lumped together in a social group with other lowly individuals. In Roman society, *infames* were relegated to the fringes and held minimal to no social, political, or legal rights, resulting in their static position with very little chance of social movement. In broader society, outside of the barracks, it seems that gladiators among other *infames* were some of the lowliest individuals with little hope of elevating their status and position, however, within the barracks there was indeed space available for individuals to see social movement. Unsurprisingly Kyle, compares the social hierarchies within the barracks to that of the broader Roman society.⁸⁵ *Infamia* allegedly took away all ability of these individuals to better their position in society by limiting them with the restrictions and penalties of their status as *infames*. Yet, within the barracks there were ranking systems in place and various positions within the building that allowed for social movement. Additionally, *infamia* stripped them of their former identity and resulted in a lack of belonging to a specific group. No longer were these individuals Greek or Roman, for example, they were instead lumped together as gladiators, and marginalized by their former social groups. Once again, the barracks though also imitated this social grouping seen elsewhere in Roman society through the usage of typing of gladiators. With about a dozen different

⁸⁵ Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 79. Hope also advocates for the idea that individual gladiators had their own experiences in the barracks and that they should not be viewed as having the exact same stories as other gladiators. Hope, "Gladiators as a Class," 559.

types of gladiators, these individuals were given new identities and social groups while inside the barracks.⁸⁶ Both of these imitations of social dynamics within the barracks indicates that despite Roman society attempting to strip away identity and belonging socially from these individuals by labeling them as *infames*, these individuals still could achieve belonging and gain a sense of identity within the barracks. This perhaps indicates that despite the best efforts of Rome to take these privileges away from *infames*, they were still able to have their own sense of identity and belonging within the barracks regardless of their social position in the broader Roman society.

Once in the barracks gladiators were divided up into smaller groups of individuals that shared the same type of fighting style. To name a few, this could include, *Samnites*, *Thracians*, *hoplomachi*, *murmillones*, or *retiarii*. Each *retiarius* or *Thracian* would be grouped together with other *retiarii* and *Thracians* in order to learn the specific fighting style but, also to train as they progressed in their careers.⁸⁷ The group of *Thracians* would not only train together, but they would eat, sleep, and spend most of their time together while in the barracks.⁸⁸ For the most part, specific types of gladiators fought other gladiators who were of a different type, as in the case of *secutores* and *retiarii* who fought one another or *hoplomachi* who typically fought either a *Thracian* or a *murmillio*. In some cases, though, the *equites* (gladiators who fought on horseback) and the *provocatores* generally fought gladiators of their same type.⁸⁹ In the case of the an *eques* especially, this makes sense to pair one gladiator on horseback with another to create an equally matched combat, but also likely created an uncomfortable situation when they had to fight, injure, and maybe even kill an individual they had trained, eaten, and lived with while in the barracks. Apart from this, gladiators would not have been completely shielded from other types of gladiators. They would have been able to interact with one another in the barracks and they still shared the same identity as a gladiator regardless of

⁸⁶ For a breakdown of the different types of gladiators see Eckart Köhne, and Cornelia Ewigleben, *Gladiators and Caesars: the Power of Spectacle in Ancient Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 45-63; See also Jacobelli. *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 7-17.

⁸⁷ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 45; Köhne, *Gladiators and Caesar*, 32-33; It has been suggested that this ranking system did not come into play until the reign of Domitian (r. 81-96), right after the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE. Although the graffiti pertaining to this ranking system is found outside of Pompeii, there is still the possibility that early forms of this rankings and grouping systems existed in Pompeii.

⁸⁸ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 45.

⁸⁹ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 17; Köhne, *Gladiators and Caesar*, 47, 57.

their type, but they also had the ability to be a member of a smaller, more intimate social group of individuals who were facing very similar experiences in the barracks. This grouping of gladiators created a sense of identity and belonging while in the barracks even if these individuals had lost their former identity and social groups because of *infamia*. There is also indication of pride associated with gladiators in the barracks in Pompeii. For example, graffiti authored by gladiators often includes the mention of their specific fighting style, such as “Crescens the Retiarius” or “Mansuetus provocator”.⁹⁰ These individuals may have been removed from what was familiar, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, but within the barracks there was the availability to recreate this despite the restrictions and limitations placed upon them by *infamia*.

The second way that life in the barracks imitated the broader social landscape of Rome included the ranking system applied to gladiators within the barracks.⁹¹ Social hierarchies were just as prevalent within the groups of gladiators as they were in the general population of Rome. When a gladiator first entered the barracks, they were given the title *tiro* (novice) until they had earned their first victory in the arena.⁹² After an individual had received their first win, they entered the general ranking system that consisted of four levels of status based on the number of victories they had achieved.⁹³ At the lowest level of the ranking system was the *quartus palus*, followed by the *tertius palus*, *secundus palus* and finally the *primus palus* at the top.⁹⁴ The members of the *quartus palus* had the least number of victories and those in the *primus palus* had earned the most. Within the level of *primus palus*, the individual who had the most victories overall was considered the *primus palus*, which came with more prestige but also more responsibilities as they often were responsible for training those in their group.⁹⁵ The trainer for specific groups were called the *doctores*, who may have been the *primus palus* and an active gladiator, or they may have been a former gladiator who remained attached

⁹⁰ *ILS* 5142e, *CIL* IV 2483, see Appendix.

⁹¹ Hope, “Gladiators as a Class,” 560.

⁹² Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 45.

⁹³ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 45; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 79.

⁹⁴ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 45; Hope, “Gladiators as a Class,” 560.

⁹⁵ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 45; members of the *primus palus* and *secundus palus* appear to have been proud of their membership in these categories; See also Köhne, *Gladiators and Caesars*, 32-33.

to the barracks to train future gladiators.⁹⁶ With each level of ranking and positions within the barracks came more status, prestige and often responsibilities. Although the broader Roman hierarchical social system is much more complex, the barracks still mimics the importance of status, power, and prestige. Even if *infamia* relegated all gladiators to some of the lowliest positions in Roman society, within the barracks they were able to achieve social mobility, gain status, and responsibility within their groups, regardless of *infamia*.

Living Arrangements for Gladiators

There have been scholarly disagreements as to where gladiators in Pompeii resided. Jacobelli, concludes that gladiators may have lived off site in other residential buildings, maybe even with spouses or children.⁹⁷ Jacobelli, for example, also suggests that not all gladiators would have been entirely confined to the barracks, suggesting that even if they lived in the barracks, they may have had the ability and the freedom to wander the streets of Pompeii at their leisure.⁹⁸ Other scholars like Dunkle and Kyle are not as convinced and refer to Mau's finding in the New Barracks that implies a locking mechanism to keep gladiators inside.⁹⁹ Some domestic and commercial spaces in Pompeii have been suggested to be the home of former gladiators, largely based on depictions of gladiators or surviving inscriptions though.¹⁰⁰ Although there are two sides to this debate, it is largely agreed upon that, there would have been stages of a gladiators life where they were not confined to the barracks, whether that be during their professional career or after retirement. This then raises two important questions. First, if active gladiators could leave the barracks on their own accord and even live off site, how did *infamia* impact them

⁹⁶ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 41-42.

⁹⁷ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 19.

⁹⁸ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 19-20.

⁹⁹ August Mau, *Pompeii: Its Life and Art* trans. Francis W. Kelsey (London: Macmillan & Co., LTD., 1902), 161-163. Mau also labels two rooms in the Barracks as the "Doorkeepers Room" and the "Guard Room" referring to the security in place within this building. Both Dunkle and Kyle agree that select gladiators i.e., those who were free and had volunteered into the barracks, may have been able to come and go from the barracks as they wished, but conclude that those who did not volunteer to enter the area were strictly confined to the barracks.

See Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 43 and Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 84.

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter Four for discussion.

during this time? Second, those that managed to retire from gladiatorial combat and live out the rest of their lives in Pompeii, did *infamia* still impact them after this period?

If we consider Jacobelli's stance and conclude that active gladiators could leave the barracks and live their lives with spouses and children, the question arises, how were they treated by Pompeians, and how did *infamia* hinder the lives of those not confined to the barracks. Additionally, those that may have lived in the barracks, but left to wander the city at their leisure, was their status as *infames* identifiable? Gladiators would not have been walking through Pompeii in their armour and their weapons, but it has yet to be considered if there were other identifiable marks, traits, or accessories that would have signified these individuals as gladiators and *infames* to the crowd or was this dependent upon their status as a slave or free person prior to their entrance into the barracks, for example. If there were no such identifiers, then it could be suggested that *infamia* did not hinder the ability of these individuals to interact with their city and its inhabitants as greatly as the legal and social aspects of *infamia* would suggest. The second question of those who retired from gladiatorial combat, is did *infamia* follow them even after they were no longer engaging in combat in the arena? Edwards points out that *infamia* was not necessarily permanent for those who committed certain crimes but did this include ex-gladiators who were no longer involved in the profession?¹⁰¹ Evidence from Suetonius suggests that former gladiators could have prestige, wealth and status, but whether or not this is a rarity is harder to say.¹⁰² Spiculus may have only held this status due to the admiration of the Emperor Nero, and this may have been the exception to post-combat life for gladiators as opposed to the rule. Furthermore, did the environment of Pompeii, including the close relationship to gladiatorial combat, in addition to the frequency of representations of gladiators throughout the city, suggest that active gladiators may not have faced the level of stigmatization that legal *infamia* intended?

If active gladiators were able to leave the barracks and live with their families, they would have been still subject to the political and legal restrictions imposed on them through their status as *infames*. However, these rights and privileges could have

¹⁰¹ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 67.

¹⁰² Suetonius, *Nero*, 47.

potentially been restored to them after they retired from the arena. Active gladiators though, even if legally and politically restricted, may not have directly felt the social impacts of *infamia* in their day-to-day lives. Were they seen as threatening to their neighbors and the average Pompeiian citizen? Or did the threat the gladiators posed only apply to the elite Roman male citizen who likely would not have interacted with gladiators in their daily lives? Neither fact that gladiators were grouped into combat types, nor that there was a clear ranking system among these types suggests that *infamia* did not filter down and impact them. The social penalties associated with *infamia* would still have applied to these individuals. But, when considering the material evidence from the barracks in Pompeii, it becomes clear that some of the social penalties imposed on them by *infamia* may not have played out as intended. In broader Roman society, gladiators were stripped of their former identity, status, and social groups once they entered the barracks, but while in the barracks there were very similar opportunities for these individuals to gain a new identity, status, and to belong to a social group despite the intentions of *infamia*.

Conclusion

When considering the current scholarship dedicated to *infamia* and *infames* a slight disconnect becomes clear. This disconnect lies in the treatment of *infamia* as a set of penalties and restrictions that equally applied to all *infames* over the course of the Republic and the Empire. However, when we examine a specific group of *infames*, like gladiators during a specific period, this broad application of *infamia* does not hold up. *Infamia* has thus far been treated as a theoretical example of what these Roman laws had intended to do rather than what actually happened in society. Furthermore, the laws, and edicts that were issued outlining *infamia*, did not occur simultaneously, nor were they all implemented early on in Roman history. While this is acknowledged by scholars, the evaluation of how *infames* in Republic and early Empire were impacted does not appear to take these variations into consideration. Doing so, suggests the conclusion that gladiators during the late Republic and early Empire, likely would not have had the same experiences with the political and social penalties of *infamia* that those in the Second or

Third Centuries may have. This evidence also suggests that gladiators may not have been as concerned with their status as *infames* as scholars have previously indicated.

Additionally, location likely affected the impact that *infamia* had on *infames* under Roman control. Gladiatorial combat has a deeper history, direct ties to, and ultimately a different relationship with cities within Campania, like Pompeii, which could impact that influence that *infamia* had in this area. These observations leave the door open to further examinations of *infamia* and how it impacted specific individuals in reality, not just in theory.

Chapter Two: Gendered Aspects of Infamia

Introduction:

Within the previous chapter, the discussion focused on the surviving evidence of *infamia* in theory. Modern scholarship has tended to emphasize the gendered aspect of *infamia* and its implications on *infames*, yet these gendered implications of *infamia* do not explicitly appear within the primary legal evidence.¹⁰³ The evidence simply suggests that gladiators, among other *infames*, did not conform to society's ideals of what it meant to be a Roman *vir* (man).¹⁰⁴ This claim is generally based on the idea that gladiators sold their bodies publicly for the enjoyment of other people, which represented the antithesis of gender, sexuality, honour, and *dignitas*.¹⁰⁵ Gladiators were even used as an example of what Roman *vir*i should not aspire to, and as an example of how they should not behave.¹⁰⁶ However, there are many examples of contemporary authors complementing gladiators' qualities that Roman *vir*i aspired to. These complements lie in direct opposition to the reasoning behind labeling gladiators *infames* in the first place.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, gladiators are often associated with deviant or transgressive sexuality, a further reasoning behind their marginalization as *infames*. These claims of gladiator's deviant sexuality, as I suggest, may have been an additional means of stigmatizing these individuals, reflecting a further social implication of *infamia* rather than truthful claims of their behaviour.

Stretching beyond the legal and social implications of *infamia* on individuals like sex workers, actors, and gladiators, *infamia* also carried significant implications on Roman concepts of gender and sexuality. Gender and sexuality were an integral part of Roman society at all levels. For example, Roman women of all economic backgrounds

¹⁰³ See Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions,"; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*; Richlin, "Not Before Homosexuality,".

¹⁰⁴ As seen in the previous chapter, this directly included gladiators being unable to match the political, social, and economic standing of a proper Roman *vir*, but upon further investigation, gladiators also failed to adhere to society's gendered expectations which included ideals of *virtus* (manliness) and can be reflected in the restrictions placed upon those who were not a *vir*.

¹⁰⁵ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 69. It is worth noting that this conclusion is made by Edwards specifically and is not necessarily reflected in ancient source material. Yet Edwards reaches these conclusions because of their attempt to determine why certain professions were subject to *infamia*.

¹⁰⁶ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 84.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter Four for further discussion.

were strictly guided by the principles of virtue, chastity, as well as submissiveness, and were limited in the political, economic, and social power they could achieve.¹⁰⁸ Roman men, on the other hand, were not only allowed to achieve political, economic, social, and military advancement and success, they were expected to do so on the basis of their sex.¹⁰⁹ In the Republic, Roman men were expected and trained throughout childhood to attain public careers, whether military or political or both. Roman *vir*i were also bound by expectations placed upon them by society based on their gender, the most important of which was *virtus* or military virtue which can be translated as manliness, courage, and excellence. Roman society idolized these traits in leading men, and it was seen as an ideal to achieve. For the purposes of this study, *virtus* is at times ascribed to the gladiators and their courage when faced with death in the arena. However, based on the findings of the previous chapter, gladiators were supposed to be unworthy of such honours because of their status as *infames*. The literary evidence provides multiple examples of such praise, as does the material evidence.¹¹⁰ Some literary evidence even provides examples of the physical attraction elite women held towards gladiators because of their supposed sexual appeal.¹¹¹ In turn, this created a fear among elite Roman authors about the power gladiators could achieve through their sexualization and sexual appeal. Although

¹⁰⁸ This is a generalization of women in ancient Rome, under specific circumstances women who came from elite families typically had greater opportunity for power than those who did not. In the Republic notable women who managed to achieve this were Clodia Metelli and Terentia. Whereas in the Empire, many women (typically wives and mothers of emperors) achieved this with greater success, i.e., Livia, Agrippina the Younger, or Julia Domna.

For Clodia Metelli see Marilyn B. Skinner, *Clodia Metelli: the Tribune's Sister* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). For Terentia, see Paul Chrystal, *Roman Women: The Women Who Influenced the History of Rome* (Stroud, UK: Fonthill Media Limited, 2015). For Livia, see Guy de Bédoyère, *Domina: The Women Who Made Imperial Rome* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2018); Chrystal, *Roman Women: The Women Who Influenced the History of Rome*. For Agrippina the Younger see, Chrystal, *Roman Women: The Women Who Influenced the History of Rome*; de Bédoyère, *Domina: The Women Who Made Imperial Rome*; Judith Ginsburg, *Representing Agrippina: Constructions of Female Power in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). For Julia Domna see de Bédoyère, *Domina: The Women Who Made Imperial Rome*; Barbara Levick, *Julia Domna, Syrian Empress* (London: Routledge, 2007).

¹⁰⁹ Augustus' "*Legis Iuliae*" introduced in 1-18 BCE stipulated the duties of men and women to marry and procreate. Benefits were given to women and men for having large families and certain rights like inheritance were prohibited to those who remained childless. For men specifically, there was preference of political office given to those who had children over those who did not. While this legislation may not have played out perfectly in practice, there were still incentives for Roman men to adhere to society's gendered expectations. For further reading see Richard Frank, "Augustus' Legislation on Marriage and Children," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 8 (1976).

¹¹⁰ See below and pages 91-93.

¹¹¹ See below.

gendered roles of women and men in Roman society are not explicitly outlined in *Praetorian* or *Censorial infamia*, the treatment of marginalized individuals like gladiators, clearly were shaped based on understood gendered expectations of men in Roman society.

Therefore, to better understand why gladiators were seen as the antithesis to the Roman *vir* and how the gendered aspect of *infamia* impacted gladiators two separate aspects will require exploration. The first section concerns questions surrounding gladiators being considered the antithesis of a Roman *vir*, which will address three questions. First, it is imperative to gain an understanding of Rome's gendered expectations and beliefs of *vir* during the Julio-Claudian period through an analysis of written evidence. Secondly, an examination of how gladiators behaved in accordance with expectations of Roman *vir* and why they were in opposition with society's gendered expectations. In addition to this, the expectations of *vir* and gladiators when it came to public performance will require attention. Finally, an overview of the commonalities that Roman *vir* and gladiators shared will be considered, including reports of gladiators displaying admirable qualities, but also instances of how both *vir* and gladiators were treated when they failed to adhere to society's expectations. The final aspect will address the ideas surrounding the deviant or transgressive sexuality of gladiators including how gladiators were deemed sexually attractive to elite Roman women, as well as the frequent representations of gladiators as overtly sexual beings. When applicable, these representations will focus on those found in Pompeii and will be used to determine if claims of gladiators being sexually transgressive can be supported or if these claims represent a further narrative by Roman society that marginalized these individuals further.

Roman Expectations of *Vir*

Infamia and gender do not appear to be obviously intertwined. While the legal and social restrictions of *infamia* did have different applications for women and men, the laws outlining *infamia* fail to specifically address ideas surrounding the gender and sexuality

of *infames*.¹¹² Instead, these restrictions and societal understandings of the “transgressive sexuality” of *infames* come from Roman beliefs about their professions. From our modern understanding of “transgressive sexuality”, (although viewpoints are rapidly changing) sex workers in ancient society are more likely to resonate with modern audiences as individuals who partake in a profession labeled as sexually transgressive. Despite ancient laws that fully legalized prostitution, sex workers were still categorized with stage performers, and criminals as those inhibited by *infamia*.¹¹³ For this study, the similarities between sex workers and gladiators lie in their profession of selling their bodies for the enjoyment of others. This commonality is likely more easily understood in the context of prostitution and sex workers and not as easily understood by modern audiences regarding gladiators and the arena.

This complexity of incurring *infamia* requires further investigation and lies heavily in Roman understandings of gender roles and Roman sexuality, specifically masculinity. It is important to differentiate Roman understandings on gendered roles in society as opposed to expected behaviours and actions of each sex. Speaking of expected behaviours and actions of each sex, men were seen as dominant and women as submissive. However, scholars are quick to point out that our modern understanding of gender and sexuality is simply inadequate to demonstrate how Romans may have thought about these concepts.¹¹⁴ Instead, ideas of individuals being active or passive (regarding sexual acts) more accurately explains Roman understandings. This typically equates men to those who penetrate, or those in the active role, whereas women were equated with

¹¹² For example, being a male *infamis* included being restricting from holding public offices or participating in public life, however, these privileges were already prohibited for women regardless of their social or economic standing.

¹¹³ Julian states: “The praetor’s words are: “The following incur *infamia*: ... one who has appeared on the stage to act or recite; one who has kept a brothel; one who in criminal proceedings has been judged guilty of vexatious litigation or collusion in anything; one who has been condemned in his name for theft, robbery with violence, insult, fraud, trickery or compromised in such a case...” *Dig.* 3.2.1 (Julian, *Edict*, book 1).

¹¹⁴ Olson points out that “The Romans operated on a system of gender identity (i.e., taking one’s primary identity from one’s sense of self as male or female, adhering to the behaviours inherent in a socially constructed gender category) rather than sexual orientation (i.e., taking one’s identity from the sex of one’s preferred sexual partner). Clearly the two can be related, but Roman ideas of masculinity and manhood included the penetration of other males, something of which was not derided or censured but admired, as long as the males were non-citizens; that is, slaves, foreigners, and young. In addition, we should note that enjoying homoerotic intercourse with a young man did not make one (as it might today) “gay” or “a homosexual;” it was, as far as we can tell, normal behavior for a citizen male.” Kelly Olson, *Masculinity and Dress in Roman Antiquity* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 135.

those who are passively penetrated.¹¹⁵ Speaking in a strictly sexual context, men or *vir* were seen as dominant, active and those who penetrated others.¹¹⁶ This “other” was not required to be a passive *woman*, but simply another passive individual. It was entirely acceptable in the social realm of Roman sexuality for a man to penetrate another man under the assumption that this man was not a *vir* himself, such as a slave or a young male.¹¹⁷ Men who wished to be penetrated or women who penetrated others were abnormal according to societal understandings of sexuality. Conversely traditional women were seen as submissive, passive, and penetrated.

When it comes to understanding gender’s impact on the *infamia* of gladiators, however, an understanding of expected gender roles for men is even more crucial. Roman men were awarded certain rights based on their status as *vir*, including the ability to participate in politics, economic freedom, social freedom, and general autonomy over themselves. The most senior *vir* or *paterfamilias* in each family was also responsible for maintaining charge over their family unit, which included their children, grandchildren, and slaves.¹¹⁸ In addition to these freedoms given to the senior *vir* in a family such as economic, social, and political freedom, a *paterfamilias* was responsible for making such decisions on behalf of those in his *familia*. Concerning gladiators, however, the most important of these freedoms is the ability of *vir* to participate in political and social life. Roman society expected the *vir* to participate in political life as a citizen. During the Republic, a life in oratory, a very public profession, was an admirable choice. Cicero even suggested that orators themselves were the only individuals who could possess true *virtus*.¹¹⁹ The word *virtus* itself can be translated in a number of ways, but is primarily defined as manliness and the characteristics of an ideal Roman *vir*, although concepts of

¹¹⁵Jonathan Walters, “Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought,” in *Roman Sexualities* ed. Judith P. Hallet and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), 30-31.

¹¹⁶ It is important to note that *vir* only included freeborn Roman citizens, in good standing i.e., those at the top of Roman social hierarchy not every adult male was considered to be a *vir*. Walters, “Invading the Roman Body,” 32.

¹¹⁷ Walters, “Invading the Roman Body,” 35.

¹¹⁸ Lin Foxhall, *Studying Gender in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 27-28. This would have included his sisters, but not his wife as women remained tied to their father’s household or their brother’s if the father was deceased. Additionally, his sister’s children would be under the household of their father.

¹¹⁹ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.83; Myles McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 335.

bravery, honour, and courage are all encompassed within this term as well.¹²⁰ *Virtus* was such a valuable and necessary asset of Roman *virī*, that Cicero stated “...*virtus* is the badge of the Roman race and breed.”¹²¹ Slaves on the hand were strictly seen as incapable of possessing *virtus*.¹²² Although the term has largely treated as a static term in Roman history, during the late Republic *virtus* underwent alterations. McDonnell’s study highlights the difference between these two types of *virtus*, one originating in the Roman tradition and emphasizing values of martial skill, while the other being borrowed and influenced by Hellenism which emphasizes ethical values.¹²³ By the time of the Julio-Claudian period, McDonnell suggests that these two forms of *virtus* were distinct from one another, however, it is worth noting that the term *virtus* as it pertains to this study, has not been differentiated within scholarship devoted to *infamia* or gladiators and, therefore, will be referred to as such.

Were Gladiators in Opposition to Roman *Virī*?

Gladiators have been suggested to be the antithesis of Roman *virī*. They lacked all the qualities that were considered ideal attributes of Roman *virī* especially during the late Republic, which carried over into the early Empire. These traits largely consisted of behaviours that would lead to successful political careers such as honour, bravery, virtue and of course manliness.¹²⁴ Roman *virī* required these traits for a successful military career and a public career. Gladiators were seen to be incapable of displaying similar qualities due to their profession and status as *infames*. Edwards, in their study of determining what made certain professions especially shameful and subject to *infamia*, states that gladiators stood as an exact example of what not to do and how not to behave to those in Rome who were seeking *dignitas* or social standing.¹²⁵ Gladiators, first and

¹²⁰ McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 2.

¹²¹ Cicero, *Phillipics*, 4.13.

¹²² McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 159.

¹²³ McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 9.

¹²⁴ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 67; Alison Futrell, “Sex in the Arena,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World.*, ed. Alison Futrell and Thomas F. Scanlon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 680; McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 4.

¹²⁵ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 67.

foremost, sold their bodies for the enjoyment and pleasure of others.¹²⁶ Specifically in the case of volunteer gladiators, they would take the gladiator oath and allow themselves to be subject to the conditions of the barracks and risk death in the arena in return for earning money.¹²⁷ Although the pleasure a spectator gained from watching gladiatorial combat may not have been sexual in nature, Roman moralists still considered the excessive pursuit of pleasure dangerous.¹²⁸ Cicero and Quintilian suggest that an excess of pleasure brings about disgrace and is incompatible with public life, whereas a life of virtue is aspirational and can only bring praise.¹²⁹ Additionally, those who sought out pleasure were those who needed to be ruled over because of their lack of self-control (e.g., women and slaves).¹³⁰ Therefore, if a Roman *vir* sought out pleasure such as that found at an arena, they equated themselves with those unable to rule, and were seen to be unable to govern Rome.¹³¹ Therefore, gladiators stood as a threat to Roman *vir*i and their ability and right to rule Rome which contributed to their marginalization in society and their labeling as *infames*.

However, the issue that arises with the argument of gladiators as the antithesis of Roman *vir*i is highlighted in the numerous compliments and praise they were given by their contemporaries. Specifically, gladiators were frequently praised for exhibiting qualities aligned with those desirable characteristics and traits that Roman *vir*i aspired to, such as bravery, and courage particularly regarding martial skill.¹³² There remain many instances where gladiators were admired for their martial ability. Pliny the Younger and Cicero both admire gladiators for their displays of bravery and courage when faced with death despite their lowly status and supposed inability to demonstrate such traits.¹³³

¹²⁶ Edwards sees this as an affront to Roman *gravitas*. Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 67.

¹²⁷ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 77.

¹²⁸ Livy, *History of Rome*, 41.20; Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 83.

¹²⁹ “From this we see that sensual pleasure is quite unworthy of the dignity of man and that we ought to despise it and cast it from us.” Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.106. (*Ex quo intellegitur corporis voluptatem non satis esse dignam hominis praestantia, eamque contemni et reici oportere.*); “Virtue brings praise, so it should be pursued; Pleasure brings disgrace, so it should be shunned.” Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 5.10.83 (*virtus facit laudem, sequenda igitur: at voluptas infamiam, fugienda igitur.*); Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 84.

¹³⁰ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 68.

¹³¹ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 67-38.

¹³² Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 2.41; Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*, 33.1.

¹³³ For further discussion see Chapter Four, Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 2.41; Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*, 33.1.

Scholars have pointed out that specifically during the Republic, Rome was a military society and virtues and traits that coincided with soldiers and the military in general were admirable even if being demonstrated by *infames* such as gladiators.¹³⁴ Gladiators were even celebrated due to these display of martial skill and military *virtus* because it reflected the values that Roman society had been built upon.¹³⁵ The type of *virtus* that gladiators were hesitantly celebrated for possessing was the Roman concept of *virtus* that stemmed from understandings of martial skill and value. At times, non-Romans were occasionally respected for displays of *virtus*. Caesar refers to the Gauls on occasion as displaying *virtus* and Livy mentions how volunteer slaves who fought during the Hannibalic Wars were given their freedom on the condition they displayed *virtus* in battle.¹³⁶ Some scholars subsequently suggest that the popularity of gladiatorial combat in general was due to the fact that Romans desired combat-style demonstrations due to their close ties of warfare.¹³⁷ It had additionally been proposed that the amphitheatre in Pompeii was erected for the veterans as gladiatorial combat was reminiscent of their time in the military and would provide the many veterans with entertainment.¹³⁸ However, the contradiction then arises if gladiators adequately displayed military *virtus* and could be admired for this trait that they were not supposed to be capable of, why were they considered such a threat and in opposition to the Roman *vir*?¹³⁹

Additionally, Roman beliefs about public performance also contribute to the designation of gladiators as *infames*, despite some resemblance to the honourable public career of oratory. However, if oratory was an admirable choice, the viewpoint that oratory could be considered performance is at odds when compared to *infames* who also performed publicly. Like acting on a stage, oratory consisted of a similar set of components including a performer, either actors or orator, an audience, and an attempt by

¹³⁴ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 19; Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 77. Hope, “Gladiators as a Class,” 558.

¹³⁵ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 77.

¹³⁶ See Caesar, *The Gallic War*, V, in particular; Livy, *History of Rome*, 24.14.6-7; McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 160-161.

¹³⁷ See Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*.

¹³⁸ Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 17-18.

¹³⁹ For further discussion see Chapter Four.

the performer to convince the audience of their performance.¹⁴⁰ Of course gladiatorial combat and oratory should not be considered entirely comparable. While both could be argued to be public performance, gladiators still provided a form of martial combat and represented ideals of corrupt morality and transgressive sexuality, whereas the same cannot be said for orators like Cicero or Cato. But this, nevertheless, emphasizes that performance in of itself was not seen as incurring *infamia* in Roman society, but instead specific types of performance brought about *infamia*. Additionally, even if one type of performance dealt with public speaking and another with combat, both could still infer displays of the Roman concept of *virtus*. This then raises the question as to why gladiators were occasionally referred to as possessing *virtus* even though those subject to *infamia* were seen as incapable of displaying such qualities. However, Cicero suggests that one can ward off a cruel and dishonourable death through the display of courage, which aligns with compliments given to gladiators by their contemporaries.¹⁴¹ Gladiators who were praised for their *virtus* were usually given such praise for their bravery in the arena and their courage and steadfastness when faced with death despite their status as *infames*. This points to the gendered implications of *infamia* that further contribute to the complex nature of the term and how it impacted those it applied to such as gladiators.

Roman Gendered Expectations and Effeminacy

The ideal actions and behaviours of Roman *virī* have been previously discussed, as has Roman understandings of gendered expectations among men, including concepts of masculinity and sexuality. Although ideas of Roman understandings of gender and sexuality deserve much time and attention, for the purpose of this study a brief overview is necessary to understand the commonalities among Roman *virī* and gladiators who appeared to fail to adhere to Roman beliefs on masculinity. Subsequently, it will also be seen that even within the grouping of gladiators, ideas of masculinity as opposed to effeminacy were prevalent as well. Roman *virī* who failed to adhere to Rome's gendered

¹⁴⁰ Sophia Papaioannou, Andreas Serafim, and Beatrice da Vela, "Chapter One," in *The Theatre of Justice: Aspects of Performance in Greco-Roman Oratory and Rhetoric*, ed. Sophia Papaioannou, Andreas Serafim, and Beatrice da Vela. (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 1.

¹⁴¹ Cicero, *Philippics*, 4.13.

expectations would often face accusation of effeminacy or a lack of masculine behaviours and characteristics. Although there is a difference between those Roman *vir*i who faced accusations of effeminacy and those who were passive individuals who were penetrated. Even Julius Caesar faced accusations of effeminacy by his contemporaries for his appearance and actions, but this did not coincide with further accusations of passivity.¹⁴² Accusation of effeminacy typically revolved around dress and ornamentation and were generally insults hurled at men by other men as seen in the example where Cicero accused his political opponent Aulus Gabinius of effeminacy.¹⁴³ Additionally, Roman *vir*i might also face accusations for choices they made concerning their dress and ornamentation such as the colour or fabric their dress was made of.¹⁴⁴ Roman *vir*i could also face accusations of effeminacy if they wore certain cosmetics or removed their hair, for example.¹⁴⁵ Accusations of effeminacy against certain Roman *vir*i for their choices of dress are also mimicked within the gladiatorial barracks. This commonality once again highlights that although gladiators were perceived to be the antithesis of men and represented a significant threat to the elite male citizen, they ultimately faced extensively similar gendered expectations, admiration for displaying certain qualities, and common accusations of effeminacy when they failed to adhere to these expectations.

The “Effeminate” *Retiarius*

In addition to the claim that gladiators were sexually deviant due to their desirability by women are the claims that specific gladiators were effeminate. As seen in accusations that could be hurled against Roman *vir*, such as effeminacy, or lack of masculinity, effeminacy was also used to degrade specific types of gladiators. These claims have been largely based off two comments from Seneca the Younger and Juvenal

¹⁴² Kelly Olson, “Masculinity, Appearance, and Sexuality: Dandies in Roman Antiquity,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 23, no. 3 (May 2014), 182.

¹⁴³ Cicero, *In Pisonem*, 25; Livy, *History of Rome*, 34.7.9; Olson, “Masculinity, Appearance, and Sexuality,” 187.

¹⁴⁴ Tacitus, *Annals*, 2.33; Olson, “Masculinity, Appearance, and Sexuality,” 191. Tiberius had prohibited *vir*i from wearing certain colours of garments such as lavender, and certain fabrics such as silk.

¹⁴⁵ Olson, “Masculinity, Appearance, and Sexuality,” 188-189.

both of whom are criticizing unmasculine behaviours.¹⁴⁶ However, others give less credence to this claim and instead suggest that the *retiarius* represented comic relief in the arena and was intended for this purpose which is supported by the relative popularity of the *retiarum* in the early Empire.¹⁴⁷ Regardless of this popularity, the *retiarius*, in particular, is often referred to as the most “unmasculine” type of gladiator either due to their armour or comments made by Juvenal and Seneca the Younger. Similarly, to the claims that gladiators were sexually attritive, scholars cite specifically the “Oxford fragment”, lines 1-13, from Juvenal’s sixth Satire to justify the effeminate nature of the *retiarius*:

In any house where a professor of obscenity lives and sports, his fidgety right hand suggesting he stops at nothing, you’ll find that everyone is disgusting—no better than pathics. These creatures they allow to pollute the food and to stand close by the sacred table. The crockery which should be smashed once Gourd or bearded Swallow-tail has drunk from it they simply have washed. That makes the gladiator trainer’s establishment purer and better than your holy hearth. In his troop Skin is told to keep well away from Loaded. Then there’s the fact that the nets aren’t kept alongside the tunic of disgrace, and that the shoulder guards and the trident of the gladiator who fights naked are not stored in the same locker. Such souls are relegated to the lowest section of the school and in their prison they have different chains.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Seneca the Younger specifically is protesting effeminacy and the loss of masculinity in Roman society. Juvenal on the other hand is directly criticizing *cinaedī*. See Juvenal, *Satires*, 6. 01-13; Seneca the Younger, *Natural Questions*, 7.31.3. A third source by Suetonius is often cited as support for this argument “Once a band of five *retiarum* in tunics, matched against the same number of *secutores*, yielded without a struggle; but when their death was ordered, one of them caught up his trident and slew all the victors. Caligula bewailed this in a public proclamation as a most cruel murder, and expressed his horror of those who had had the heart to witness it.” Suetonius, *Caligula*, 30.3. Cerutti and Richardson conclude that Suetonius must have expected the reader to understand the induendo of this combat as opposed to viewing it as a normal combat in the arena. Steven M. Cerutti and L. Richardson Jr. “The *Retiarius Tunicatus* of Suetonius, Juvenal, and Petronius,” *The American Journal of Philology* 110, no. 4 (Winter, 1989), 589.

¹⁴⁷ Anne Duncan, *Performance and Identity in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 206; Valerie Hope, “Fighting for Identity: The Funerary Commemoration of Italian Gladiators,” *Institute of Classical Studies* 44, no. S73 (2000): 97.

¹⁴⁸ Juvenal, *Satires*, 6.01-13. (*In quacumque domo vivit ludique professus obscenum et tremula promittens omnia dextra, invenies omnis turpes similesque cinaedis. his violare cibos sacraeque adsistere mensae permittunt, et vasa iubent frangenda lavari cum Colocyntha bibit vel cum barbata Chelidon. purior ergo tuis laribus meliorque lanista, in cuius numero longe migrare iubetur psillus ab euhoplo. quid quod nec retia turpi iunguntur tunicae, nec cella ponit eadem munimenta umeri pulsatorisque tridentem qui nudus pugnare solet? pars ultima ludi accipit has animas aliusque in carcere nervos.*)

The fragment, however, refers to a specific type of *retiarius*, the *retiarius tunicatus* or the *retiarius* wearing a tunic.¹⁴⁹ *Retiarii* in general wore the *subligaculum* and were unique among gladiators as the only type who engaged in combat without a helmet.¹⁵⁰ They were also arguably the most lightly armed combatant in the arena in comparison to heavily armed gladiators like a *Thracian* or *murmillo*, for example.¹⁵¹ Seneca the Younger also more indirectly refers to this effeminacy by suggesting that unmanly men were trained as *retiarii* in the barracks.¹⁵² He writes, “Daily we invent ways whereby an indignity may be done to manliness, to ridicule it, because it cannot be cast off. One man cuts off his genitals, another flees to an indecent part of a gladiators’ school; and, hired for death, he chooses a disgraceful type of armament to practice his sickness in.”¹⁵³ However, other scholars, such as Duncan, suggest that combat between a *retiarius* and a *secutor* who were generally paired together represented a sub context of “manly man versus effeminate man”¹⁵⁴ (The *secutor* and the *retiarius* respectively). This suggests that perhaps *retiarii* were intentionally effeminate in comparison to other gladiators, perhaps emphasizing the possibility of staged performances in the arena.

Although the effeminacy of *retiarii* is difficult to determine with certainty, the example provided by Juvenal and Seneca the Younger still support the commonalities that Roman *vir*i and gladiators had concerning Roman gendered expectations. As mentioned previously, Roman gendered expectations for *vir*i represented traits and

¹⁴⁹ Carter suggests *retiarii* who wore the tunic may refer to individuals who were Roman citizens prior to volunteering in the arena. If this is the case then Juvenal is condemning both Roman citizens who would dare volunteer to perform in public, but also that they chose to become the least masculine type of gladiator, the *retiarius*. For further discussion see Michael Carter, “(Un)Dressed to Kill: Viewing the *Retiarius*,” in *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture* ed. Jonathan Edmondson and Alison Keith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

¹⁵⁰ S.G. Owen, “On the Tunica *Retiarii*,” *The Classical Review* 19, no. 7 (1905): 354. The *subligaculum* was a type of loincloth that was tied to a belt, Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 13; Köhne, *Gladiators and Caesars*, 59.

¹⁵¹ Duncan, *Performance and Identity in the Classical World*, 206; See Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 7-17 and Köhne, *Gladiators and Caesars*, 45-64 for overview on types of gladiators and their armour.

¹⁵² Cerutti, “The *Retiarius Tunicatus* of Suetonius, Juvenal, and Petronius,” 590.

¹⁵³ Seneca, *Natural Questions*, 7.31.3.

¹⁵⁴ Duncan, *Performance and Identity in the Classical World*, 206. Futrell also discusses the specific weapons that *retiarii* used as an explanation for their labeling as effeminate. Specifically, *retiarii* used the same tools used by fishermen. Fishermen were manual labourers who were looked down on by society because they used their hands and hunched over their work which feminized them in the eyes of elite Romans. See Futrell, “Sex in the Arena,” 679. Although Owen is not convinced that a *retiarius* wearing a tunic immediately associated them with effeminacy. Owen, “On the Tunica *Retiarii*,” 357.

behaviours that were incompatible with gladiators due to their social status as *infames*. These traits and behaviours that were aspirational for Roman *vir*i could also be admired or respected when seen in a gladiator. Additionally, common accusations of effeminacy were frequently hurled against Roman *vir*i who failed to adhere to these idealized masculine behaviours, which is once again mirrored in gladiators who appear to lack masculine traits. Despite the gladiators' subjection to *infamia*, they faced similar gendered expectations as they were similarly respected for displaying admirable traits and behaviours and they were equally subject to similar gendered accusations such as effeminacy for lacking these traits.

Gladiators as Sexually Deviant Individuals

Alongside discussions of *infamia*, nearly all scholars address the alleged sexually deviant behaviour of gladiators, yet this determination requires further analysis. Gladiators are not only portrayed as the antithesis of the ideals of a Roman *vir* as discussed above, but it is taken one step further as they are also portrayed as sexually transgressive due to their profession of public performance. The *Digest* states that gladiators are given the designation of *infames* due to their profession as public performers.¹⁵⁵ Authors like Edwards and Gardner further expand this idea when they address the viewpoints of Roman moralists who viewed any pleasure as a threat to Roman society and those who ruled and governed it.¹⁵⁶ Sex workers, as Gardner points out, provided directly sexual pleasure, whereas gladiators provided pleasure through entertainment, yet they are still portrayed as sexually deviant and promiscuous. Gardner maintains that “[t]hose who sell their bodies for public exhibition in the theatre or arena are assumed to be sexually available.”¹⁵⁷ There also remains the assumption that gladiators were appealing to women in unsavory ways. They are presented as sexually

¹⁵⁵ *Dig.* 3.2.1 (Julian, *Edict, book 1*) “The praetor’s words are: “The following incur *infamia*: one who has been discharged from the army in disgrace by his general or the person with the power of decision in this matter; one who has appeared on the stage to act or recite; one who has kept a brothel...”

¹⁵⁶ In the Republic, this was elite male citizens, while an excess of pleasure was still a threat to elite male citizens, and excess of pleasure by the emperor also posed a threat. Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 67-68; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 135.

¹⁵⁷ Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 135.

attractive to Roman women who lack the self-control to resist the temptation which in turn contributes to the threatening nature of gladiators.¹⁵⁸ The infamous find of the skeleton of a woman in the New Barracks (VIII.7.16) of Pompeii has also been occasionally used to support the idea of gladiators being sexually desirable to elite women.¹⁵⁹ Additionally, representations of gladiators or graffiti authored by gladiators is used to contribute to this narrative of their sexually deviant behaviour. Lastly, the *retiarius* is often portrayed as the least “manly” gladiator for obscure reasons, furthering the presentation of certain gladiators as sexually deviant due to this effeminate behaviour. However, these justifications for labeling gladiators as sexually deviant, transgressive, and threatening do not appear directly in legal evidence that designates these individuals as *infames* and appears to be more of a social consequence of *infamia* imposed on them by society. The evidence that currently supports the sexual deviance of gladiators also equally supports other explanations that are less immoral in nature and therefore need to be considered as well.

What Constituted Roman Sexual Desire?

When it comes to considering gladiators as sexually attractive there are examples from contemporary sources that do point to this conclusion. The story of Eppia, the senator’s wife from Juvenal’s *Satires* or the gossip surrounding the paternity of Commodus are at the forefront of the argument as are representations of gladiators typically with a large phallus, or graffiti boasting about their sexual prowess.¹⁶⁰ This has led to quotes from scholars such as Edwards who writes “Stripped of the social and cultural paraphernalia that give identity and status to most men, the gladiator is naked,

¹⁵⁸ Edwards points out that pursuit of low pleasure including eating, drinking, sex, gambling and going to the games were pursued by those who lacked self-control, including women, thus the need for them to be controlled and governed by those who had self-control, i.e., the Roman *vir*. Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 68.

¹⁵⁹ Mau, *Pompeii: Its Life and Art*, 163; Weidemann, suggests that the skeleton may have been the wife or lover or one of the gladiators in the barracks. Also makes reference to the skeleton of an infant found in the barracks to explain that families of gladiators may have been present in the barracks, but this could also be explained by the chaos in the aftermath of the eruption as the infant may have been brought into the barracks for shelter and had no direct connection with the gladiators who lived there. Weidemann, *Emperors and Gladiators*, 115-116.

¹⁶⁰ Juvenal, *Satires*, 82-106.

defined only by his weapon. He is all sword.”¹⁶¹ Others, such as Hopkins, emphasize the sexual innuendoes of the weapons used by gladiators. He emphasizes that “[t]he victorious gladiator, or at least his image, was sexually attractive. The word *gladius* - sword - was vulgarly used to mean penis.”¹⁶² Duncan commenting on Juvenal emphasizes the publicity of gladiators: “The gladiator, in this reading, was the original “bad boy,” the ruggedly masculine man who combines positive personal qualities with the status of a social outcast. But there was another component to the gladiator’s sex appeal, and it had to do with his role as a public performer. He was desirable because he was looked at by thousands and thousands of spectators, because he was on stage.”¹⁶³ However, conclusions such as these overlook important aspects of understanding Roman sexual desire and appears to project modern understandings of sexual attractiveness upon a culture who viewed sex appeal in vastly different ways.

Clarke points out that modern views of what constitutes “pornographic” imagery does not align with what Romans or Pompeians more specifically considered “pornographic” if they even used that terminology at all.¹⁶⁴ Secondly, it is improper to assume that what constitutes sexual desire of others by modern standards would equally apply to Romans and Pompeians. Even if Juvenal’s Eppia considered gladiators to be sexually attractive this does not infer that Roman society as a whole were attracted to similar things. Additionally, Gardner rightfully points out that there lies a difference between the assumption that gladiatorial performance was considered “erotic” or that gladiators who were not performing were seen as sexually promiscuous.¹⁶⁵ Gardner’s first point of considering gladiatorial combat as “erotic” once again falls under Clarke’s scrutiny. It is difficult to assume with our own modern beliefs and opinions what Romans and Pompeians considered to be sexually attractive, furthermore, there appears little evidence to suggest that gladiatorial combat specifically was ever referred to in this

¹⁶¹ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 78.

¹⁶² Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 22.

¹⁶³ Duncan, *Performance and Identity in the Classical World*, 213.

¹⁶⁴ John R. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art 100 B.C-A.D. 250* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 3-4.

¹⁶⁵ Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 135.

manner.¹⁶⁶ Gardner's second point also has similar weaknesses that they themselves address. Evidence from funerary inscriptions for deceased gladiators erected by their wives and children do not entirely reflect the narrative that gladiators were overwhelmingly sexually deviant and promiscuous in their personal lives.¹⁶⁷ Although the women who put up the epitaphs may not have been legally married to the gladiators in question due to Roman law, there is still the possibility that they were committed partners and not temporary relationships. Although some gladiators may not have engaged in long-term committed relationships, there remains evidence to suggest that it was a possibility for some. For example, one tombstone erected by Ingenua reports that she lived with a retiarius for over five years, while another tombstone states how Laurica lived with a *secutor* named Urbicus for seven years.¹⁶⁸ The tombstone set up by Laurica for Urbicus also references their daughter again suggesting that gladiators who managed to retire from the arena could engage in long-term relationships and start a family.¹⁶⁹ Therefore, if the evidence to suggest the sexual deviance of gladiators is lacking in this regard, the continuation of this narrative is problematic.

Gladiators as Sexually Attractive to Women

From literary evidence there remain two significant stories of women's attractiveness to gladiators with gladiators.¹⁷⁰ The first piece of evidence is Juvenal's mention of Eppia, the senator's wife who abandoned her family because of a gladiator who Juvenal describes as heavily scared and wounded from his time in the arena. Juvenal also refers once again to the idea of gladiatorial weapons and, therefore, the danger that

¹⁶⁶ Gardner also comes to similar conclusions later on "In the case of gladiators, moreover, although there are numerous references to the attraction they are said to hold for women, deliberate eroticism is not a characteristic ascribed to their performances (unlike some stage performances)." Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, 136.

¹⁶⁷ The dating of these particular tombstones are difficult to determine with complete certainty, but due to epigraphic conventions, Hope dates them roughly to the first and second Centuries CE. Hope "Fighting for Identity," 96.

¹⁶⁸ *CIL* V 4506, *CIL* V 5933; Hope "Fighting for Identity," 104.

¹⁶⁹ *CIL* V 5933; Hope "Fighting for Identity," 104.

¹⁷⁰ Tertullian also mentioned how "women [surrender] their bodies" to gladiators. Tertullian *De Spectaculis*, 22.

appealed to women by writing “It’s the steel that they’re in love with.”¹⁷¹ The second source addresses the gossip surrounding Faustina the Younger, the wife of Marcus Aurelius, who was accused of having multiple affairs with gladiators, “Many writers, however, state that Commodus was really begotten in adultery, since it is generally known that Faustina, while at Caieta, used to choose out lovers from among the sailors and gladiators.”¹⁷² Additionally, the female skeleton found within the New Barracks of Pompeii has equally been used to support the idea of love affairs between lowly gladiators and elite women.¹⁷³ Scholars such as Kyle and Dunkle have pointed out that too much emphasis has been placed on finding an elite woman’s skeleton in the barracks considering the chaos that must have ensued during the eruption of Vesuvius.¹⁷⁴ As opposed to the eruption catching a gladiator and his elite lover in the chaos, it seems more likely that the woman was attempting to seek shelter during the eruption, perhaps alongside the seventeen other skeletons that were found alongside her.¹⁷⁵ These stories from Juvenal, the *Historia Augusta* and the New Barracks in Pompeii do not entirely support the idea that gladiators were sexually attractive to women. As Dunkle points out, the women may have been attempting to seek shelter in the barracks during the eruption of Vesuvius, nor does the example from Juvenal suggest an overwhelming number of elite women who chose to leave their families behind for a gladiator. The final category of evidence used by scholars to assume the sexual desire that women held for gladiators are the handful of graffiti authored by gladiators themselves. These graffiti generally discuss the gladiator’s opinion on how sexually desirable he is to women including one gladiator claiming to be “Crescens the net-fighter, doctor to nighttime girls, morning girls, and all the rest.”¹⁷⁶ However, this evidence does not conclusively support the idea that gladiators were desirable to women in reality. Boastful graffiti such as this once

¹⁷¹ Juvenal, *Satires*, 6.104-112.

¹⁷² *Historia Augusta, Marcus Aurelius*, 19.8, 23.7; *Historia Augusta, Commodus*, 8.1.

¹⁷³ “Among them that of a woman richly adorned with gold jewelry; she had a necklace with emeralds, earrings, and two armbands, besides rings and other ornaments.” Mau, *Pompeii: Its Life and Art*, 163.

¹⁷⁴ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 51; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 85.

¹⁷⁵ Mau, *Pompeii: Its Life and Art*, 163.

¹⁷⁶ *CIL IV 4353/ ILS 5142e*. See Appendix.

again may only be suggesting that this particular gladiator felt this way about themselves, not that women actually viewed him in this way.¹⁷⁷

Most significantly to the argument though are the comments regarding Faustina the Younger from the *Historia Augusta* as they appear to equally be a condemnation of the actions of Commodus. “[Marcus Aurelius and Faustina the Younger’s] son Commodus was born a gladiator, not really a prince; for afterwards as emperor he fought almost a thousand gladiatorial bouts before the eyes of the people, as shall be related in his life. This story is considered plausible, as a matter of fact, for the reason that the son of so virtuous a prince had habits worse than any trainer of gladiators, any play-actor, any fighter in the arena, or, in fine, anything brought into existence from the offscourings of all dishonour and crime.”¹⁷⁸ The author appears to try to explain the actions of Commodus by assuming Faustina the Younger must have had an affair with a gladiator who was Commodus’ real father, as nothing else adequately explains his time in the arena as a gladiator. Furthermore, the action of accusing women, especially politically powerful ones, of adultery was not limited to Faustina the Younger. This is also seen in accusations relayed against Agrippina the Younger, Julia Domna among many others.¹⁷⁹ It should also be considered that women like Agrippina the Younger and Faustina the Younger both had sons who were greatly disliked emperors. For example, authors like Tacitus have indirectly condemned the actions of Nero through the slandering of his mother Agrippina the Younger.¹⁸⁰ This may also be a possibility in the case of Faustina the Younger and her son Commodus. Additionally, Ginsburg points out that Agrippina the Younger held significant political power both during the subsequent reigns of her husband Claudius and her son Nero, and the accusations against her may have originated

¹⁷⁷ For further discussion see Chapter Three.

¹⁷⁸ *Historia Augusta, Marcus Aurelius*, 19.8.

¹⁷⁹ Agrippina the Younger was not only accused of committing adultery with Seneca the Younger, Nero’s tutor and advisor, but she was also accused of committing incest with her brother Caligula and her son Nero. Suetonius, *Caligula*, 24; Tacitus, *The Annals*, 14.2; Ginsburg, *Representing Agrippina*, 116. Julia Domna was also accused of adultery. Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 77.16.5. Adultery against women was an easy method of tarnishing their reputations as part of Roman gendered expectations against women surrounded virtue and chastity, therefore any accusation of adultery tarnished their reputation. Agrippina the Elder, Tacitus, *The Annals*, 6.25, Julia the Elder, Suetonius, *Divius Augustus*, 65, and Messalina Suetonius, *Claudius*, 26 provide further examples of Julio-Claudian women who faced accusations of adultery.

¹⁸⁰ Ginsburg, *Representing Agrippina*, 117-118.

due to the power she held in Roman political matters.¹⁸¹ Therefore, the criticism against Faustina the Younger should not be used exclusively to determine the sexual appeal gladiators held for women as there remain other motivations by authors that explain their accusations against her.

“Sexual” Representations of Gladiators

Physical depictions of gladiators have also been used to further the idea of the sexual attractiveness that gladiators held in society. Two specific examples from Pompeii are generally cited for this argument including the statue of a gladiator alongside Priapus from the Inn of the Gladiators (I.20.1) or the tintinnabulum which depicts a *bestiarius* with a large phallus.¹⁸² However, the usage of phallic imagery did not necessarily invoke sexual feelings or desires in the ancient viewer. Tintinnabula, as Jacobelli points out, were often hung at the entrances of shops or houses with the purpose of bringing good luck.¹⁸³ Although these representations may present themselves to the modern viewer as sexual in nature or even as sexually transgressive, these modern beliefs do not reflect Roman or Pompeiian society. In fact, representations of Priapus or Mercury, are often depicted with an exaggerated phallus as seen frequently in Pompeii. The House of the Vettii (VI.15.1) for example contains two separate depictions of Priapus. One is located near the entrance to the house, the other located in the peristyle, both spaces are commonly used to house depictions of Priapus.¹⁸⁴ These often appear at entry and doorways to shops or homes and are used for the purpose of warding off the evil eye. This apotropaic nature of imagery, as Clarke points out, was not a new invention by Pompeii as apotropaic imagery can be seen all over the Mediterranean world at this time.¹⁸⁵ Although the usage of gladiatorial imagery for this purpose may indeed by

¹⁸¹ Ginsburg, *Representing Agrippina*, 117-118; For other accusations of adultery against Agrippina see pages 122-130.

¹⁸² Duncan, *Performance and Identity in the Classical World*, 212; Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 22; Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 100, 105.

¹⁸³ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 100.

¹⁸⁴ Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking*, 174-176.

¹⁸⁵ John R. Clarke, “Sexuality and Visual Representation,” in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities*, ed. Thomas K. Hubbard (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2013), 531.

unique to Pompeii¹⁸⁶, the combining of phallic imagery and gladiators as seen in the statue from the Inn of the Gladiators (I.20.1) or the tintinnabulum should not be assumed to be sexually appealing as opposed to apotropaic simply because a gladiator is depicted alongside the phallus. It is improper to assume that an image of gladiator with a large phallus evoked sexual feelings in Pompeians considering the phallus was already known to be used as an apotropaic function in the city.¹⁸⁷ This furthers the conclusion that the claims of gladiators as being sexually attractive, deviant and/or transgressive require further attention.

To summarize, the evidence that has been generally used to claim that gladiators were sexually desirable to Roman women or that they were overly sexual beings in the minds of Roman society can also be used to support alternate conclusions. Representations that have been used to conclude that gladiators were sexualized beings can also be explained by Roman society's use of apotropaic imagery, for example. Additionally, examples of women having affairs with gladiators can also be representative of the common narrative of adultery used by ancient authors against women of power, specifically in the case of Faustina the Younger. The claims surrounding gladiators as being sexually available due to their public performances also raises concerns. First, there is little to suggest that gladiatorial combat in the arena was in any way "erotic" for the viewer, which only leads to a further issue of applying our modern understanding of what constituted eroticism in the ancient spectator. Secondly, there remains too little evidence to justify that gladiators were sexually promiscuous in their own lives. Therefore, while the narrative of gladiators being considered sexually desirable and sexual beings may be partially the result of modern understandings of sexuality, there remains the possibility that ancient narratives, particularly surrounding those that considered gladiators sexually threatening to women, may have arisen as a

¹⁸⁶ See Chapter Three for further discussion.

¹⁸⁷ Clarke notes a bakery in Pompeii where a depiction of a phallus was placed over the bread oven likely indicating "The context makes it clear that the baker was not thinking of the happiness of mere sexual arousal, but rather of the good luck that phallic fertility and power brought. He placed the phallic plaque over his oven, to make his bread rise and his business prosper." Clarke, "Sexuality and Visual Representation," 532.

further means of marginalizing these individuals in society. By the early Empire, gladiators became increasingly popular and perhaps posed a more significant threat to society, as seen in the rapid increase in frequency of the combat but also in the desirability for individuals to volunteer in the arena. It appears that as gladiatorial combat rose in popularity, so did the legislation and restrictions against them, as seen in Chapter One. Therefore, it does not seem to be a stretch to consider that negative rhetoric aimed at gladiators, perhaps in the form of accusations of deviant sexuality, could have increased simultaneously. By labeling gladiators as sexually deviant and threatening to Roman women and society, this may have had the power to socially stigmatize and marginalize these individuals further. Although this evidence can be used to support a variety of conclusions, it nevertheless emphasizes the impact that Roman understandings of gender and sexuality had on the marginalization of gladiators and further supports the gendered aspects of *infamia*.

Conclusion

As discussed, in Chapter One, the complex relationship between gladiators and *infamia* is difficult to determine. While in Chapter One, some relatively solid restrictions and limitations were placed upon gladiators due to their status as *infames*. However, these rules and regulations that were put in place come with many problems that require addressing. Questions surrounding if gladiators truly felt the impacts of these restrictions remain as do questions surrounding the timeline of *infamia* itself and when were these restrictions truly enforced. This chapter only furthers the complicated relationship between gladiators and *infamia* since the explanation of why gladiators were subject to *infamia* given by modern scholars lies in their incompatibility with traits associated with Roman *vir*. However, as this chapter demonstrates, gladiators and Roman *vir* were admired and criticized for exhibiting similar behaviours and traits, despite one group being subject to *infamia* and the other not. Furthermore, both gladiators and Roman *vir* faced similar gendered expectations and equally similar accusations when they failed to adhere to these norms. Additionally, the evidence to suggest that gladiators were sexually deviant and transgressive leaves much to be desired due to the alternate conclusions that

can be reached using the same evidence. Finally, the tendency of ancient and modern authors to sexualize representations of gladiators appears to fail to consider other explanations such as the apotropaic nature of gladiatorial imagery as demonstrated by Sheppard, which will be discussed further in Chapter Three. Therefore, these gendered aspects of *infamia* and the treatment of gladiators as sexualized individuals not only contributes to the complex relationship between gladiators and *infamia*, but also demonstrates the contradictory nature of the current scholarship on the subject.

Chapter Three: Agency and Pompeian Gladiators

Introduction

When researching gladiators and their position in society during the Roman Empire, the constant contradictory nature of their status quickly becomes clear. Gladiators seemingly have a dual status both as *infames* and as cultural icons. The fact that they could hold these two positions simultaneously creates a conundrum and a massive contradiction in our modern understanding of Roman gladiators. Gladiators are generally presented to modern audiences in one of two ways. First, there is the tendency to focus on the *infamia* of gladiators and the legal and social restrictions they faced because of this legal concept. This style of presentation also generally focuses on the negatives of gladiatorial combat and views gladiators in terms of their marginalization due to *infamia*.¹⁸⁸

The second manner of presentation of gladiators is the actual gladiatorial combat and its popularity in Roman society. This presentation emphasizes the “positive” qualities of gladiators in the arena and can appear as an attempt to “rationalize” this blood sport based on traits and customs in Roman society. On occasion the horrors of the arena are discussed, but recently there has been a push to view gladiators as “ancient athletes” and to correlate the popularity of gladiatorial combat to our modern fascination with violent “spectacles” such as boxing or even ice hockey. Scholars like Fagan, Futrell, and Kyle all fall under this category to varying extents.¹⁸⁹ Other scholars such as Dunkle, and Hopkins attempt to bridge the gap and discuss both within their work, but none clearly attempt to consolidate the two vastly different portrayals of gladiators as both *infames* and athletes at the same time.¹⁹⁰

A narrative of gladiators and their combat in the arena that has yet to be extensively explored is from the position of the gladiators themselves. By doing so,

¹⁸⁸ See, for example, Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” who focuses on what made gladiatorial combat subject to the restrictions and penalties of *infamia*.

¹⁸⁹ Fagan, “Gladiatorial Combat as Alluring Spectacle,” in *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity* ed. Paul Christesen and Donald G. Kyle (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2014); Futrell, *Blood in the Arena*. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*.

¹⁹⁰ Dunkle, *Gladiators*; Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*; Thomas Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators* (London: Routledge, 1992).

modern scholarship can provide voices to a group of individuals that have been extensively marginalized in past scholarship. The problem with the two existing narratives of gladiators as either entirely marginalized and disreputable *infames* or as ancient athletes, or even a mixture of the two is that none of these narratives present the evidence from the viewpoint of the gladiators themselves. Both the idea that gladiators were *infames* or cultural icons, is presented from elite Roman male sources and views them through the lens of spectators. By altering the positionality of our modern understanding of gladiators, a whole new interpretation of the evidence becomes available, which leads to a broader understanding of these complex individuals in Roman society. The method of providing a voice to gladiators in Pompeii, specifically through the usage of graffiti, epigraphy, and physical representations, as opposed to the written work about them, allows for the discussion of new conclusions. The evidence from Pompeii suggests that the existing material culture pertaining to gladiators does not completely reflect the expected narrative that gladiators are *infames* or cultural icons and instead provides a new avenue of interpretation. Their position in society was not restricted to being *infames* or being cultural icons, which reflects their personal agency.

Pompeian Sex Workers and Agency

Levin-Richardson's monograph on sex-workers¹⁹¹ brought forth a new method of viewing marginalized individuals in Roman society. Specifically, Chapter Seven "Female Prostitutes" and an earlier article (which this chapter is based upon) by the same author present Pompeian sex workers in a new light. This method involves considering traditionally marginalized individuals, in this case Pompeian sex workers, as agents who were able to resist against their expected role in society and to view these actions from the lens of the marginalized individual(s) themselves. Levin-Richardson points out in *The Brothel of Pompeii* that "What remains to be done is an in-depth study of the experiences of the female prostitutes themselves: how they represented themselves and their work,

¹⁹¹ Sarah Levin-Richardson, "Female Prostitutes," in *The Brothel of Pompeii: Sex, Class, and Gender at the Margins of Roman Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Sarah Levin-Richardson, "Futata Sum Hic: Female Subjectivity and Agency in Pompeian Sexual Graffiti," *The Classical Journal* 108, no. 3 (February-March 2013): 319-345.

how they interacted with clients and among themselves, and what avenues were available for agency in the face of exploitation.”¹⁹² What also remains to be done is an in-depth analysis of how the same theory and methodology could be applied to gladiators in Pompeii, and how or if Levin-Richardson’s methodology would need to be altered to apply to another group of individuals. Applying the framework and methodology used by Levin-Richardson on their study of sex workers and adjusting it to study gladiators is not too far of a stretch. Gladiators and sex workers have many commonalities including their general marginalization by Roman society, their stigmatization as *infames*, and the disadvantages they faced due to these positions and labels. Furthermore, within Pompeii, they faced similar levels of popularity, both groups were frequently represented in visual depictions throughout the city, and both of their professions were important to the fabric of the city despite the negatives associated with such work.

Levin-Richardson first establishes the idea that the graffiti within the Brothel (VII.12.18–20) could have been written and read by women authors.¹⁹³ By doing so, the possible implications and meanings of the graffiti expands to include questions and answers about the Roman world that could not be considered under the assumption of male-only authorship.¹⁹⁴ With the potential of women writing and reading graffiti in the Brothel, Levin-Richardson also suggests the possibility that they could experience agency and subjectivity. Their definition of agency in its most simple form comes down to “women’s actions” where the emphasis on subjectivity arises from a “women’s conceptualization of themselves”.¹⁹⁵ They establish the ways that women could achieve this within the Brothel as writing or reading the graffiti aloud. The graffiti itself is also broken down into two types, those that were of a boastful nature regarding themselves, and those that defamed, or mocked their male clients.¹⁹⁶ These actions demonstrate their subjectivity and repositioned their marginalization.

First by writing graffiti, women in the Brothel could reposition themselves as active individuals within the sexual encounter which defied traditional understandings of

¹⁹² Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii*, 111.

¹⁹³ Levin-Richardson, “*Futata Sum Hic*,” 321.

¹⁹⁴ Levin-Richardson, “*Futata Sum Hic*,” 341.

¹⁹⁵ Levin-Richardson, “*Futata Sum Hic*,” 327.

¹⁹⁶ Levin-Richardson, “*Futata Sum Hic*,” 341.

Roman gender roles. For example, graffiti such as “Fortunata sucks” (*Fortunata fellat*)¹⁹⁷ or “[Bero?]nice sucks” (*[----]nice fellat*)¹⁹⁸ use the active form of the verb *fellare* as opposed to the passive form of the verb *irrumare*.¹⁹⁹ By doing so, the two women demonstrate their active role in fellatio, flipping the traditional gender norms of Roman society. The women are doing the action, as opposed to receiving the action, which is interpreted by Levin-Richardson as claiming their sexual agency and demonstrating their personal subjectivity.²⁰⁰ Women in the Brothel further demonstrate the contestation of their marginalization through other graffiti such as “Mola the fucktress” (Μόλα φουτουτρικς).²⁰¹ This claim again presents the female subject as the active individual in the sexual encounter as opposed to the passive individual as expected by Roman understandings.²⁰² By authoring this type of graffiti *Mola* is indicating her status as a sexual agent and in turn claiming her personal agency and subjectivity.²⁰³

The other method that Levin-Richardson brings forth for women to claim agency and subjectivity is through the defaming of male clients in graffiti. Reading graffiti aloud and positioning the male client as the passive partner who received some form of penetration in the sexual encounter, achieved these goals.²⁰⁴ Although women may not have authored this graffiti, Levin-Richardson suggests that women are still capable of claiming their own sexual agency through reading graffiti which repositioned male clients as the object of sexual intercourse (i.e., the traditional role for female sex workers).²⁰⁵ By mocking and shaming male patrons at the brothel, female sex workers repositioned themselves as dominant and active participants in opposition to their expected roles as the submissive and passive participants.

¹⁹⁷ *CIL* IV 2275; Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii*, 120.

¹⁹⁸ *CIL* IV 2278; Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii*, 120.

¹⁹⁹ *Fellare* = to suck, *irrumare* = “to mouth-fuck”.

²⁰⁰ Levin-Richardson, “Futata Sum Hic,” 328-329; Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii*, 121.

²⁰¹ *CIL* IV 2204; Levin-Richardson, “Futata Sum Hic,” 332-333; Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii*, 121.

²⁰² For Roman expectations of men and women See Chapter Two.

²⁰³ Levin-Richardson, “Futata Sum Hic,” 333.

²⁰⁴ Examples of this include *CIL* IV 2257 “*Fronto Plani lingit cun num*” or *CIL* IV 2254 “*ration mi cum ponis Batacare te pidicaro*”, Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii*, 126.

²⁰⁵ Levin-Richardson, “Futata Sum Hic,” 340-341.

The argument for using Levin-Richardson's work as a departure point to examine gladiators arises from the similarities between sex workers and gladiators. There are two important similarities between these two groups. First, they are both apart of the "big three" groups of *infames* in Roman society. Second, they both hold levels of prominence in Pompeii with frequent representations within the city.²⁰⁶ Both groups faced similar contradictory reception by their contemporaries because they were necessary professions that benefitted society, but also ones that were stigmatized. Sex work itself was legal and filled a demand held by Roman men, whereas gladiators provided public entertainment in addition to political advancement for magistrates, other elected officials, and even the emperor. Within Pompeii itself, both sex work and gladiatorial combat were clearly important to the fabric of society. The construction of a building strictly meant for sex work and the construction of the earliest datable stone amphitheatre are compelling evidence for their popularity in the city.²⁰⁷ However, despite this necessity of both groups of individuals in Pompeii, there appears little if any significant value of their lives according to legal texts and select literary sources. Both faced harsh conditions and were heavily exploited for the benefit of others. Additionally, numerous depictions, both officially commissioned, and "unofficial" graffiti of sex workers and gladiators are scattered around the city to varying degrees. Both groups of individuals are depicted in private houses and bathhouses, in addition to their image on everyday items used by Pompeians, such as lamps and baby bottles.²⁰⁸ A further commonality between the two are the dozens of remaining graffiti likely written by sex workers and gladiators themselves, thanks to the preservation of Pompeii. Therefore, the site provides evidence directly from these marginalized individuals, where other locations do not and allows for an examination of evidence directly from the individuals in question. Furthermore, the justification for using graffiti as evidence for the agency and subjectivity of gladiators is that most of the evidence discussing them and their position in society comes from elite

²⁰⁶ The other being actors. There remain other groups of people who could be labeled as an *infamis*, such as deserters in the army, or an elected official who took a bribe. (See Chapter One). Actors, gladiators, and sex workers were automatically *infames* due to their profession and these groups were *infames* as a whole, whereas only elected officials who took bribes were *infames* not every elected official. Therefore, these three groups account for the majority of *infames* in Roman society.

²⁰⁷ Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii*, 24-25; Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 72.

²⁰⁸ Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking*, 220; Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 7.

Roman male authors. Graffiti, even if authorship cannot be entirely certain, provides the most reliable insight into the personal views and opinions of gladiators about themselves. The usage of graffiti written by gladiators offers direct evidence from the group in question as opposed to understanding them through the lens of elite individuals in Roman society.

Despite these vital similarities between sex workers and gladiators, I need to address a few key differences between the two groups. These differences do not allow for a complete application of the definitions, framework, or criteria used by Levin-Richardson regarding sex workers to be applied without alteration to gladiators. First, their gender creates differences of how *infamia* applied to each group and gender also impacted their reception by society. As most sex workers were women and most gladiators were men, *infamia* and its implications would have impacted each group differently, as certain aspects of *infamia* affected men, but not women.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, society imposed varying expectations on women and men that depended largely on their gender. Second, gladiators arguably had a profession that was intended for a broader audience and was much more public than the profession of sex work. A public and open admiration for gladiatorial combat was considerably more appropriate for a larger group of people than it was for sex work. That is not to say that sex work was entirely exiled to the shadows of society, but Levin-Richardson largely focuses on evidence from the Purpose-Built Brothel in Pompeii.²¹⁰ This building itself limits the publicity of the profession, as does Levin-Richardson's dismissal of female clients using the services provided by the Brothel. Gladiators on the other hand, were publicly viewed and *munera* were attended by many members of society, including men, women, children, religious officials, and the imperial family, without shame.²¹¹ Finally, the third significant

²⁰⁹ This comes down to political implications of *infamia* such as the restriction of being a magistrate. Women, regardless of their status were unable to be elected as a magistrate, therefore the prohibition of *infames* being elected as a magistrate was already prohibited to women regardless of their occupation as a sex worker.

²¹⁰ There are graffiti in Pompeii that sells or advertises sex from outside of the Brothel, which is similar to the advertisements for gladiators. The difference lies in the public versus private nature of the performance. Gladiatorial combat was designed to be a public spectacle which was not the case with sex work.

²¹¹ The seating area of the amphitheatre was divided into sections based on standing in society. For example, women were relegated to the top seating (i.e., the furthest away from the arena), but religious officials, including the Vestal Virgins were seated near the arena floor. (Futrell, *Blood in the Arena*, 164; Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 103.) There is some evidence to suggest that those who became

difference is the result of this publicity that gladiators had which allowed for more avenues to achieve agency than was available to sex workers in the Purpose-Built Brothel.

The result of these differences between sex workers and gladiators in Pompeii requires the alteration of the definitions, framework, and criteria established by Levin-Richardson to better suit an analysis of gladiators in Pompeii. The definition provided for agency, and subjectivity as contesting their expected role and the ability to reinscribe their marginalization through their actions, largely holds true for an analysis of gladiators in Pompeii.²¹² Of course the definitions of “women’s actions” or “women’s conceptualization of themselves” will need to be adjusted to apply to male gladiators and will henceforth be defined as “the actions of a gladiator” and “how gladiators viewed themselves and their profession.” I will also establish their marginalization and expected roles as gladiators. It cannot be argued that they resisted their expected roles and contested their marginalization without a clear understanding of what they were resisting and contesting. The important addition to Levin-Richardson's framework and established criteria is due to the key differences between sex workers and gladiators. The analysis of gladiators is not restricted to graffiti in a specific building in Pompeii. Instead, graffiti from the House of the Gladiators and the Gladiator Barracks, as well as the Amphitheatre, will be considered as potential locations for gladiator-authored graffiti. This will be further supplemented by graffiti from outside of these buildings, epigraphy, and physical representations from Pompeii. The most significant addition to Levin-Richardson's framework will be the consideration of the actions of gladiators as a potential avenue for agency. This is separate from the action of authoring graffiti, and instead considers the actions of gladiators in and outside of the arena as a means of contesting their expected role and repositioning themselves as marginalized individuals.

One does need to consider the reality that the actions of gladiators in and outside of the arena were not always reported by gladiators themselves. Moreover, one cannot

“obsessed” with gladiators and gladiatorial combat were frowned upon and chastised by their contemporaries, but all members of society were able to openly enjoy a day at the arena with appropriate enthusiasm, the same for which could not be said about the Purpose-Built Brothel.

²¹² Levin-Richardson, “*Futata Sum Hic*,” 319.

say with complete certainty that the claims written on funerary monuments, for example, are accurate. I argue, however, that this is of secondary importance. For example, each claim written with the Purpose-Built Brothel about a specific individual performing or receiving a specific sexual act will never be able to be confirmed with complete certainty, but that does not undercut the potential for agency in writing and reading these claims, as established by Levin-Richardson. Therefore, the legitimacy of the claims made by gladiators is less significant than the deliberate action taken by gladiators to inscribe such an accomplishment about themselves. Additionally, evidence from street advertisements does come with a stronger sense of legitimacy. Official scribes, for example, produced these advertisements, and subsequently, remain a step away from gladiators directly. However, I argue that advertisements and other written graffiti that provide evidence for the successfulness and victory associated with a gladiator still provide evidence of agency by the gladiator in question. These street advertisements were meant to be read by passersby and reading that a specific gladiator had achieved such a victory repositioned their marginalization by demonstrating traditional traits that were deemed incompatible with marginalized gladiators.

Another significant difference between the criteria of agency applied to sex workers that will need to be adjusted for gladiators is the idea of sexual agency. Gladiators were in some cases seen as sexual objects, often portrayed by their contemporaries as the objects of desire by elite Roman women, but this was not the primary “purpose” they served in Roman society.²¹³ Gladiators were not subjected to the same expected gender roles as female sex workers were in the Brothel. Women in a brothel were largely considered to be sexual objects and their intentional claim of being sexual subjects as opposed to sexual objects is logical as a means of agency for sex workers. This was not the case with gladiators, however, and will need to be adjusted accordingly. In the arena, gladiators were seen as objects of entertainment with no rights or protection from what happened to their person. The potential to view gladiators as subjects of entertainment (as following the framework of Levin-Richardson) then must be considered, through their actions within the arena. Furthermore, if gladiators were *infames* in the arena, any action

²¹³ See Chapter Two.

taken by a gladiator that displayed qualities in opposition to expected roles of *infames* or suggested the lack of *infamia*, should be considered as agency.

***Infamia*, Marginalization, and Exploitation**

The investigation into the agency of a group of individuals may not be as impactful if the group was not in some form marginalized and exploited by society. The significance of viewing the agency of elite Roman citizens may not yield the same results compared to the agency of socially and politically stigmatized individuals like *infames*. To gain a better understanding of how gladiators specifically could gain agency over their position in society, the marginalization and exploitation they faced due to *infamia* must first be understood. *Infamia*, which is fully explored in Chapter One, can be defined as “Special disqualifications based on moral grounds from certain public or quasi-public functions.”²¹⁴ This included disqualifications from being elected as a magistrate, sitting on juries, or serving in the Roman army, for example.²¹⁵ *Infamia* also included more social implications such as not being protected from corporal punishment which was a key aspect of being a Roman citizen.²¹⁶ Although this was a political penalty it held significant social consequences as gladiators no longer enjoyed the privileges of Roman citizenship upon being labeled *infames*. The fact that gladiators and other *infames* were allowed to be beaten equated them with the lowest of the low in society including slaves and non-citizens. Furthermore, the idea that gladiators sold their bodies for the entertainment and pleasure of others endangered the ability of elite Roman males to rule. An excess of pleasure (which could be created by a love of the arena, for example), indicated a lack of self-control in an individual, this in turn made individuals ineligible to rule over others.²¹⁷ This Roman understanding of an excess of pleasure and an inability to govern fed into ideas of gladiators, and other *infames* as being untrustworthy and threatening to society, hence their subsequent marginalization and stigmatization.

²¹⁴ Greenidge, *Infamia*, 8.

²¹⁵ See Chapter One.

²¹⁶ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions”, 73.

²¹⁷ Women and slaves for example were considered to lack self-control, which demonstrates why they needed to be governed by others in society. Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions”, 68.

However, the marginalization of gladiators by society did not prevent this group of individuals from being exploited. Even if an excess of pleasure was a threat to the ruling class, gladiatorial combat and *munera* were abundant by the early Empire.²¹⁸ Gladiators who were forced to participate in the arena were exploited physically, mentally, and emotionally.²¹⁹ They risked death in the arena or from wounds received during combat which could have impacted them mentally and emotionally, not just physically. Furthermore, the treatment that gladiators faced due to *infamia*, and its penalties is another method of the exploitation of these individuals. It seems society as a whole and individuals (non-*infames* specifically) could profit and benefit off the entertainment value associated with these individuals, but the question remains whether or not this trickled down and actually benefitted or profited individual gladiators. If this relationship was not a symbiotic one, it indicates a further method of exploitation that these individuals faced at the hands of society. However, as seen when viewing this evidence from the perspective of agency, these individuals may not have profited per-se from their popularity in society, but there were means available for these individuals to reclaim some sense of the rights and community that they lost due to their status as *infames* within the barracks. Yet, this only furthers the contradictory nature of gladiators and other *infames*.

Avenues for Agency

The evidence to suggest that gladiators gained agency over their marginalized position falls into two categories. The first category comprises evidence that gladiators produced themselves such as graffiti and their actions in and outside of the arena. The second category provides evidence for the agency of gladiators through the usage of their image, names, and victories that were either produced by unknown individuals or by non-gladiators. The first category can be further broken down into four distinct types of graffiti found within the House of the Gladiators, the Barracks, and the Amphitheatre in Pompeii, in addition to the actions taken by gladiators in and out of the arena. These

²¹⁸ The potential reasons for this will be further discussed in Chapter Four.

²¹⁹ For those who volunteered for the arena, see Chapter One.

examples also provide direct insight into the subjectivity of gladiators. The second category is further broken down into graffiti, epigraphy (comprising of funerary monuments and advertisements), and physical depictions, both private and public.²²⁰ This second category is just as important to the discussion of gladiators and their agency in Pompeii as it provides information on how society benefited from the exploitation of gladiators and the usage of their imagery despite their marginalized position. This alludes to the contradictory nature of gladiators being considered *infamia* ridden individuals and “ancient celebrity athletes” simultaneously, which will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Graffiti Authored by Gladiators

The graffiti found within buildings associated with gladiators in Pompeii hold much importance in understanding the agency of gladiators. Buildings like the Amphitheatre (II.6), the House of the Gladiators (V.5.3) and the Gladiatorial Barracks (VIII.7.16) are three key locations in the city that are directly associated with gladiators. The graffiti and other evidence that is found within these buildings are of particular importance as they were likely to be directly associated with gladiators. The context and content of the graffiti provides assurance of the authorship and provides direct insight into the subjectivity and agency of gladiators. Within the category of graffiti written by gladiators there are four distinct types that can be identified. These four types include identifications, pictorial graffiti, recounting wins, and those of a personally boastful nature. Each distinct type of graffiti demonstrates the personal agency of gladiators as they were deliberate actions by gladiators themselves that resisted society’s marginalization of them. Specifically, graffiti that recounts a gladiator's record or those of a personally boastful nature also provide insight into the subjectivity of gladiators and demonstrates how they viewed themselves and their position in Roman society. The conclusions and insight that can be gained from this type of graffiti suggests that gladiators had the ability to reinscribe their position in society through the authorship of

²²⁰ All sources for this analysis are compiled in the Appendix. See page 125.

this graffiti, and that gladiators did not necessarily see themselves as the heavily marginalized individuals that elite Roman authors and *infamia* would lead us to believe.

Identifications

A significant social consequence of *infamia* included the loss of personal identity and the exclusion from societal groups in Rome. Any former sense of belonging those gladiators had prior to the entrance into the arena was stripped from them, or in the case of slaves and foreigners, this sense of status and belonging was already lacking. In the barracks, however, extant graffiti suggests that gladiators resisted this marginalization through the writing of their names and by indicating the type of gladiator that they belonged to.²²¹ Examples of these include “Celadus, Thracian gladiator”, “Masuetus Provocator”, or “Crescens the Retiarius”.²²² This type of graffiti indicates a form of agency for gladiators as it indicates a sense of belonging and pride associated with their specific type of gladiator. Not only did they wish to write their names, but they wished to include what type of gladiator they fought as, arguably making this as important to their identity as their own names. Furthermore, within the barracks, gladiators were grouped with their specific type and lived, trained, slept, and ate with these individuals. This sense of belonging and identity imitates the social groupings that is seen within Roman society. Since *infamia* was intended to strip these individuals of their personal identity and removed them from belonging to “proper society” this claim to identity within the barracks repositions their marginalization. Additionally, it provides insight into their subjectivity as it showcases how these individuals came to view themselves as belonging to a new identity even after being robbed of their old one. It would also appear that a gladiator could feel a sense of belonging within “society” and a social group even if only within the confines and smaller scale of the barracks.

²²¹ Although other individuals likely would have had access to the barracks, such as attendants, trainers, medical personnel and perhaps even visitors, the main group of people that would have been in the barracks the most often were gladiators, increasing the likelihood of their ability to author these graffiti. Additionally, this type of identification graffiti would also support the idea that gladiators authored this graffiti as they are identifying themselves as a specific type of gladiator within the writing.

²²² *CIL* IV 4342/ *ILS* 5142a/ *EDR*175482; *CIL* IV 2483/ *EDR*151789; *CIL* IV 4353/ *ILS* 5142e. See Appendix. (All translations are provided by Alison E. Cooley, unless otherwise stated.)

A sub-category of this type of graffiti, is when only names are written, such as “Antonius”, “Dasius”, “Felix” or “Alexandros”.²²³ The first three examples here, written in Latin may demonstrate a method gladiators could use to reclaim their own identity in the arena. By writing their names they make themselves an independent individual from all other gladiators in the barracks or amphitheatre. The final example of Alexandros, originally written in Greek “Ἀλέξανδρος” provides a new level to this claim in identity. By writing their name in Greek the individual is not only reclaiming their name, but their former identity of Greek origin prior to their entrance into the barracks. This graffiti also indicates their subjectivity by demonstrating that they conceptualize themselves still as a Greek individual even if they are a Roman gladiator. By reclaiming their identities after the impacts of *infamia*, whether this is regarding their Greek origins or by creating a new sense of belonging within the barracks, this action demonstrates a form of agency that these individuals were able to carve out under the confines of *infamia* and their marginalization.

Pictorial Graffiti

Like identity graffiti, pictorial graffiti found within the barracks and the amphitheatre, demonstrates another avenue of agency for gladiators through the claiming of identity which was lost upon becoming an *infames*. Numerous pictorial graffiti found within these contexts are similar in nature, such as etchings of a shield or a helmet, which are common enough that a specific type of gladiator is not identified.²²⁴ Other examples, such as the drawing of a net, identify the author as a *retiarius*, as *retarii* are the only type of gladiators to use this type of weaponry.²²⁵ This type of graffiti is in line with identity graffiti but differs in that the author may not have had to be literate or able to write.²²⁶

²²³ *CIL* IV 2424/ *EDR*166750; *CIL* IV 2429/ *EDR*167049; *CIL* IV 2427/ *EDR*166751; *CIL* IV 2432/ *EDR*167575. See Appendix.

²²⁴ See also *CIL* IV 8573/ *EDR*167471; *CIL* IV 8576/ *EDR*167661; *EDR*167776. See Appendix.

²²⁵ *EDR*168080. See Appendix.

²²⁶ Some estimates for Roman literacy during the late Republic and Early Empire have been stated as 20-30% for men (10% for women) according to Harris’ 1991 evaluation (William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991). Although Harris points out that based on their analysis Campania may have been generally more literate than other areas under Rome’s control. (Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 266). Although issues arise when considering a definition of literacy in the Roman world.

Often the debate around authorship of graffiti involves literacy, but in this case, literacy would not be necessary for this authorship. This method provided gladiators with the ability to claim a form of belonging to a specific group or type of gladiator without the limitation of literacy.

Recounting Wins

The three professions associated with *infamia* including sex workers, actors, and gladiators were all considered inherently shameful due to their status as *infames*. The idea that they sold their bodies for the enjoyment of others voided them of any honour or *dignitas*. They lost political and social rights due to the stripping of their status as citizens and were equated to lowly status individuals like slaves due to their lack of protection from corporal punishment. *Infames* were denied the protection, status, and honour associated with Roman citizenship which points to their marginalized status in society and their inherent shamefulness. However, the shamefulness that was incurred by their status is not reflected in the graffiti written by gladiators. Instead, the third type of graffiti indicates a sense of pride and accomplishment displayed by gladiators in the arena. Examples such as “Celadus, belonging to Octavus, fought 3, won 3”²²⁷ or “28 July, Florus won at Nuceria; 15 August, won at Herculaneum.”²²⁸ These examples, show how gladiators inscribed their success on the walls of the barracks for its inhabitants to see.²²⁹ Those who inscribed their records in the arena were proud of their accomplishments and wished to leave that information for other people to read. If their record in the arena was

Literacy in a modern sense may not perfectly align with should be considered literacy in the Roman Republic and Empire. Additionally, pictorial graffiti, as mentioned here, may still have been an adequate form of communication among people even if it does not align with our modern understanding of literacy.

²²⁷ *CIL* IV 4297. See Appendix.

²²⁸ *CIL* IV 4299. See Appendix.

²²⁹ The main inhabitants of the barracks were gladiators, but their trainers, and the *lanista* may have also lived there. The gladiator barracks were also not completely isolated from the rest of Pompeian society. As seen in the *Apologia*, Apuleius discusses how his former ward spent too much time in the local *ludus* watching and studying the gladiators (Michael Carter, “Armorum Studium: Gladitorial Training and the Gladiatorial Ludus,” *Bulletin - Institute of Classical Studies* 61, no. 1 (2018): 119), indicating it was possible for other people to visit the barracks. Additionally, on occasion the wives and family of gladiators may have also inhabited the rooms of the barracks. (Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 44). However, like the Brothel, the only inhabitants and people that lived there were either sex workers, gladiators and those who were in managed the building and the people there, while others may have had occasional or temporary access to the area, they were not the main inhabitants.

not something to be proud of, it seems unlikely that they would inscribe it for prosperity's sake. Therefore, the conclusion can be made that gladiators were proud and wished others to know about their success in the arena, it does not appear that they were ashamed about their careers. The literary sources, specifically the lack of rights and social standing associated with *infamia*, would suggest that gladiators had nothing or little to be proud of. The remaining graffiti does not align with the social stigmatization of gladiators and their status as *infames*.

Personally Boastful in Nature

The last type of graffiti authored by gladiators are those that discuss personally boastful epithets that are often of a sexual nature. For example, the same Celadus from the House of the Gladiators wrote “The girls’ idol, Celadus the Thracian gladiator”²³⁰ and in another refers to himself as the “Girls’ heart throb”²³¹. Additionally, from the House of the Gladiators a *retiarius* named Crescens describes himself as “Crescens the net-fighter, doctor to nighttime girls, morning girls, and all the rest.”²³² These boastful epithets of Celadus and Crescens shed light into the subjectivity of gladiators. While these claims are not necessarily accurate representations, they nevertheless resist how select literary sources represent gladiators to their audiences. Celadus and Crescens are portraying themselves as desirable to women which lies in opposition to literary portrayals of gladiators as lowly *infamia* ridden individuals. Furthermore, the boastful nature of their remarks indicates a level of humor among gladiators in the barracks and perhaps some overconfident self-perception. Similarly, to the type of graffiti that identified gladiators as belonging to a specific type, these boastful epithets also indicate a sense of pride in their profession. The legal aspects of *infamia* in addition to the social stigmatization of the label, do not indicate that pride or self-confidence, would be aligned with these professions. Yet, the remarks made by gladiators do not display a sense of shamefulness as could be expected. Which leads to the conclusion that *infamia* and the stigmatization

²³⁰ *CIL* IV 4345/ *ILS* 5142b. See Appendix.

²³¹ *CIL* IV 4342/ *ILS* 5142a. See Appendix.

²³² *CIL* IV 4353/ *ILS* 5142e. This is also sometimes translated as “Crescens the Retiarius, the netter of girls by night.” (Wiedemann, p. 26). See Appendix.

associated with it did not heavily impact the subjectivity and personal perception that gladiators had of themselves, despite what literary sources would suggest.

Actions of Gladiators

The idea that the individual actions of gladiators could provide evidence for agency or be used to provide insight into their personal subjectivity is difficult to determine. Unlike other examples discussed so far, our knowledge of the specific actions of gladiators are not written by gladiators themselves and instead are filtered through the opinions and minds of Roman authors. Additionally, it is difficult to evaluate the authenticity of the specific stories being told as there may be other intentions of the accounts. For example, Seneca discusses two gladiators who take their own lives in protest prior to their entrance into the arena but does so in the context of a discussion about “burst[ing] the bonds of human servitude.”²³³ Or in Cicero’s *Tusculan Disputations* 2.41 gladiators are described as “ruined men or barbarians” on the one hand, but also appear to be admired for their bravery and martial skill. This opinion and description of gladiators and their martial ability also need to be taken within the context of Cicero’s intentions for writing this work. Therefore, any conclusion regarding the agency or subjectivity of gladiators and their personal actions should be considered with some apprehension. Furthermore, the intention behind the actions of gladiators that are reported will always be unknown. This raises the question of whether intention has to be established to justify evidence of agency and subjectivity. Using the actions of gladiators as evidence for agency and personal subjectivity requires extensive attention and research in the future. For this study, it provides examples of potential areas that require further study and suggests avenues of agency that may not have been available for other groups of *infames* such as sex workers.

²³³ Seneca the Younger, *Epistles*, 70.19.

Taking Their Own Lives

Evidence for gladiators taking their own lives prior to their entrance into the arena is provided by Seneca in his *Moral Letters*. The two separate examples potentially demonstrate the deliberate actions of individual gladiators to protest against gladiatorial combat and the arena. By choosing to take their own lives, these individuals must have considered death to be a more preferable outcome than life in the barracks and arena. Therefore, it can likely be determined that these individuals were not volunteers to the arena if they chose drastic measures to prevent themselves from having to engage in combat. What remains unclear is the influence that Seneca's original argument had on the retelling of these events. Furthermore, if Seneca is taken at his word, it is still greatly uncertain if these individuals were acting with intention and taking a stand against what they must have considered to be the cruelty of Roman spectacle. Did these individuals intentionally take their own lives because of fear of the arena, or to protest Roman blood sport, to name a few.²³⁴ Obviously, the actions of these two gladiators were intentional in nature, but whether they were intended as I have suggested is undeterminable. The actual text provided by Seneca does not provide much clarity on these questions.

For example, there was lately in a training-school for wild-beast gladiators a German, who was making ready for the morning exhibition; he withdrew in order to relieve himself, – the only thing which he was allowed to do in secret and without the presence of a guard. While so engaged, he seized the stick of wood, tipped with a sponge, which was devoted to the vilest uses, and stuffed it, just as it was, down his throat; thus he blocked up his windpipe, and choked the breath from his body.²³⁵

Lately a gladiator, who had been sent forth to the morning exhibition, was being conveyed in a cart along with the other prisoners; nodding as if he were heavy with sleep, he let his head fall over so far that it was caught in the spokes; then he kept his body in position long enough to break his neck by the revolution of the wheel. So he made his escape by means of the very wagon which was carrying him to his punishment.²³⁶

²³⁴ Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 86-87; "8. Seneca's Gladiators." *Sport, ethics and philosophy* 4, no. 2 (2010): 210.

²³⁵ Seneca the Younger, *Epistles*, 70.19-21.

²³⁶ Seneca the Younger, *Epistles*, 70.23.

As opposed to other evidence discussed so far, these particular actions do demonstrate the agency of these individuals, but not necessarily in a positive manner as seen so far. If we define agency as the actions of gladiators, then taking their own lives, could be argued to be the most definitive example of agency yet discussed. The significant problem that remains is the method in which we receive this example of agency and if elite Roman male authors can provide agency to gladiators through their writings. When considering the subjectivity of these individuals who chose to take their own lives instead of fighting in the arena, it appears to suggest there was not a sense of pride or any positive feelings associated with their position. If these individuals chose death over a life in the barracks and the arena, it can be assumed that they did not think highly of themselves as other gladiators did, nor do they seem to have had any optimism for their future. Furthermore, the frequency of situations like these is also difficult to understand. While there are plenty of examples with the barracks and amphitheatre that demonstrate some gladiators had positive conceptualizations of themselves despite *infamia*, these two examples clearly demonstrate the opposite, and it remains unknown how often drastic actions like these may have taken place.

Martial Admiration

The evidence to suggest admiration of gladiators by Roman authors is seemingly as frequent as those shaming gladiators for their marginalization and stigmatization.²³⁷ Examples of this are provided from Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* or Pliny the Younger's *Panegyricus*. Like Cicero, Pliny describes gladiators as "criminals and slaves" but also admires their ability to "inspire [others] to face honourable wounds and look scorn on death."²³⁸ Despite their associations as barbarians, criminals, and slaves, these individuals could still have redeeming qualities according to Cicero and Pliny, for example. If gladiators could demonstrate attributes that were desirable in non-*infames* then this could indicate agency of gladiators on the one hand, but also support the seemingly positive subjectivity seen in other examples of evidence. Since gladiators were

²³⁷ This contradictory nature will be further discussed in the Chapter Four.

²³⁸ Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*, 33.1.

marginalized and stigmatized due to *infamia*, and a significant impact of *infamia* was being seen as lacking in all redeeming moral qualities, any action by gladiators to dispute this is indicative of agency. Specifically, regarding martial admiration, the intention behind gladiators who demonstrated bravery and honour in the arena is of lesser importance. If Roman authors could see these admirable traits in gladiators whether intentional or not, is secondary to the fact that despite the implications of *infamia*, gladiators could still demonstrate martial skill. The fact that gladiators could and did demonstrate these traits, indicates agency over their marginalization and stigmatization due to *infamia*. Furthermore, the recognition of martial skill by gladiators may also provide insight into the subjectivity of gladiators. If gladiators were acknowledged for displaying these qualities in the arena, this may suggest why other areas of evidence support a positive personal conceptualization of themselves. Although, the intent of Cicero's and Pliny's writings may have impacted the descriptions of these gladiators they still support the ability of gladiators to demonstrate traits that were seen in opposition to their profession. This indicates the ability of gladiators to achieve agency over themselves by repositioning their marginalization and provides us with evidence to understand the subjectivity of these individuals.

Graffiti From a Non-Gladiatorial Context

Graffiti pertaining to gladiators are not restricted to buildings directly associated with them in Pompeii, like the amphitheatre and the barracks. The format of the graffiti is largely identical to that found within gladiatorial contexts, including images depicting gladiators, recounting wins, and identifications. The difference lies in the level of certainty regarding the authorship of the writing. Graffiti found within the amphitheatre complex or the House of the Gladiators (V.5.3), for example, are very likely to have been authored by gladiators who inhabited these buildings.²³⁹ On the other hand, graffiti found in contexts not directly related to gladiators can presumably be attributed to other individuals. The possibility does remain that graffiti found within the barracks could have

²³⁹ See Appendix.

been authored by non-gladiators or that graffiti found outside of the barracks could have been written by a gladiator. The barracks and amphitheatre were not entirely restricted to gladiators, and gladiators were not entirely restricted to the barracks and the amphitheatre, however, the likelihood of this is significantly less.

The graffiti found outside of the amphitheatre and the barracks, contributes to the agency of gladiators even though authorship by gladiators is unlikely. These findings also add to the contradictory nature of gladiators and their reception in Pompeii. Agency should not only be considered in terms of gladiator's direct actions that can resist and contest society's marginalization of them. The way gladiators are received and perceived in society should also be considered as means of agency as *infames* and marginalized individuals. If legal and other literary texts suggest that *infamia* inhibited gladiators and relegated them to the margins of society, then any evidence to suggest otherwise contributes to their agency as this also resists and reinscribes their positionality. Furthermore, the way Pompeii specifically received and perceived gladiators also adds to our understanding of the subjectivity of gladiators. If society did not entirely treat gladiators as the literary sources suggests then it may be an explanation as to why gladiators did not exclusively view themselves as highly marginalized *infames*.

For example, the House of Ceius Secundus and Fabia Prima (I.6.15) contains three depictions of gladiatorial combat accompanied with inscriptions that are grouped together. *CIL* IV 8055a-b depicts a victorious Oceanus who defeats Aracintus, while *CIL* IV 8056 to the right depicts Albanus who defeats Severus.²⁴⁰ The significance of these finds lies in the location of the graffiti and the need to inscribe these gladiators within a private house. Additionally, the author of these graffiti is evidently knowledgeable about these specific gladiators to not only inscribe their names and draw them, but to know who won and lost the battle, their records, and that they held free status. This knowledge of gladiators by an individual in Pompeii does not completely align with the narrative that gladiators were disreputable individuals without any redeeming qualities. Instead, it more likely suggests a level of popularity within the city.

²⁴⁰ See K.M. Coleman, "A Left-Handed Gladiator at Pompeii," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 114 (1996): 194-196. See Appendix.

Additionally, the public nature of these graffiti, which are located just off the atrium of the house, points to the likelihood that guests could have seen the graffiti when visiting.²⁴¹ This relatively public nature of the graffiti and its context show that having depictions of gladiators within private homes was not frowned upon despite the connotations of *infamia*. Instead, it showcases a further avenue for gladiators in Pompeii as it demonstrates that gladiators were not alone in their ability to resist and reinscribe their perceived marginalization due to *infamia*. This graffiti indicates that the connotations of *infamia* and its impacts seemingly did not prevent individuals from using the names and imagery of gladiators within their homes. Although a graffiti such as this is not as elaborate as other depictions of gladiators that will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs, it nevertheless remained in situ within this house with no attempts to erase it. This suggests that select individual's perceptions of Pompeian gladiators were not entirely negative as literary sources and legal concepts would suggest.

This find in the House of Ceius Secundus and Fabria Prima (I.6.15) is also supported by two additional finds in the House of Plotilla (VIII.3.24). Two sets of images of gladiators are seen near one another as seen in the previous example. Although, names and numbers are not included in this depiction, specific armour identifies two *retiarii* alongside a third unidentifiable gladiator.²⁴² Graffiti such as this supports the conclusion that gladiatorial combat was popular enough in Pompeii and the drawing of their imagery within the contexts of private houses was acceptable at this time. This conclusion contributes to the subjectivity of gladiators as it supports their lack of conceptualizing themselves as lowly *infames* as evidence from other individuals in the city do not emphasize the suggested marginalization of *infames*. Additionally, it furthers the agency of gladiators as it indicates how they were perceived by Pompeian society, which is seemingly in a positive light. Although, this is not the direct actions of a gladiator, the action of inscribing gladiatorial imagery and graffiti throughout Pompeii still resists the marginalization and the negative connotations that *infamia* placed upon these individuals.

²⁴¹ For a further example of public graffiti of this nature see Tomb 14EN located at the Porta Nocera, Pompeii.

²⁴² *CIL* IV 1991/ *EDR*150296. See Appendix. *CIL* IV 1992/*EDR*150297. Both found at House of Plotilla (VIII.3.24). See Appendix.

Epigraphy

Apart from graffiti, there are additional examples of writing found in Pompeii that contribute to the understanding of the agency and subjectivity of gladiators. Epigraphy remains unique from graffiti in this situation because of the formality associated with the former and it can be divided into two types within Pompeii including advertisements and funerary monuments. The category of epigraphy in this study is indirectly associated with gladiators as it discusses them and their profession but was not directly created by them. Instead, in the case of advertisements, professionals were hired to paint official notices on the sides of shop walls, taverns, houses, and other locations across the city. The advertisements discuss upcoming games and which individual is hosting the event. The significance of these notices lies in the sheer frequency of *munera* that were held in Pompeii, and the publicity associated with the host who is named. These notices indicate that gladiatorial combat was frequently shown within the city and many individuals of high social and political standing were responsible for hosting *munera*. This in turn provides insight into the agency of gladiators and how the city and inhabitants of Pompeii perceived gladiatorial combat and those who participated in it. The second type of epigraphy are those examples found on select funerary monuments in Pompeii. These monuments were again commissioned officially, presumably by the deceased persons family or loved ones, and demonstrate how they wished to have the deceased person be remembered for prosperity. By associating individuals of stature with *infames* like gladiators on their funerary monuments there seems to be a disconnect. If literary sources and our understanding of *infamia* hold true, it seems counter-intuitive to be associated with gladiators in any sense, whether that be through an advertisement or through a funerary monument. Yet these many examples, suggest there were not serious social or political repercussions from doing so, in fact the opposite appears to be true.

Advertisements

A further demonstration of the popularity that gladiators received in Pompeii are the numerous advertisements for upcoming *munera* found around the city. These advertisements generally follow the same form and include the number of gladiators that

will be present, who is hosting the *munera*, and the dates of the show. For example, *CIL* IV 7995 reads “20 pairs of gladiators of Decimus Lucretius Satrius Valens, perpetual priest of [[Nero]] Caesar, son of Augustus, and 10 pairs of [gladiators] of Decimus Lucretius Valens, his son, on 28 March. There will be a hunt and awnings.”²⁴³ The locations of these advertisements are not relegated to the areas near the amphitheatre or the barracks, and are found in five regions of Pompeii. The advertisements are frequent enough to identify specific individuals who put on numerous shows including Aulus Suettius Certus, Decimius Lucretetius Satrius Valens, and Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius.²⁴⁴ Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius was so well known as a patron of *munera* that in the *Palaestra* next to the amphitheatre one graffiti reads “Good fortune to Gnaeus Alleius Maius, the leading games-giver.”²⁴⁵ It is important to keep in mind that these three individuals were likely a few among many at Pompeii who were known for their patronage of *munera* and gladiatorial spectacle. These advertisements are what remain at the time of the eruption in 79 CE, and it can only be assumed that many other individuals would have advertised their games in the months, years, and decades prior to the eruption that had since been painted over. Additionally, it is known that certain elected officials were required to host *munera* for the people while in office.²⁴⁶ The reason for this was a way for elected officials to gain popularity and, therefore votes, by providing entertainment and spectacle to the people.²⁴⁷ This fact only further complicates the relationship between gladiators, *infamia*, and their popularity among the people. *Infamia* and the restrictions placed upon *infames*, including their marginalization, would lead audiences to assume that the promotion of marginalized individuals through the sponsoring of games would not be beneficial to the political or social career of an “elite” member of society. *Infamia* and its repercussions would suggest that the association of an

²⁴³ *CIL* IV 7995. See also *CIL* IV 7992, *CIL* IV 3884/ *ILS* 5145. See Appendix.

²⁴⁴ Aulus Suettius Certus was an *aedile* (see *CIL* IV 1189), Decimius Lucretetius Satrius Valens was a priest of Nero and Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius was a priest of Vespasian who later became the *quinquennial duumvir*. (see *CIL* IV 7991). See Appendix.

²⁴⁵ *CIL* IV 7990.

²⁴⁶ Futrell, *Blood in the Arena*, 10; Luciana Jacobelli, “Pompeii and Games,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*, ed. Alison Futrell and Thomas F. Scanlon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 488; Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 182.

²⁴⁷ Futrell, *Blood in the Arena*, 10; the word *munera* is defined as “duties” or “obligations”. These were originally in reference to the duty or obligation to host funeral games for deceased relatives, but later came to be known as the duty or obligation of Roman leaders to their people.

aspiring or rising elected official with marginalized individuals would be harmful to their political aspirations as opposed to a means of securing popular support, which will be further discussed in the following chapter.

This contradiction of non-*infames* benefiting from their association with marginalized gladiators also contributes to their agency. Based on the abundance of advertisements, gladiators were in demand for entertainment purposes in Pompeii and indicate that society's perception of gladiators is not completely in line with literary explanations of *infamia* and its impacts on *infames*. Furthermore, the direct and prideful association of individuals with gladiators also suggests that the association of the two opposite groups with one another was not taboo enough to socially or politically impact the non-*infames*. If anything, this association could benefit these individuals which also repositions the marginalization of gladiators. This evidence leads to the theory that *infamia* and its harmful impacts may not have played out in all areas of the Roman Empire as literary sources tend to suggest. If society clearly enjoyed gladiators and gladiatorial combat to the extent that aspiring and current politicians could use these marginalized people for political and social gain, then a new avenue for agency becomes clear. The fact that hosting *munera* benefited elected officials in Pompeii, among other Roman cities, meant that gladiatorial combat was frequently held within the area. In Pompeii, within one calendar year, 49 days of *munera* were hosted, while another 39 days of games were hosted in nearby towns in the Bay of Naples area.²⁴⁸ This schedule of games in Pompeii provides two opposite insights into the marginalization of gladiators in the city. On the one hand, the clear popularity of *munera* could contribute to the subjectivity of gladiators as the high demand for combat gives the perception that society did not always perceive them to be marginalized individuals. If society enjoyed gladiatorial combat, this, in theory could contribute to gladiator's lack of conceptualizing themselves as *infamia* ridden individuals. However, on the other hand, the demand for *munera* due to the benefit elected officials received for hosting such events, also furthers the exploitation that gladiators received at society's hands. It cannot be overlooked that gladiatorial combat came with extensive dangers, primarily death. While not every

²⁴⁸ Cooley, *Pompeii*, 51. It can also be assumed that gladiators were not restricted to Pompeii and were able to travel from city to city to perform.

gladiator died in the arena or from their wounds, it begs the question if gladiators benefited from the popularity of *munera* as much as elected officials and spectators did. This conundrum is difficult to address, because the popularity of gladiators and their association with elected officials do not entirely reflect the negative impacts and positionality expected of gladiators due to their status as *infames*. However, gladiators could achieve social mobility within the barracks but also if they won their freedom, but it seems unlikely that with the constant threat of death, they benefitted as greatly as those who exploited them.

Funerary Monuments

Non-*infames* and other elite members of society not only benefitted from the exploitation of gladiators in the arena during their lifetimes and political careers, but as seen in the handful of funerary monuments from Pompeii, individuals could also benefit after their death. Funerary monuments are unique in their own way as on occasion they can be classified strictly as epigraphy or as physical representations in this context, or on other occasions examples such tomb HGW17 is a combination of both.²⁴⁹ This medium also differs slightly because individuals who chose to decorate or address their funerary monuments with gladiators made the conscious decision to send the message to people who did not know them during their lifetime and only encountered their grave after the fact, they made the decision to be associated with gladiators to everyone who came after them. They used their association with gladiators as their claim to fame which indicates that this was what they wished to be remembered for.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ See Appendix. For images see <http://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/tombs/tombs%20hgw17.htm> courtesy of *Pompeii in Pictures*.

²⁵⁰ This is also reflected in funerary monuments for retired gladiators that have been found outside of Pompeii. For example, epitaphs for gladiators generally included the number of victories a gladiator achieved in the arena and how many appearances they had made. (Hope, "Fighting for Identity," 103.) Other information often included the names of family members left behind (Hope, "Fighting for Identity," 104.) Hope points out that a common way to commemorate a gladiator on his funerary monument was with the term "*bene merens*" indicating the gladiator was well deserving of this commemoration. (Hope, "Fighting for Identity," 105.) Although, these epitaphs were often erected by surviving family members or fellow gladiators, they still indicate a means of controlling how the deceased individual was to be remembered through their funerary monuments.

Tomb SG6 from Porta Stabia contains an inscription consisting of seven rows which measures over four meters long. The inscription in question discusses various achievements he made during his lifetime including how he contributed to *munera* in Pompeii. When the individual assumed his *toga virilis* he offered a gladiatorial spectacle where 416 gladiators competed. Then on two separate occasions he offered great shows without any burden on the community.²⁵¹ A second funerary monument from Porta Stabia is SG7 which depicts a *munera* in various stages on a relief including the inspection of the arms or the *probatum armorum*, gladiators engaged in combat and a beast hunt or *venatio*.²⁵² Based on the content and dimensions of both SG6 and SG7, it has been theorized that the relief of SG7 would have sat atop SG6 in antiquity. At some point in history the top relief may have broken off resulting in the differing locations and dates of excavation for the two pieces. Regardless of if these two pieces were meant to be separate in antiquity or if they were indeed part of the same monument, the individual(s) in question intentionally chose to decorate and address their funerary monument with gladiators. The conclusions that can be made from this align with those of advertisements. It adds to the understanding that those who associated with *infames* and contributed to the hosting of gladiatorial combat did not receive a negative reputation by association.

However, it does differ slightly from advertisements due to the individuals being deceased at the time of the association. Individuals chose to be associated with gladiators even after death when political leverage or popularity were no longer a benefit or required by the person. Associating with gladiatorial combat and *munera* would not have served this person in the afterlife, yet there remain a handful of examples of these monuments.²⁵³ Therefore, this indicates that the reason for non-*infames* to contribute to *munera* was not only due to public and political support. It appears there must have been

²⁵¹ Massimo Osanna, "Games, Banquets, Handouts, and the Population of Pompeii as Deduced from a New Tomb Inscription," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 31 (2018): 314. For SG6 see Appendix. For images of SG7 see <http://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/tombs/tombs%20stabg7.htm> courtesy of *Pompeii in Pictures*. For images of SG6 see <http://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/tombs/tombs%20stabg6.htm> courtesy of Archaeological Park of Pompeii.

²⁵² Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 95-96. For SG7 see Appendix.

²⁵³ See Tomb VGJ at Porto Vesuvio, Pompeii and Tomb HGW17 at the Herculaneum Gate, Pompeii for reference. See Appendix.

a sense of pride associated with this, if this is how individuals chose to be remembered by all who came after them. Additionally, it further contributes to our understanding of how diverse the imagery of gladiators was in Pompeii, thus contributing to the popularity of the group. Once again, the question that must be raised is if this popularity contributed to the agency of gladiators themselves? While non-*infames* could clearly benefit from the imagery of gladiators, did the usage of their imagery benefit or lessen the burdens of *infamia* on these individuals? On the other hand, it appears that these mentions of supporting gladiatorial combat and the usage of their imagery may reflect a new avenue of exploitation of these individuals that has not been fully considered. If gladiators themselves, did not share in the benefit of using their imagery on funerary monuments then the conclusion must be made that this adds to the exploitation of these individuals. The appropriation of their imagery by other Pompeiians for their own personal benefit may be a more accurate explanation for these monuments and may also carry over to physical representations of gladiators in the city.

Physical Representations

The final category of evidence that can be used to examine agency and gladiators in Pompeii are physical representations. These physical representations potentially provide new insight into the dynamic of gladiators and their position in society. Gladiators are usually presented as either individuals who are burdened with the stigmatization of *infamia*, or as ancient athletes who are admirable for their martial skill and bravery. However, Sheppard has suggested a third aspect.²⁵⁴ When they analyzed the seventeen known wall paintings from Pompeii, Sheppard found that twelve of these depictions were located near entryways or doorways. The frequency of finding images of gladiators located near doorways, led to the suggestion that gladiators may have had a protective function in Pompeii, as an apotropaic image. If this holds true, it could provide significant agency to gladiators. They may not have simply been infamous performers, but may have held a significant level of importance in society, which could support their

²⁵⁴ Joe Sheppard, "Guardians of the threshold: the image of the gladiator and its protective function in Pompeii," *Open Arts Journal*, Issue 10 (2020).

generally positive conceptualization of themselves, seen in evidence authored by gladiators themselves.

However, when viewing this evidence from the perspective of gladiators themselves it begs the question if this protective function affected the impact of *infamia* on these individuals. This may also be a further example of individuals in Pompeii benefitting from the exploitation of gladiators. In this case specifically, it perhaps demonstrates the appropriation of the images of gladiators by Pompeian society for their own means. What is difficult to determine though, is if this appropriation of gladiatorial imagery negatively, positively or did not impact individual gladiators and their marginalization by society due to *infamia*. Evidently, this new aspect of understanding gladiators in Pompeian society as a protective image does indeed give new agency to gladiators as a whole and suggests a further explanation to their popularity and importance in society. However, even if agency and popularity are gained by this group of individuals, that does not overrule the possibility that this can also demonstrate the appropriation of gladiatorial imagery by Pompeii for their own personal benefit. What remains uncertain is the impact this relationship had on gladiators and their stigmatization in society.

Private Houses

The category of private houses in Pompeii will be used quite loosely. Ideas of public vs. private could be discussed extensively on their own, but in this context private is used to denote houses in Pompeii that were not entirely open to all in the city. That is not to say that houses did not receive visitors, guests, or conduct business, it simply references that houses would not have seen the same level of traffic that shops, bathhouses, and taverns likely would have. These private physical representations that depict gladiators are found in ten domestic spaces in Pompeii. Perhaps the most popular example of this is located at the House of Anicetus (I.3.23), which contains three wall paintings of gladiators. The most known painting “The Riot of the Amphitheatre” was on the western wall of the peristyle and depicts the infamous fight between the local

Pompeians and the neighboring Nuceriaans.²⁵⁵ On either side wall of this wall painting were two additional paintings of gladiators, that have since been lost, each depicting one victorious gladiator standing above their defeated opponent.²⁵⁶ This representation is further supported by the example seen at the House of the Priest Amandus (I.7.7) which depicts scenes of gladiatorial combat and possibly beast hunts.²⁵⁷ This fresco measures over two meters long and roughly half a meter high and is located on the right wall of a hallway near the entrance to the house.²⁵⁸ Both of these examples demonstrate the usage of gladiatorial imagery by individuals for personal reasons within their homes. The reasons for this are uncertain but could include personal admiration or interest in scenes depicting gladiators, or as Sheppard discusses, their image may have apotropaic traits. Given the implications of *infamia*, it does seem contradictory that individuals chose to decorate their houses with images of gladiators. It has even been previously suggested that both houses must have been the home to former gladiators due to the content of these physical depictions.²⁵⁹ However, these assumptions do not seem to take into consideration that depictions of gladiators are found in numerous types of buildings in Pompeii including the Suburban Baths and thirteen other buildings in the city. The frequency of these depictions makes it unlikely that each building was inhabited or owned by former gladiators.

Public Buildings

The label “public” in this context refers to buildings that functioned or served many individuals in Pompeian society, such as bathhouses, shops, or bars. There are

²⁵⁵ Sheppard, “Guardians of the threshold,” 121. See Appendix. For image see <https://www.pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R1/1%2003%2023%20p2.htm> courtesy of *Pompeii in Pictures*.

²⁵⁶ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 73.

²⁵⁷ See also House of Loreius Tiburtinus (II.2.2), House of the Red Walls (VIII.5.37), House of Holconius Rufus (VIII.4.4), House of the Sculptor (VIII.7.24), House (IX.9.d). See Appendix. For an image of the House of the Priest Amandus (I.7.7) see

<http://www.pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R1/1%2007%2007.htm> courtesy of *Pompeii in Pictures*.

²⁵⁸ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 73-74.

²⁵⁹ This has also been suggested with the *House of the Red Walls (VIII.5.37)* by August Mau. See George K. Boyce, “Corpus of the Lararia of Pompeii,” *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 14 (1937): 77; Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 81; Sheppard, “Guardians of the threshold,” 121.

eight examples of these depictions located throughout the city, with a cluster found in Regio IX.²⁶⁰ Examples of these depictions are found at the Suburban Baths (VII.16.a), where two registers containing a handful of painted gladiators is located near the entrance hallway. The paintings are poorly preserved with one register only preserving the legs of the gladiators.²⁶¹ A further example excavated in 2019 located in the entryway of a bar (V.8) depicts a victorious gladiator on the left with the defeated gladiator signaling for mercy on the right.²⁶² It can be assumed that these public depictions would have received a larger audience than those located in private houses in Pompeii. Although private spaces in Pompeii were not entirely private, the flow of traffic likely would not have been as great as seen at bars, bathhouses, or shops. Therefore, it becomes clear that publicly displaying images of gladiators in or outside of combat was appropriate within these contexts. The frequency of these depictions does not appear to indicate that the *infamia* inflicted upon these individuals prevented people of Pompeii from adopting and using their images in public displays. Further, this usage seems to elevate the popularity of gladiators within the city and demonstrates a potential further avenue for their agency. Also, considering the suggestions made by Sheppard regarding their protective nature, this provides a new element to our understanding of gladiators in Pompeian society and provides them with additional agency.

Apotropaic Function

Most depictions of gladiators from both private and public locations in Pompeii are situated near entrances and doorways in their respective buildings. This does support Sheppard's proposal that images of gladiators held a protective function in society. If this proposal is supported, it does elevate the popularity and importance of gladiators in

²⁶⁰ See also Thermopolium (I.4.27), Shop (VII.4.26), Thermopolium (VII.5.14), Caupona (IX.3.13), Room and Bar (IX.9.8), Caupona (IX.12.7).

²⁶¹ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 120; Sheppard, "Guardians of the threshold," 85-89. See Appendix. For image see <https://www.pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R7/7%2016%20a%20entrance%20corridor%20and%20vestibule.htm> courtesy of *Pompeii in Pictures*.

²⁶² Sheppard, "Guardians of the threshold," 119. See Appendix. For images see <https://www.pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R5/5%2008%2000%20gladiator.htm> courtesy of Archaeological Park of Pompeii.

Pompeii. It provides a new understanding to their position in society, not just as infamous entertainers, but also as individuals with an apotropaic function. If we consider the subjectivity of individual gladiators, this protective function may have contributed to the way gladiators conceptualized themselves. It may be that this additional feature of their imagery contributed to the positive attitudes that gladiators had about themselves as evidenced in the graffiti they authored. However, the fact the use of the imagery of gladiators needs to be separated from individual gladiators. When considering advertisements and funerary monuments that depict or discuss gladiatorial combat, the benefit of being an individual who funded these games is clear. These individuals could gain political, personal, or economic favour when funding and hosting gladiatorial combat. Certain political positions in society were even required to fund this type of spectacle.²⁶³ Yet the idea of gladiatorial imagery being used for protective purposes was not required by law and could also be considered as an appropriation by other individuals. The nature of this does not appear to benefit individual gladiators or to lessen the burdens of *infamia* that they faced. If individuals in Pompeii benefitted by adopting the imagery of gladiators for apotropaic purposes, it appears to also to be an exploitation of the imagery and identity of gladiators.

Exploitation:

Although the presented evidence paints a picture of the many ways gladiators could have gained agency over themselves and how gladiators may have conceptualized themselves during their time in the arena, this is not to say that *infamia* did not continue to have an impact. The legal restrictions of *infamia* that had social repercussions still impacted gladiators on a day-to-day basis. Even if the evidence suggests that gladiators could reclaim some form of identity within the barracks that mimicked Roman social hierarchies, for example, they were still prohibited from the legal rights granted to Roman citizens, like the ability to be elected as a magistrate. The evidence presented that indicates methods of gaining agency over their positions in society does not overrule

²⁶³ Dio Cassius. *Roman History*, 54.2, 54.17; Futrell, *Blood in the Arena*, 44-45; Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 18.

these impacts of *infamia*. Instead, it provides another method of examining this evidence from the perspectives of gladiators themselves and provides a more diverse understanding of gladiator's marginalization in society. Furthermore, if Sheppard's conclusions regarding the usage of gladiatorial imagery for apotropaic purposes holds true, this on the one hand provides a more dynamic understanding of gladiators and their positionality in society, but on the other hand it could indicate further exploitation. This evidence can suggest that gladiators and their images held important functions in Pompeian society, but this alone does not outweigh *infamia*. The possibility that this use by Pompeii demonstrates an appropriation of gladiatorial imagery and furthers the means of exploitation that these individuals faced at the hands of society.

Conclusion

Building off of the work by Levin-Richardson and sex workers in Pompeii's Purpose-Built Brothel, similar insights concerning gladiators' ability to gain agency over themselves becomes clear. By evaluating specific evidence like graffiti, that was likely authored by gladiators from the Old and New Gladiatorial Barracks in Pompeii, new insight into the personal subjectivity of gladiators becomes clear, as does their ability to gain agency over themselves. Like sex workers in the Brothel, gladiators in the Barracks could use graffiti that they authored to create their own narratives about themselves. This graffiti provides insight into the personal subjectivity of individual gladiators and indicates how they perceived themselves in a society where they faced marginalization and stigmatization because of their profession. Yet, this graffiti does not appear to focus on presenting themselves as individuals burdened with *infamia*, and instead presents themselves in a largely positive light. Accounts of their actions in and out of the arena also contribute to this understanding that gladiators had the ability to demonstrate behaviours and actions that were typically seen as incompatible with their profession, thus providing gladiators with another avenue to gain agency over their status as *infames* in society. Additionally, graffiti, epigraphy and other forms of material culture that featured gladiators and were created by other people in society also contributes to the agency of gladiators as a group, as it demonstrates the importance and popularity that

gladiators had in Pompeii specifically. However, this usage of gladiatorial imagery by Pompeian society also indicates the city's perception of gladiators and their combat, which may also support the conclusions made by the personal graffiti of gladiators that does not present themselves as individuals burdened with *infamia*. This again, highlights the conclusion that *infamia* does not appear to play out in the physical representations of gladiators in the city, nor did it likely impact or concern them in their daily lives. The usage of gladiatorial imagery within private and public spaces and their potential apotropaic function, which Sheppard rightfully suggests, again provides evidence to suggest the agency of gladiators in Pompeii. Although this usage of gladiatorial imagery by other people in society, could potentially suggest an additional form of exploitation faced by gladiators in Pompeii, it nevertheless raises areas of research that can be further explored.

Chapter Four: The Contradictory Nature of Gladiators

Introduction

The past three chapters have alluded that gladiators and their societal positions during the Julio-Claudian period are filled with contradictions. Gladiators appear to be equally established as both individuals who were stigmatized by the burdens of *infamia*, while also being admired for their actions in the arena. Neither understanding of gladiators is more nor less accurate than the other, but the question remains as to how to consolidate both interpretations of these individuals during the Julio-Claudian period. How could these individuals be both infamous and admirable athletes at the same time? Moreover, how did society accept each portrayal of them? Three significant contradictions concerning *infamia* and its impact on gladiators in Pompeii during the early Empire will be discussed. First, I address how secondary scholarship can better address the two conflicting literary representations of gladiators as either *infames* or as admirable individuals. Second, I explore why, and how did individuals profit from gladiators and their imagery without incurring any negative impacts upon themselves. This will include an examination of advertisements, funerary monuments, and other literary examples of individuals profiting from gladiatorial combat through association specifically. Both contradictions are not discussed under the suggestion that *infamia* did not negatively impact the lives of gladiators nor, that it did not affect them as harshly as literary sources suggest. Instead, I intend to suggest that our modern understanding of *infamia* and its impacts on gladiators is more dynamic than it appears. This leads to the third and final contradiction that will be addressed which analyzes the usage of gladiatorial imagery in Pompeii. It is without a doubt that these individuals were impacted by *infamia* both legally and socially in Pompeii, however, there remain numerous examples of individuals using and benefitting from the image of gladiators. This suggests a differentiation between gladiators as individuals and as a group from their imagery which does not appear to garner the same stigmatization as the individual or group did.

Literary Contradictions

When studying gladiators in the Julio-Claudian period the first area of contradiction that becomes clear is the tendency of ancient authors to insult and compliment gladiators simultaneously within their writing. In some cases, such as Cicero or Pliny the Younger, this is done within the same paragraph.²⁶⁴ Not only does this indicate a level of contradiction within the opinions of these specific authors, but it also creates confusion for the reader. Did Cicero admire gladiators or did the implications of *infamia* outweigh any redeeming qualities they possessed? Cicero and Pliny the Younger are not the only authors to present a contradictory understanding of gladiators in society, however. Some authors such as Cassius Dio, Tacitus, and Suetonius present conflicting accounts on gladiators as well. These accounts may not be personal opinions of these authors concerning gladiators, but nevertheless demonstrate the variety of sources available, some positive, others negative. The addition of these accounts to the opinions of Cicero and Pliny the Younger, for example, only create further questions that require attention. How can an individual burdened with the stigmatization of *infamia* have any redeeming qualities? Due to their position in society, did this not disallow for any admiration of these individuals? Was it not frowned upon to admire gladiators who embodied the antithesis of desirable Roman traits and characteristics like honour, bravery, and virtue?

The contradictory nature of literary sources concerning gladiators is not limited to ancient authors either. Secondary scholarship appears to present a similar dichotomy of gladiators being *infames* on the one hand, while ancient athletes or quasi-celebrities on the other.²⁶⁵ In other situations secondary scholarship does address this contradiction, but does not delve deeper into the issue, or they choose to take an approach of analyzing subjects adjacent to gladiators themselves such as amphitheatres, arena and crowd

²⁶⁴ Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 2.41; Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*, 33.1.

²⁶⁵ For example, see Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions,;" Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*, and Richlin, "Not Before Homosexuality," for *infamia*. See Kyle, *Spectacles of Death, in Ancient Rome*, and Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena*, for gladiators as athletes/ quasi-celebrities.

dynamics, or origins of the spectacle.²⁶⁶ Although creating or finding a definitive answer to any of the questions I have posed is unlikely, the contradictory nature does require more attention due to the implications this has on our understanding of gladiators in society. The arguments made in the previous chapter for the agency and personal conceptualization of these individuals in Pompeii is affected depending on if gladiators are viewed as *infames*, or as athletes, or as a combination of both. If the evidence of gladiators suggests this combination of two opposite portrayals of these individuals, then secondary scholarship needs to address this dynamic regardless of how confusing and difficult it may be. It only hinders future research to consider gladiators as either exclusively *infames* or ancient athletes. Although it may create difficulties in finding definitive answers or conclusions, it indicates that gladiators and their societal roles were more dynamic than they appear at first glance.

The concept of *infamia* and how it impacted gladiators in Pompeii during this period has been addressed in the first chapter. As has the ability of gladiators to contest their marginalization through ideas of agency and conceptualization of themselves, in the previous chapter. The sources discussed here have been addressed in other contexts, such as the first chapter, but here I intend to use this literary evidence to demonstrate the contradictory nature when viewing gladiators in antiquity. Due to the limited nature of literary sources concerning gladiators, these sources are not directly related to Pompeii but still provide insight into the perspectives, opinions, and legal decisions that relate to gladiators. Therefore, these sources will still be compared with the material evidence found within Pompeii during the Julio-Claudian period. Furthermore, these sources will be used to make suggestions, not conclusions as to why gladiators seemed to exist in a state of contradiction in Roman society. Ancient authors present gladiators in a negative light as marginalized individuals who are inflicted with the negative traits of *infamia*, but there is also a tendency to focus on their lowly status in society, perhaps as a direct comparison to the social status of non-*infames*. However, within the positive or complimentary sources on gladiators, ancient authors present them as being capable or

²⁶⁶ See Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, on amphitheatres Futrell, *Blood in the Arena*, and Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena*, on arena and crowd dynamics. See Dunkle, *Gladiators* and Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, on origins.

displaying positive moral and behavioural qualities, primarily military *virtus* which could be expanded to include traits like bravery and honour. In the case of secondary scholarship, gladiators are portrayed either from the viewpoint of *infamia* or occasionally from a more positive lens including the idea of an ancient “athlete” or as individuals who could display admirable qualities. Although, overwhelmingly, scholarship focuses on topics and ideas that do not place emphasis on gladiators themselves, nor is the evidence considered from the perspectives of gladiators themselves, in turn providing these traditionally marginalized individuals with a voice.

Gladiators as *Infames*

Generally, ancient authors present gladiators as *infames* who lack the desirable traits found in Roman male citizens due to their status. It is not always the case that gladiators are directly labeled an *infamis*, but they all tend to discuss gladiators in terms of what they are lacking. This includes a lack of status or citizenship, lack of non-criminality, bravery, honour, and other moral characteristics. These sources are skewed to a negative light and demonstrate how *infamia* impacted gladiators, especially socially, as it provides insight into how gladiators were viewed by society, rather than the law. It also indicates how Rome “othered” and as a result marginalized gladiators by discussing them in terms of what they lacked compared to elite Roman male citizens or other non-*infames*. Cicero and Pliny the Younger directly refer to this lowly status by providing the labels of “ruined men or barbarians”²⁶⁷ and “criminals and slaves”²⁶⁸ respectively. Where other authors do not directly insult gladiators by labeling them as such, others indirectly allude to the lowly status and stigma surrounding gladiators and the arena. For example, Tacitus writes “As to the origin of Curtius Rufus, whom some have described as the son of a gladiator, I would not promulgate a falsehood and I am too ashamed to investigate the truth.”²⁶⁹ Where Cassius Dio criticizes Commodus for spending too much of his

²⁶⁷ Later in this paragraph Cicero describes one Samnite as a “filthy fellow” (*Samnis, spurcus homo*). Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 2.41. (*gladiatores, aut perditii homines aut barbari, quas plagas perferunt!*)

²⁶⁸ Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*, 33.1. (*cum in servorum etiam noxiorumque corporibus amor laudis et cupido victoriae cerneretur.*)

²⁶⁹ Tacitus, *Annals*, 11.21. (*De origine Curtii Rufi, quem gladiatore genitum quidam prodidere, neque falsa prompserim et vera exsequi pudet.*)

wealth on “wild beasts and his gladiators.”²⁷⁰ Lastly, a further theme of condemning gladiators indirectly is the criticism of any non-*infames* from participating or from spending too much of their time with gladiators or viewing their combat. Cassius Dio once again reprimands Commodus extensively for performing in the arena as a gladiator, where Suetonius and Dio report about a law under Augustus that had to be created to prevent senators and other elite-born individuals from performing as gladiators in the arena.²⁷¹

These examples of the indirect methods that authors used to describe gladiators reiterates the understanding of gladiators as marginalized *infames*. The first examples of direct insults towards gladiators by Cicero and Pliny may be in reference to a specific gladiator or a group, but the method of indirectly insulting gladiators demonstrates the understanding and opinions that society held about gladiators. If Tacitus was too ashamed to investigate whether Curtius Rufus was indeed the son of a gladiator, that indicates the disdain for that type of career and lifestyle. Furthermore, the labeling of these gladiators as “barbarians”, “criminals”, and “slaves” all demonstrate how this group was marginalized and “othered” from the rest of Roman society. Non-citizens, criminals, and slaves all lacked the same rights, freedoms, and protections that Roman citizens enjoyed, once again indicating the separation between the two social groups.²⁷² However, at the same time, the fact that Augustus was even required to create such a law prohibiting senators from performing as gladiators, or that Commodus clearly did participate in the arena, is a direct example of this contradiction. Although the authors discussed here clearly held negative views towards gladiators there are also others who had a desire to be a gladiator despite these negative societal views.

Gladiators Portraying “Military Virtus”

This portrayal of gladiators as *infames* is only further complicated by the compliments given to gladiators with a similar frequency. To compare, Cicero and Pliny

²⁷⁰ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 73.16. See also Seneca, *Epistles*, 87.15.

²⁷¹ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 48.43; Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 35. See page 23 for additional discussion.

²⁷² Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 69.

the Younger both discuss admirable qualities of gladiators within the same paragraphs where they insult this group. Pliny the Younger writes that gladiators could inspire Roman citizens to “face honourable wounds and look scorn on death”,²⁷³ where Cicero compliments gladiators on their ability to display bravery in the face of death, writing that viewing gladiatorial combat was the best way to teach others to endure pain and death honourably.²⁷⁴ Other examples from Suetonius, Valerius Maximus, and Seneca the Younger also indirectly demonstrate the ability of gladiators to display admirable qualities.²⁷⁵ Suetonius and Valerius Maximus in particular both provide insights into the responsibilities awarded to certain gladiators. Suetonius discusses how a certain gladiator named Spiculus had honours bestowed upon him that rivaled other honourable individuals.²⁷⁶ Valerius Maximus on the other hand, discusses how gladiators were used to train soldiers in the Roman army.²⁷⁷ Although none of these examples entirely oppose the concept of *infamia*, nor do they categorically refute the idea that *infamia* existed and impacted the lives of gladiators. However, these positive attributes associated with gladiators do create contradiction. It presents an issue of how could a criminal or slave be someone that could display qualities that Roman citizens should aspire to? *Infamia* did exist and it did indeed prohibit and limit what gladiators were able to do and how they were able to live their lives, yet they appeared to also be able to demonstrate virtues that were aspirational even for the most elite individuals in Rome. Furthermore, according to Edwards, *infamia* and *infames* represented the antithesis of honour and respectability in Roman society, so why were gladiators being praised for these attributes by Pliny the Younger, Cicero, and Seneca the Younger?²⁷⁸

²⁷³ Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*, 33.1. (*sed quod ad pulchra vulnera contemptumque mortis accenderet*.)

²⁷⁴ Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 2.41.

²⁷⁵ Seneca also discusses the decision made by gladiators to take their own lives prior to their entrance into the arena, which he admires due to them choosing their own death. Seneca the Younger, *Epistles*, 70.19-21, 70.23. See Chapter Three.

²⁷⁶ Suetonius, *Nero*, 30. It should be noted here that Nero appears to have had a more accepting view in gladiatorial combat in comparison to other emperors, and this should be considered when viewing this instance. See John. F. Drinkwater, *Nero: Emperor and Court* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 297-298.

²⁷⁷ Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, 2.3.

²⁷⁸ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions,” 67-68. As seen in Chapter One, the freedoms of gladiators while in the barracks has been considered by some scholars (like Kyle and Dunkle) to depend on the individuals social standing prior to their time as a gladiator. Both Kyle and Dunkle suggest that gladiators who were free and volunteers may have had more freedom to come and go from the barracks as they were not slaves.

The legal and social understanding of *infamia* and the expected behaviours and beliefs about *infames* are at a direct contradiction to some of the sources that discuss gladiators and their behaviour. While the motivation for complimenting gladiators should be considered with each individual author, it does not seem to be the case that it was disallowed to compliment them, or there would not be examples of this. This may be a similar case to where Romans could openly discuss non-Roman generals such as Hannibal who displayed admirable qualities.²⁷⁹ However, there were limits to this. It may have been acceptable to compliment individuals like Hannibal because Rome still defeated him in the end. Potentially, this could indicate that certain gladiators, or certain displays of bravery in the arena, could be admired so long as gladiators continued to be “othered” and marginalized legally and socially, as the laws of *infamia* would have assured. The exact impact of each of these traits attributed to gladiators is impossible to determine though. Did *infamia* outweigh all portrayals of admirable qualities in the day to day lives of these individuals or was this a case-by-case basis? Regardless of the implications on the daily lives of gladiators, this dichotomy between the infamous and the admirable create a dynamic that impacts modern understandings of gladiators in society.

Secondary Scholarship

The secondary sources that focus on the *infamia* aspect of gladiators tend to have a legal focus. Authors such as Edwards, Gardner, and Richlin, for example, discuss *infamia* primarily from a legal perspective and how that impacted gladiators and others who were labeled as such.²⁸⁰ Authors such as Welch, Jacobelli, and Fagan, pose questions that are indirectly related to gladiators themselves. Welch concentrates on the

This freedom granted to select gladiators indicates a variation of treatment while in the barracks, but contemporary authors like Cicero, Pliny the Younger or Seneca the Younger do not appear to differentiate between free vs. slave gladiators in their comments.

²⁷⁹ For example, in the *History of Rome*, Livy describes the admirable qualities and impressive accomplishments that Hannibal possessed. He describes the “greatness of his [Hannibal’s] achievements” and considered him “a leader of consummate courage” despite being an enemy of Rome. See Livy, *History of Rome*, 30.28.

²⁸⁰ See Edwards “Unspeakable Professions,”; Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen*; Richlin, “Not Before Homosexuality.”

origins and developments of amphitheatres across the Roman world.²⁸¹ Jacobelli, focuses on cataloguing and categorizing material evidence related to gladiators in Pompeii.²⁸² Whereas Fagan emphasizes the dynamics of the crowd in the arena and how social psychology can aid in that analysis.²⁸³ Many of these authors focus on issues associated with gladiators themselves, such as analyzing the dynamics and origins of gladiatorial combat, and attempting to provide an explanation for this assumed Roman “blood lust”.²⁸⁴ All of these stances are informative, and none are incorrect, however, these sources tend to lack perspectives of gladiators themselves, and they do not directly address the many contradictions that arise when analyzing gladiatorial combat in the early Empire. Kyle’s work on the social status of gladiators comes the closest to addressing these issues, but still leaves room for further analysis.²⁸⁵ The gap that remains in the scholarship is the lack of considering this evidence from the perspective of gladiators themselves. Additionally, the scholarship tends to present both sides of the ancient literary evidence, of gladiators as *infames*, or as admirable individuals, but does not directly consider the impacts of this contradictory portrayal. No author discussed here presents an incorrect stance on this issue, nor is it incorrect to focus on the aspect of *infamia*, for example. However, what does require future scholarly attention is how this dichotomy creates a new, more dynamic understanding of gladiators in society. Furthermore, how did this contradiction impact gladiators directly, and what knowledge could be gained if this evidence is viewed from the perspective of gladiators themselves?

²⁸¹ See Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*.

²⁸² See Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii* and “Pompeii and Games,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*, ed. Alison Futrell and Thomas F. Scanlon 488-497. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

²⁸³ See Fagan *The Lure of the Arena* and “Gladiatorial Combat as Alluring Spectacle,” in *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity* ed. Paul Christesen and Donald G. Kyle 463-477 (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2014).

²⁸⁴ Authors who conduct this type of research include, Futrell, *Blood in the Arena*; Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*; Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators*; and Dunkle, *Gladiators*, to a lesser extent.

²⁸⁵ See Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*.

Profiting From *Infames*

Select literary sources, such as Apuleius' *Apologia*, in addition to the criticism that individuals like Nero and Commodus faced by their contemporaries, indicate that Roman society took issue with individuals who spent too much time enjoying or participating in arena spectacles.²⁸⁶ Individuals like Commodus were criticized because they performed in the arena as a gladiator which would have equated him the lowly status and social stigma that gladiators had. As for individuals like Sicinius Pudens in the *Apologia* criticism largely arises because elite authors viewed this fascination with gladiatorial combat as an overindulgence of pleasure and enjoyment. As Edwards explains, this was seen as a lack a self-control which threatened the ability of elite Roman males to rule.²⁸⁷ Furthermore, the marginalization and subsequent lowly status that gladiators endured under *infamia* would presumably impact those that associated with them. Yet, at the same time, individuals like Julius Caesar, Atticus, and Nero, owned and operated gladiatorial schools without significant social or political repercussions.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Apuleius, *Apologia* 98.7; Carter, "Armorum Studium," 119.

²⁸⁷ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 67-68.

²⁸⁸ There are a few suggestions as to why individuals like Caesar, Nero, and Atticus were "allowed" by society to operate a gladiatorial school. However, the reasons that it was deemed acceptable for them, are not necessarily the same reasons why individuals in Pompeii did, nor is it yet clear what impact location (i.e., Rome vs. Pompeii) had on this acceptability. Additionally, the location of these *ludi*, owned by Caesar and Nero were all located at Capua, near Pompeii. This also raises the possibility of a regional difference. Perhaps since their *ludi* were far enough away from Rome, adding to their ability to be "removed" from the operation, and from the gladiators, this also contributed to the "acceptability" of such actions.

Julius Caesar purchased his *ludus* for his aedileship in 65 BCE with the intention of hosting a *munera* to further his political career. Caesar kept this school throughout his career as praetor and consul (Dunkle, *Gladiators* 38-40; Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena*, 211; Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 19). Atticus' reason for purchasing a gladiatorial *ludus* was not explicitly for political advancement as was the motivation for Caesar. In Cicero's letters to Atticus, Cicero inquires about the state of the troupe but implies that he is only interested in the gladiators to make sure they were performing well (Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 4.8.2). In another instance Cicero inquires on the profit that Atticus is receiving from his gladiators (Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 4.4.a), however, Cicero does not express any disapproval for Atticus' actions or association, perhaps reinforcing the idea that individual could profit off of gladiators without social repercussions even outside of Rome. (Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 39; Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena*, 216. Dunkle also suggests that other upper-class Roman families also owned *ludi* in the Campanian region such as Lentulus Batiatus and C. Aurelius Scaurus whose school was responsible for training Roman army recruits in 105 BCE. Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 38. See also Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, 2.3.

This contradiction is not limited to individuals in Rome and is also reflected in Pompeii during this period.²⁸⁹ Individuals who hosted and funded gladiatorial combat do not appear to have faced any real repercussions for their actions such as “*infamia* by association” or criticism.²⁹⁰ If anything, it appears that these individuals were proud of their contributions to *munera* in Pompeii, going so far as to memorialize their association with gladiators on their funerary monuments.²⁹¹ Additionally, laws were created in Rome that dictated which magistrates were required to host *munera* for the people due to the high demand from society such as the *senatus consultum* that was created after the deadly amphitheatre collapse in 79 CE.²⁹² Although, hosting *munera* was required by law in some instances, it still remains conflicting that individuals who were so closely associated with this infamous profession did not receive any stigma for doing so, which further contributes to the contradiction. Why were these individuals not inflicted with some level of stigmatization or social shunning because of their close association with *infames*?²⁹³ It is logical to assume that since gladiators and other *infames* were so heavily marginalized in society due to their social standing, that any individuals who associated with them, worked with them, or were involved in the production of *munera* would face similar stigmatization. However, in Pompeii, the evidence seems to suggest the opposite, contributing a further avenue of contradiction regarding gladiators in society. However, viewing evidence from Pompeii also brings forth an additional consideration due to its location. Since gladiatorial combat originated in Campania, where the city of Pompeii is

²⁸⁹ Although, numerous graffiti from Pompeii do indicate that specific gladiators who fought in Pompeii belonged to the schools owned by Caesar and Nero.

²⁹⁰ This is not to say that every inhabitant of Pompeii supported the association of non-*infames* with gladiators, there very well may have been outliers to these statements. However, if criticism or “*infamia* by association” was rampant in Pompeian society, the frequency of these examples likely would not have been so prevalent. Furthermore, literary sources and material culture have yet to support the condemnation of those who benefited and profited off gladiatorial combat.

²⁹¹ See HGW17, SG7, VGJ. See Appendix.

²⁹² Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 54.17; Tacitus, *Annals*, 4.63; Futrell, *Blood in the Arena*, 123-124.

²⁹³ Pliny the Younger in a letter to Rosianus Geminus (*Letters*, XXIV) discusses the noblewoman named Ummidia Quadratilla who owned a troupe of pantomime actors. Pliny criticizes her for being a woman of good social standing who chose to be involved with lowly individuals, although he does praise her for shielding her grandson from these pursuits. See David H. Sick, “Ummidia Quadratilla: Cagey Businesswoman or Lazy Pantomime Watcher?” *Classical Antiquity* 18, no. 2 (1999); 336. These comments by Pliny perhaps suggest that owners of gladiators who were more directly involved (as Quadratilla appears to have been) were more likely to be stigmatized than those who remained at arm’s length such as Atticus. Although there is no direct evidence to suggest this yet within Pompeii, Pliny’s comments concerning the ties between Quadratilla and pantomime do not rule out the possibility of such criticism.

located, there remains a possibility that these origins impacted the reception of gladiatorial combat in Pompeii during the Julio-Claudian period.²⁹⁴ Although certain aspects of spectacles and gladiatorial combat were regulated in Rome and potentially implemented in Pompeii legally, that does not rule out that Pompeii had its own cultural traditions that remained in effect socially and in practice. Due to the origins of gladiatorial combat in the area, even if they were originally centered on funerary games, this may suggest that Pompeii received, viewed, and accepted gladiators and those associated with them more openly than elsewhere during this period.²⁹⁵ This could potentially explain the contradictory nature between what literary sources present in regard to *infamia* and gladiators, compared to what the material culture suggests about *infamia* within Pompeii.

Requirements For Hosting *Munera*

Originally in the early Republic, gladiatorial combat was used as a display at funerals to honour the deceased person's life.²⁹⁶ However, by the time of the late Republic and the early Empire, gladiatorial combat transitioned towards public spectacle with individuals competing to fund more lavish entertainments for the public.²⁹⁷ As displays of gladiators transitioned from funerary contexts to public entertainment, Augustus introduced laws to curb the amount of money that was allowed to be spent on these spectacles in addition to how frequently they were allowed to take place.²⁹⁸ Specifically Augustus limited praetors from hosting more than two spectacles while in office and limited the number of gladiators present in Rome to 120.²⁹⁹ These limitations

²⁹⁴ See Chapter One for further discussion.

²⁹⁵ However, without further examinations of if what is seen in Pompeii also played out in other cities during the early empire, this only remains as a possibility at the time, until further research can be conducted.

²⁹⁶ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 5; Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 18.

²⁹⁷ Futrell, *Blood in the Arena*, 31; Welch, *The Roman Amphitheatre*, 18.

²⁹⁸ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 54.2, 54.17.

²⁹⁹ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 54.2, 54.17; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, 52; the limitations of the number of gladiators allowed in Rome at a given time had been restricted in the past. As a result of a significantly large display of gladiators put on by Caesar, Suetonius recounts how other politicians enacted a law to curb this number out of fear of too many armed individuals in the city. "Caesar gave a gladiatorial show besides, but with somewhat fewer pairs of combatants than he had purposed; for the huge band which

and rules did not completely hinder the frequency or lavishness of games in Pompeii though. Evidence from *munera* advertisements indicate that nearly fifty days of games were held in Pompeii in a given year. Moreover, a funerary monument records one particular *munera* that displayed over four hundred gladiators.³⁰⁰ The contradiction that arises here is the apparent frequency and resulting popularity of gladiatorial combat in the Early Empire, despite the infamous status of the individuals who took part. Those that were required to host and fund these events were not lowly status individuals themselves, since they required the political office or personal wealth to fund a *munera* at their own expense, yet the material evidence from Pompeii indicates a level of pride associated with this patronage.³⁰¹

If this was the case, how did these politically and socially powerful individuals not receive any stigma or negative reputation for profiting, benefiting, and associating with *infames* like gladiators? On the contrary, individuals were able to politically and socially benefit from the popularity of gladiatorial combat.³⁰² For example, individuals who were seeking re-election, or perhaps wished to run for a higher office could use gladiatorial combat as a way to campaign for their office by hosting lavish spectacles and public entertainments, which of course benefited the individual seeking office.³⁰³ Tuck even highlights that *munera* in Pompeii were scheduled around elections for this purpose.³⁰⁴ Unlike Commodus, for example, who was likely criticized due to his direct participation in the arena, were individuals who funded these spectacles not impacted by society's marginalization of infamous individuals, because they did not directly participate in combat themselves? However, individuals who owned brothels or trained gladiators, for example, were also labeled *infames*, despite the fact that they did not

he assembled from all quarters so terrified his opponents, that a bill was passed limiting the number of gladiators which anyone was to be allowed to keep in the city." Suetonius, *Caesar*, 10.2.

³⁰⁰ Tomb SG6. Osanna, "Games, Banquets, Handouts," 314. See Appendix.

³⁰¹ See Chapter Three.

³⁰² Futrell, *Blood in the Arena*, 31.

³⁰³ Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 37.8.1; Suetonius, *Caesar*, 10.2; This is seen in the example of Julius Caesar who purchased a *ludus* for this purpose. By owning his own gladiators, he could host *munera* during his political career with the intent of using the publicity to seek higher office and political advancement. Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 38-39.

³⁰⁴ Steven L. Tuck, "Scheduling Spectacle: Factors Contributing to the Dates of Pompeian 'Munera,'" *The Classical Journal* 104, no. 2 (2008): 132.

directly participate in sex work or perform in the arena.³⁰⁵ Dunkle also discusses this contradiction between owning a *ludus* while not incurring *infamia* and suggests that Atticus, for example, may have been able to escape any negative repercussions by delegating the running of the *ludus* to other people, hence separating himself from the actual business of gladiatorial combat.³⁰⁶ Furthermore, Dunkle suggests another possibility, that Atticus, similar to Caesar and Nero did not solely make their living off of gladiatorial combat, making the investment more of a hobby than an actual business, once again creating enough separation between themselves and *infames*.³⁰⁷

Advertisements

A common source of evidence from Pompeii that demonstrates individuals' ability to profit from gladiatorial combat is seen in the numerous advertisements for upcoming games. The advertisements provide information on when the *munera* was to take place, how many gladiators would be present, and most importantly who was hosting the event. For example, this advertisement was painted on the building of Eumachia in the city, and read "The gladiatorial troupe of Aulus Suettius Certus, aedile, will fight at Pompeii on 31 May. There will be a hunt and awnings."³⁰⁸ One individual named in these advertisements also hosted games on behalf of his son, Decimus Lucretius Satrius Valens and Decimus Lucretius Valens, respectively. This example may also demonstrate the desire to not only promote oneself in the city but also provide his son with publicity as well. Advertisements like these were quite frequent within Pompeii, with certain individuals being commonly referred to in these wall paintings. Other graffiti located near these advertisements also indicate the public's response to individuals who frequently hosted and funded these spectacles. For example, "[Good fortune] to the priest of Nero Caesar" was written in reference to Decimus Lucretius Satrius Valens, while "Good fortune to Gnaeus Alleius Maius, the leading games-giver" was found on the

³⁰⁵ Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 82.

³⁰⁶ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 39.

³⁰⁷ Dunkle, *Gladiators*, 39-40.

³⁰⁸ *CIL* IV 1189. See Appendix.

building II.7.7 in the city.³⁰⁹ Franklin also explains that the ability of these individuals to profit and benefit from *munera* did not stop during the ten year ban on gladiatorial combat in Pompeii by Emperor Nero in 59 CE.³¹⁰ During this period Gnaeus Alleius Maius redecorated the amphitheatre with scenes of past *munera*, reminding Pompeians of past spectacles he had funded.³¹¹

The frequency of these advertisements across Pompeii not only indicates the popularity of gladiatorial combat in the city, but it also provides insight into who were hosting *munera* in addition to the level of extravagance of *munera* that could be expected in Pompeii. These advertisements contribute to the contradictory nature of gladiators because individuals such as Gnaeus Alleius Maius and Decimus Lucretius Satrius Valens, clearly did not face political or social repercussions from their association with *infames*. This is supported by the set of graffiti mentioned above that indicates that Pompeii's inhabitants were grateful and appreciative of the spectacles hosted by individuals like Gnaeus Alleius Maius and Decimus Lucretius Satrius Valens. Furthermore, the fact that these advertisements directly name individuals who were responsible for hosting and funding these spectacles, indicates that doing so was socially acceptable. If hosting or funding gladiatorial combat resulted in negative implications due to the marginalization of gladiators themselves, it would be unlikely that individuals would name themselves in public, nor would it be likely that an individual would host a game in the name of his son either. Additionally, it can be assumed that these individuals did profit and benefit from hosting gladiatorial combat since they did name themselves publicly. By doing so, their name and their generosity was made known to inhabitants of the city, which could benefit their future political careers for example.³¹² The question remains, though as to why hosts and other patrons of gladiatorial combat managed to do so without incurring some form of stigma due to their proximity to infamous individuals, but also because they profited from an infamous profession. Individuals like brothel owners, and trainers of gladiators

³⁰⁹ *CIL* IV 7996; *CIL* IV 7990; Tuck, "Scheduling Spectacle," 132.

³¹⁰ Tacitus, *Annals*, 14.17 This ban was implemented by Nero due to a riot that had broken out in the amphitheatre between the local Pompeians and the visiting Nuceriensians. James L. Franklin Jr., "Cn. Alleius Nigidius Maius and the Amphitheatre: "Munera" and a Distinguished Career at Ancient Pompeii," *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte* 46, no. 4 (1997): 446.

³¹¹ Franklin Jr., "Cn. Alleius Nigidius Maius," 446.

³¹² Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 37.8.1; Suetonius, *Caesar*, 10.2; Futrell, *Blood in the Arena*, 31.

also were considered *infames* since they profited off infamous professions.³¹³ The reasons as to why certain individuals were negatively impacted by being involved with *infames* and *munera* while others did not, deserves further analysis.

Funerary Monuments

A second source of evidence that furthers the contradictory nature of individuals profiting and benefiting off *infames* is seen in funerary monuments from Pompeii. The city has four separate references to gladiators on these monuments, all of which were likely dedicated to individuals who were involved in hosting or funding gladiatorial combat. In the case of SG6, discovered in 2017, the inscription on the monument makes mention to how the deceased individual hosted a *munera* featuring 416 gladiators. On a separate occasion he held a spectacle without any expense to the public and offered another spectacle where every species of animal was provided for the beast hunts.³¹⁴ SG7 and HGW17 both contain reliefs depicting various stages of a *munera*, including the examination of the weapons, gladiatorial combat, as well as beast hunts.³¹⁵ These depictions indicate that the deceased individuals likely had a connection to gladiatorial combat. As will be seen in depictions of gladiators in private and public contexts, an explanation for these depictions may be that the deceased individual was a former gladiator, or perhaps a former trainer or *lanista*. This remains a possibility, but since the two other monuments depicting gladiators were dedicated to individuals who hosted and funded *munera*, this possibility remains open as well for HGW17 and SG7.³¹⁶

Another example, the monument dedicated to the aedile Gaius Vestorius Priscus (VGJ), provides a wall painting of two gladiators near the end of their combat, with the defeated gladiator signaling for mercy on the right, and the victorious gladiator standing

³¹³ Edwards, “Unspeakable Professions, 82; Seneca even refers to trainers of gladiators as “despised men” *Epistles*, 87.15. “That which can fall to the lot of any man, no matter how base or despised he may be, is not a good. But wealth falls to the lot of the pander and the trainer of gladiators.” (*Quod contemptissimo cuique contingere ac turpissimo potest, bonum non est. Opes autem et lenoni et lanistae contingent.*)

³¹⁴ For Tomb SG7 see Osanna, “Games, Banquets, Handouts,” 314. Also see Appendix.

³¹⁵ For Tomb HGW17 see Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 90-92; For Tomb SG7 see Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 95-97. Also see Appendix.

³¹⁶ For SG7 see Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 95-97; For HGW17 see Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 90-92. Also see Appendix.

above him on the left.³¹⁷ This depiction in particular had been suggested to represent either *munera* that were held by Gaius Vestorius Priscus during his career as aedile, or it depicted gladiatorial combat that was held as a part of his funeral, as seen in the traditional origins of this combat.³¹⁸ Either explanation still demonstrates that an individual of political power did on occasion decorate their tomb with gladiatorial imagery. Specifically, what makes funerary monuments unique, in this contradiction, is that this individual, or his remaining family, chose to use gladiatorial imagery to indicate and honour his life. A funerary monument presents an avenue for an individual to choose how all those who come after them will remember or learn about the deceased person. By choosing images of gladiators, whether on this monument, or on SG6, SG7, or HGW17, these individuals chose to be associated with gladiators by all who viewed their tombs in the future. It can be assumed that one would choose something meaningful to decorate their funerary monuments, suggest that gladiatorial combat was something these individuals were proud to be involved with since they made the conscious decision to associate themselves with gladiators for posterity.

When we consider the social and legal implications of *infamia* and how this burdened *infames*, the association of an aedile like Vestorius Priscus is contradictory. Why would these non-infamous individuals wish to be associated with gladiators if it resulted in their own stigmatization or marginalization. Therefore, the assumption can be made that individuals who decorated their funerary monuments with gladiators did not receive the same level of stigma that *infames* did. Perhaps the reasoning for adorning a funerary monument with gladiatorial imagery may have been to recognize the deceased person's contribution to *munera* within Pompeii. On HGW17 specifically, this relief may depict an actual *munera* that took place in Pompeii and could have been significant enough to remain in the city's memory. The suggestion for this arises from the inscriptions above the depictions of gladiators in the top panel engaged in combat which list the names of the individual gladiators, which ludus they belonged to and their statistics.³¹⁹ If this was the case, it indicates a sense of pride associated with hosting and

³¹⁷ For Tomb VGJ See Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 92-94. Also see Appendix.

³¹⁸ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 94.

³¹⁹ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 91-92.

funding lavish spectacles for the city. This further supports the contradiction of individuals being able to profit and benefit from gladiatorial combat even after their death. This may also demonstrate another method of Roman society appropriating the image of gladiators for their own personal gain and benefit. This also presents a further area of contradiction that will now be discussed, which is the usage of gladiatorial imagery by non-*infames* despite the legal and social implications of *infamia*.

Images of Gladiators

A further example of how other individuals could benefit off gladiators is seen in the use of their imagery throughout Pompeii. Although the impacts and burdens associated with *infamia* are largely given to us in literary sources from outside of Pompeii, it should not be assumed that Pompeii did not implement or have similar understandings of *infamia* and those labeled as *infames*. Some admiration of gladiators appears to have been acceptable under the right circumstances, but not to the extent that gladiators would not have felt or been affected by *infamia*.³²⁰ Gladiators in Pompeii were still impacted by the legal restrictions and social stigma that gladiators elsewhere in the Roman Empire were subject to. What remains unique to Pompeii is the treatment of the imagery of gladiators and their combat. Nearly two dozen representations of these *infames* are found throughout the city. They are relatively well distributed across Pompeii with seven of the nine regions containing a depiction. These are not relegated to a specific area, nor are these depictions limited to specific building types.³²¹ These representations are in a variety of buildings, including domestic houses, bathhouses, shops, *cauponae*, and *thermopolia*.³²²

³²⁰ These circumstances appear to be in relation to the proximity to gladiators. Those who owned schools or funded spectacles do not appear to be negatively impacted, however, there is evidence to suggest that those who spent too much time enjoying the spectacle could be chastised, although this comes through in the literary evidence and does not entirely reflect what may have been playing out in Pompeii at this time.

³²¹ The two *regiones* that do not currently contain a depiction of a gladiator are *regio* III and IV. These two *regiones* have yet to be extensively excavated leaving open the possibility that images of gladiators are yet to be discovered.

³²² These are separate from buildings that were inhabited by gladiators themselves such as the Old Barracks (V.5.3), the New Barracks (VIII.7.16), and the Amphitheatre (II.7).

It has been suggested that the image of a gladiator may have held apotropaic functions in Pompeii, but the reasoning for decorating homes and businesses with gladiatorial imagery is still relatively elusive.³²³ However, these examples do demonstrate a further contradiction concerning gladiators and *infamia*. Upon immediate investigation, the usage of imagery depicting *infames* seems an unlikely candidate for a wall painting or a statue, for example. If gladiators were as reprehensible and stigmatized as is evident through literary sources, what reasoning would an inhabitant of Pompeii have for painting their walls with these “criminals”, “slaves” and “barbarians”? At first glance, it would appear to be a taboo thing to do given the understanding of *infamia* and how the concept marginalized gladiators in society. Yet, the numerous depictions of gladiators found in Pompeii paint a very different picture. This leads to the suggestion that there may have been a separation between a physical gladiator, or a group of gladiators as opposed to their imagery. Perhaps, an image of a gladiator did not hold the same level of stigma that physical gladiators did, resulting in the acceptability of Pompeiians using their imagery without any repercussions. Once again, there remains the potential that regionality impacted what is presented in the material culture from the city. Because gladiatorial combat dates to early Campanian traditions, these origins may explain why there are a prominence of gladiatorial imagery across the city in spaces not directly associated with gladiatorial combat like the barracks or the amphitheatre. Additionally, the history of this spectacle in the area may also contribute to why it appears that the literary *infamia* that is presented to us, did not seem to impact the material culture that depicts these infamous individuals.

Domestic or Private Representations

Depictions of gladiators found within domestic spaces account for nearly half of the physical representations that remain from Pompeii. The reason for separating domestic buildings from commercial ones is for the purpose of identifying who likely would have commissioned the representation and who the image was likely intended for.

³²³ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 105; Shepard, “Guardians of the threshold,” 117-119.

Although these domestic spaces may not have had the same level of foot traffic that a bath house or a thermopolium might have had in antiquity, these depictions still should not entirely be considered private. Domestic spaces did receive visitors and business throughout the space. Therefore, a depiction of a gladiator found away from the entryway did not mean that it was intended strictly for personal viewing. If an individual chose to have a depiction of a gladiator on their walls, there must not have been any repercussions or stigma attached to the image. The case has been made for the House of Anicetus (I.3.23) and the House of the Red Walls (VIII.5.37) that the inhabitants and owners must have been retired gladiators because of their choice to adorn their homes with these images.³²⁴ Furthermore, this theory alone does not adequately explain why images of gladiatorial combat are found within the Suburban Baths, for example, nor does it address why other domestic spaces such as the House of C. Holconius Rufus (VIII.4.4) or the House of the Sculptor (VIII.7.24) have not received similar claims regarding who inhabited this space. It must not be concluded then that each depiction of a gladiator was directly related to a physical gladiator and consequently indicates a lack of stigma associated with gladiatorial imagery or those who chose this type of depiction for their home, suggesting a separation between gladiators as individuals and as a group of marginalized people and their imagery.

Out of the eight domestic spaces in Pompeii that contain depictions of gladiators only three remain visible today. These spaces include depictions from the House of Anicetus (I.3.23), House of the Sculptor (VIII.7.24), and the House of the Priest Amandus (I.7.7). The example from the House of Anicetus (I.3.23), portrays the Riot of the Amphitheatre that took place in Pompeii in 59 CE. This wall painting along with two smaller depictions of gladiatorial combat (both smaller depictions are now lost) were

³²⁴ The House of Anicetus was named because of an inscription found near the entrance “Anice(te) fac” (CIL IV 2993) The House of the Red Walls contains a lararium that was decorated with gladiatorial arms, indicating that the individual who lived there may have been a retired gladiator. See Boyce, “Corpus of the Lararia of Pompeii,” 77; Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 81; Sheppard, “Guardians of the threshold,” 121. It can be assumed that some gladiators who reached retirement in Pompeii chose to live the remainder of their lives in the city, or even in some scenarios, there is evidence to suggest that active gladiators could have lived outside of the barracks with a potential wife and family. Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 73, 81. Therefore, the living spaces attributed to gladiators should not be overlooked, but the assumption that gladiatorial imagery equated the ownership of the space disregards other evidence is not an accurate criterion to accommodate all the depictions and items found within the city.

discovered within the peristyle of the house.³²⁵ Similarly, the depiction from the House of the Sculptor (VIII.7.24) was also located near the peristyle, whereas the representation from the House of the Priest Amandus (I.7.7). was found in a hallway from the entrance into the house.³²⁶ These examples, demonstrate that depictions of gladiators were relatively common within domestic spaces and not necessarily relegated to an overly “private” section of the house. They likely would have been seen by visitors and guests which further demonstrates an apparent lack of stigma associated with the imagery compared to the stigmatization that physical gladiators felt due to *infamia*.

Therefore, if these domestic spaces were not necessarily inhabited by retired gladiators, why did the owners decide to use these images? The suggestion has been made that the imagery of gladiators could have held a protective function within Pompeii to ward off the evil eye. This suggestion has largely been discussed by Sheppard in the context of viewing the locations of the depictions within their buildings. Jacobelli maintains a similar position in terms of material remains depicting gladiators like lamps and statues.³²⁷ Furthermore, if the inhabitants of Pompeii used gladiatorial imagery for a protective function, this does provide a new dynamic to understanding the position of gladiators in Pompeian society. However, it does not yet appear that gladiators in Pompeii benefited from this new function associated with their imagery. This protective function does not extend to the suggestion that gladiators felt the burdens of *infamia* less than those elsewhere in the Empire, for example. Nor does this protective nature appear to have resulted in Pompeian gladiators being treated differently or respected more than any other gladiator. Therefore, on the one hand, this usage of gladiatorial imagery by non-*infames* may provide a further example of how individuals in the Roman Empire could and did benefit off gladiators, suggesting a further avenue of exploitation that these individuals faced. Which in turn leads to the suggestion that the imagery of gladiators was seen in a very different light compared to actual gladiators themselves.

³²⁵ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 71-73.

³²⁶ For the House of the Sculptor see Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 81-82; For the House of the Sculptor see Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 81-82; For the House of the Priest Amadnus see Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 73-76.

³²⁷ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 105.

Public or Commercial Representations

The second category of gladiatorial imagery from Pompeii are those associated with public or commercial buildings. These nine separate depictions also provide additional evidence to suggest that imagery of gladiators did not hold the same level of stigma in comparison to gladiators themselves. The variety of locations and depictions may even suggest that gladiatorial imagery held a nearly complete opposite purpose in society due to the locations of the depictions themselves. This only furthers the discrepancy between the impacts of *infamia* on gladiators in society, and how Pompeians interacted with gladiatorial imagery. Most of these depictions are lost and only remain due to documentation made by excavators.³²⁸ The two most well-preserved depictions are located at the Suburban Baths and a bar at V.8. The remaining scenes from the Suburban Baths predominately only feature the legs of the individuals making identification difficult and are located within a corridor leading towards a vestibule.³²⁹ The depiction from the bar at V.8 has been preserved better. This depiction demonstrates the final stages of battle with a victorious Murmillo on the left, and a Thracian signaling for mercy on the right.³³⁰ This scene was likely part of a larger depiction as the legs of an arena attendant can be seen in the adjacent panel.³³¹ This depiction was located underneath a stairway near the entrance to the establishment. Due to the bar's location near the Old Barracks (V.5.3) the gladiatorial imagery and the stairs, it has been suggested that this bar was frequented by gladiators from the barracks, whereas the upper floor was utilized by sex workers.³³²

However, this assumption based on location near buildings that housed gladiators is inconsistent with the various other depictions not located near either barracks or the

³²⁸ Five out of nine of these depictions are completely lost apart from written accounts. Two others remain as reconstructions. See Sheppard, "Guardians of the threshold," 119-122.

³²⁹ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 85-87.

³³⁰ Sheppard, "Guardians of the threshold," 119.

³³¹ Pompeii Sites, "The Fresco of the Fighting Gladiators. New Discovery in the Regio V," Pompeii Sites press release, October 11, 2019, on the Pompeii Sites website. <http://pompeiiisites.org/en/comunicati/two-gladiators-at-the-end-of-the-fight-this-is-the-scene-of-the-last-fresco-found-in-the-regio-v/>, accessed April 28, 2022.

³³² Pompeii Sites, "The Fresco of the Fighting Gladiators. New Discovery in the Regio V."

amphitheatre.³³³ Furthermore, the assumption that gladiators must have frequented these locations strictly based on the imagery is presumptuous when compared to locations like the Suburban Baths. It would be highly unlikely that gladiators were the sole patrons of the Suburban Baths for example, nor would it be logical, based on the population of Pompeii in comparison to gladiators, that all eight, bars, shops, and thermopolium primarily served gladiators based on this imagery. That is not to say that gladiators were not a portion of the patrons in these buildings, it is known that gladiators were able to leave the barracks and were able to conduct their lives outside of the barracks.³³⁴ Gladiators may have indeed been patrons of many establishments across the city. This argument can also be reversed though. It is just as unlikely that gladiators would have been restricted to these eight buildings when working under the assumption that gladiators were largely unidentifiable outside of the barracks, yet depictions of gladiators are only found within these specific spaces.

This adds to the suggestion that depictions of gladiators do not definitively have to be directly associated with an individual gladiator, which further supports the suggestion that *infamia* did not play out as heavily in Pompeii during the Julio-Claudian period as literary sources would suggest. This imagery, especially when considering those found within the Suburban Baths indicates that these depictions were acceptable for and to inhabitants of Pompeii. It is too far of a stretch to assume each of these sets of imagery were intended for a gladiatorial audience alone and, therefore, it should be assumed that gladiatorial imagery did not hold the same level of stigma or infamous qualities that gladiators themselves did. The issue remains that certain locations are given the assumption of gladiators being the primary customers while other locations are not. It is extremely difficult to determine who the patrons of these establishments were strictly based on wall paintings or location within Pompeii and this methodology and criteria appear to be inconsistently implemented when viewing these buildings. Therefore, the complexity of this contradiction of gladiatorial imagery within public buildings in

³³³ Such as the Thermopolium at VII.5.14, the Shop at VII.4.26, the Caupona at IX.12.7, or the Suburban Baths VII.16.a (Public Only).

³³⁴ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 67. Additionally, gladiators would have likely been unidentifiable when outside of the barracks. Their armour and their weapons would have not been worn when they were not engaged in combat or training.

Pompeii does not yet allow for definitive conclusions to be made, which supports this contradictory nature of the evidence.

This suggestion though is contradictory to the literary understanding of *infamia* and the position of *infames* in society. Overall, individuals labelled *infames* were prohibited from the rights and protections that Roman citizens enjoyed, and they were socially marginalized due to the inherited distrust and distaste towards “barbarians”, “criminals” and “slaves”. However, on the occasion when elite authors indicate some sense of respect towards gladiators it generally focuses on traits that were admirable in Roman male citizens, such as bravery, honour, and martial skill. Perhaps, the fact that most of these images depicted some stage of gladiatorial combat, these images were considered acceptable because they reflected bravery, honour, and martial skill. These images did not overtly portray gladiators as “barbarians”, “criminals” and “slaves”, nor were any labels given to these depictions in writing, such as the word “*infames*” suggesting that nothing directly associated these images with infamous behaviour or *infamia* itself. This contradiction remains difficult to dissect and has led some scholars such as Jacobelli and Sheppard to conclude this imagery must have had apotropaic functions. The idea that this imagery held apotropaic power does provide one method of explaining this contradiction of intentionally decorating public spaces with images of *infames*, although other explanations could also exist. Regardless, this evidence indicates that something different was reflected in these images for Pompeians to accept them in their public spaces in such a large number. What separated gladiators as *infames* from a seemingly non-infamous image. The understanding of *infamia* and its legal and social penalties make the usage of infamous individuals’ imagery in this level of frequency a significant contradiction.

Items

The contradictory nature of adorning spaces in Pompeii with gladiatorial imagery is not limited to wall paintings. A handful of examples remain from the city that showcase how gladiatorial imagery could be used to adorn portable household items. A

few of these examples include, lamps, cups, statues, and even baby bottles.³³⁵ These depictions generally also show a stage of gladiatorial combat, with a set of two statues depicting combat against one another, or a cup which depicts two pairs of gladiators engaged in combat on the handle space, for example. The contradiction that arises with these types of items are why individuals would choose to use household items that depict *infames*. The suggestion that these items belonged to former gladiators could arise, as seen with domestic spaces being adorned with gladiatorial imagery, but this does not account for other possibilities. When considering the context of some of these items, such as the terracotta statue of a gladiator found in the House of Marcus Lucretius (IX.3.5), this suggests that individuals other than gladiators could have owned depictions of these *infames*, as no suggestion has been made that Marcus Lucretius was a former gladiator.³³⁶ However, the examples from the Tomb of the Blue Vase at the Herculaneum Gate, contained two sculptures of gladiators, that have been suggested to be votive offerings, which may point to a more personal connection with gladiatorial combat.³³⁷ However, there is not enough evidence to fully suggest one explanation or the other. Neither argument of determining who would have owned, commissioned, or used these items is supported enough to decide as the current evidence supports both conclusions. Additionally, the lamps mentioned above, according to Jacobelli were quite popular items dating to the 1st century CE, overlapping with the Julio-Claudian period.³³⁸ Some of these lamps even included names of certain gladiators who were popular during this time, and they have not been limited to domestic spaces, but were also found within funerary contexts like tombs. These contexts once again suggest multiple explanations for who owned these pieces and why adding to the complex nature of gladiatorial imagery in Pompeii. Although this popularity may also suggest that these items were relatively commonplace among inhabitants of Pompeii and may not have been restricted to those with close personal ties to gladiatorial combat.

³³⁵ Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 7; Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 99-105.

³³⁶ Matthew P. Loar, "Sexual Graffiti in the House of Marcus Lucretius in Pompeii (IX.3.5, 24)," *The Classical World* 111, no. 3 (2018): 405-406; Summer Trentin, "Reality, Artifice, and Changing Landscapes in the House of Marcus Lucretius in Pompeii," *Greece and Rome* 66, no. 1 (2019): 71-72.

³³⁷ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 100.

³³⁸ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 99.

A further possible explanation follows the suggestions of Jacobelli and Sheppard who conclude that the image of gladiators may have protected these items. This protective function could account for the usage of depictions featuring *infames*. Decorating a baby bottle with an image of a gladiator may have been created as a means of protection, as Mau suggested upon discovering a baby bottle in the city “...the figure of a gladiator is stamped on it, symbolizing the hope that the infant will develop strength and vigor.”³³⁹ Another example from the Inn of the Gladiators (I.20.1) also supports the idea that gladiatorial imagery held protective function, perhaps supporting the idea that gladiatorial imagery was by the inhabitants of Pompeii for protective purposes. This sculpture depicts a gladiator armed with a sword and shield protecting a smaller figure, suggested to be Priapus who was apotropaic on its own and was found within the peristyle of this building.³⁴⁰ The combination of a gladiator with another figure who has been interpreted as apotropaic on its own, is highly suggestive that gladiatorial imagery can be viewed as protective as well.³⁴¹ Therefore, the suggestion that the imagery of gladiators did not hold the same stigmatization and negativity that gladiators themselves did is also supported when viewing household items. If an image of a gladiator incurred any negative implications to those who used or associated with the item, it appears unlikely that there would be evidence of a baby bottle, cup, or a lamp adorned with this imagery. Although an exact and decisive reason for why Pompeians owned household items that depicted infamous individuals remains elusive, it nevertheless provides further support for the contradictory nature of individual gladiators as opposed to their imagery. Finally, these examples also indicate avenues of analysis that require further attention, as

³³⁹ Mau, *Pompeii: Its Life and Art*, 372.

³⁴⁰ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 105.

³⁴¹ Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii*, 105; Sheppard, “Guardians of the threshold,” 117-119. The building where this sculpture was found has also been suggested to host spectators who travelled to Pompeii to view spectacles in the amphitheatre, due to the proximity near the amphitheatre. This suggestion again adds further difficulty when attempting to explain this contradictory nature of gladiatorial imagery in Pompeii. Multiple explanations, such as items and buildings being owned by former gladiators, spaces being used by gladiators, spaces being used by spectators of gladiatorial combat, or that gladiators held apotropaic functions are all possible explanations to what is seen playing out in the city. However, one explanation has yet to appear superior to the others. Furthermore, in the past five years two separate examples of gladiatorial imagery have been excavated and based on the current distribution of gladiatorial imagery, it seems likely that further examples have yet to be discovered. Perhaps at a later date a more definitive explanation will come to light.

does the implications this had on gladiators in society, and what new knowledge could be gained when considering this evidence from the perspectives of gladiators themselves.

Conclusion

The list of contradictions surrounding the study of gladiators and their combat in the Roman world is extensive. These contradictions are best highlighted by Tertullian who states, “They love whom they lower; they despise whom they approve; the art they glorify, the artist they disgrace.”³⁴² The current scholarship addresses these contradictions but leaves much room for further analysis. Although, a solution to these contradictions may be impossible, they still raise additional questions that can be considered and addressed. Instead of accepting these contradictions as they are, they can be used to contribute further to our modern understanding of marginalized individuals in Roman society, such as gladiators. For example, the dual presentation of gladiators by literary sources as quasi-athletes or individuals burdened by *infamia* indicates that *infames* could demonstrate behaviours that were admired by Roman society, despite their subjugation to the restrictions of *infamia*. Or individuals who were not subject to *infamia* could still closely participate alongside infamous professions or use imagery of gladiators and their combat for their benefit. However, how this impacted individual gladiators either negatively as a form of exploitation or positively as providing gladiators with personal agency are both possibilities that remain and should be considered more thoroughly. These can all potentially contribute to future research that directly provides voices to marginalized groups of individuals like gladiators and can equally aid in a deeper understanding of *infamia*'s role in Roman society. This also provides additional support to the idea that *infamia* cannot be treated as a static term that equally impacted all *infames* throughout the Roman world. Furthermore, the contradictions demonstrate that the restrictions and limitations of *infamia* that were imposed on gladiators were likely counteracted by the positive opinions and admiration Roman society felt for these individuals. This once again, suggests that gladiators were not as heavily impacted by the

³⁴² Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, 22.

legal concept in their daily lives. These contradictions are clear indications that *infamia* requires additional scholarly attention with the intention of gaining a more thorough understanding of how it genuinely impacted *infames*.

Conclusion

Generally, previous scholarship has tended to emphasize the study of gladiators and gladiatorial combat from perspectives other than that of gladiators themselves. This Roman spectacle is often portrayed from the viewpoints of the audience in the arena, or elite Roman male authors. Other portrayals of gladiatorial combat may focus on gladiators, but typically do so in a broad manner, resulting in the treatment of gladiators as a static group, with similar experiences over the history of Rome. These portrayals lack the viewpoints of individual gladiators from specific periods of time and locations throughout the regions under Roman control. Similarly, the Roman concept of *infamia* has also been largely studied in terms of how it was intended to be implemented in society, rather than how individuals subjected to it may have experienced it in reality. Therefore, the treatment of *infamia* as equally applying to all *infames* across Roman history results in an inaccurate depiction of the impacts of the legal term on *infames*. Furthermore, the modern understanding of gladiators, gladiatorial combat, and *infamia* have all placed an emphasis on literary sources as opposed to material culture when considering *infamia* and its impact on this group of *infames*. The remaining material culture is frequently at odds with the picture that is presented in literary sources.

Instead, this paper has intended to show how considering existing evidence from a heavily researched topic such as gladiators can still provide additional insight when viewed from a different perspective. The intention of this study was to consider existing evidence on gladiators and their combat from the perspectives of gladiators themselves as opposed to other scholarship which appears to emphasize the voices of contemporary elite Roman male authors, spectators, and the broader Roman society. However, this could not have been adequately attempted without a consideration of the term *infamia* itself. It is hard to imagine a study of gladiators without considering *infamia* and the impact that it had upon gladiators in the daily lives. However, the current understanding of Roman *infamia* has typically been treated broadly as opposed to considering the term from the perspectives of gladiators over the course of Roman history. If the intention is to provide voices to this marginalized group by considering the existing evidence from their own perspectives, this method also needs to apply to a consideration of *infamia*. In

reality, *infamia* was not a term that equally applied to gladiators in the Republic compared to those in the later Empire, nor did *infamia* appear as a fully formed legal category or term alongside the origins of gladiatorial combat. *Infamia* as it pertained to gladiators, evolved over time and was added to throughout the Republic and the Empire and was not fully formed as early in Roman history as secondary scholarship appears to imply. Additionally, *infamia* impacted different groups of *infames* differently, and it cannot be assumed that each *infamis*, nor each gladiator (even those who lived at the same time, in the same location) would have experienced the restrictions and limitations of *infamia* equally. These conclusions contribute to the problematic nature of the current research concerning *infamia*. If the intention of a study is to highlight the experiences of a certain group of *infames* at a specific time and region, such as Pompeiian gladiators during the Julio-Claudian period, then the current understandings of *infamia* are not enough. Nor is there sufficient evidence to suggest that *infamia* played out as intended by Roman law or that gladiators themselves were burdened or concerned about their status as *infames*. Although further research is required, this nevertheless highlights the potential for considering how *infamia* likely impacted other groups of *infames* at various periods and locations throughout the Roman world which can contribute significantly to the modern understanding of gladiators and *infamia*.

The consideration of the gendered aspects of *infamia* is vital in an analysis of how the term impacted *infames*. Gladiators were subject to the limitations and penalties associated with *infamia* partially due to Roman society's understanding that gladiators represented the opposite of a respected Roman *vir*. which adds to other conclusions made in Chapter One. Gladiators were seen as incapable of demonstrating traits and characteristics that Roman *vir* aspired to. On top of this, gladiators were not only considered a threat to Roman *vir* because of their incompatibility of traits and behaviours, but they were also seen as threatening to Roman women because of their profession of performing on stage which reflected their transgressive sexuality. However, it has been demonstrated that gladiators in fact shared similar gendered expectations to Roman *vir* including being admired for displays of military *virtus*, honour, and bravery. Gladiators were also subject to similar accusations of effeminacy when they were perceived to have failed to uphold Rome's gendered expectations, as seen in other

accusations against Roman *virī*. Additionally, accusations of gladiators being sexually available and sexually transgressive due to their public profession do not appear to hold up when considering evidence from material culture. If gladiators were subject to *infamia* due to their failure to adhere to society's gendered expectations this creates an additional contradiction as evidence suggests that gladiators could demonstrate admirable qualities of Roman *virī*, despite their status as *infames*. This conclusion emphasizes the importance of consolidating these contradictions in order to gain a better understanding not only of the agency and subjectivity of gladiators, but also the impacts that *infamia* had on Pompeian gladiators.

Furthermore, it is necessary to consider the evidence produced by gladiators themselves in order to provide voices to these traditionally marginalized groups that have generally not been prioritized in the past. By considering material culture, especially that created by gladiators themselves provides valuable insight into how gladiators in Pompeii may have experienced *infamia* during their time in the barracks and the arena. Graffiti that was likely authored by gladiators themselves, also offers insight into the subjectivity and experiences faced by gladiators that are not portrayed in literary accounts. Like the findings made by Levin-Richardson on Pompeian sex workers in the Purpose-Built Brothel, gladiators produced graffiti that provide insight into a largely positive subjectivity of themselves despite their subjugation to the restrictions and penalties of *infamia*. *Infamia* in theory, was meant to penalize gladiators and seemingly was a significant burden to their lives, yet graffiti produced by gladiators presents individuals who demonstrated pride in their work and their identity as a gladiator. Additionally, *infamia* stigmatized these individuals and as a result society often treated gladiators as lowly individuals with no moral value and no admirable qualities, yet gladiators were able to portray themselves in a positive light. This is evident of gladiators who were able to gain agency over their position in society as they were able to change the narrative of their marginalization due to *infamia*. Furthermore, other material culture from Pompeii also contributes to the agency of gladiators due to the apparent popularity of gladiatorial imagery by those in the city. The potential that gladiatorial imagery held an apotropaic function in society contributes to the agency of gladiators but may also support why a gladiator's subjectivity appears overwhelmingly positive. Taken together, this again

suggests that *infamia* does not appear to play out in the material culture from Pompeii and that gladiators likely did not feel the impacts of the term as Roman laws intended. Going forward, these conclusions can be used to consider the subjectivity and potential avenues of agency for other groups of infames. Doing so has the potential to provide voices to traditionally marginalized groups but also can provide valuable insight and a broader understanding of those on the fringes of Roman society.

As mentioned before, a study of gladiators would be inadequate without considering *infamia*. Similarly, a study of gladiators without acknowledging the numerous contradictions pertaining to literary sources, material culture, their popularity, and their marginalization would also fall short. The main contradiction currently surrounds scholarship on Roman gladiators is how to consolidate the two aspects of gladiators as popular quasi-athletes capable of displaying admirable qualities, compared to the marginalized individuals burdened by the stigmatization of *infamia*, who represent the antithesis of a Roman *vir*. This contradiction also influences other contradictions in our understanding of Roman gladiators, such as the attempt to explain their popularity based on their lowly status, or how Romans who were not stigmatized by *infamia* could profit and benefit off of individuals who were. All of these contradictions hinder the ability to understand the experiences of gladiators in society and impact every aspect of gladiatorial combat. These contradictions alter modern understandings of *infamia*, how gladiators experienced *infamia*, their subjectivity, their ability to gain agency over their position, and how gladiators were perceived in society by their contemporaries. Without further analysis or an attempt to consolidate these significant contradictions, the modern understanding of gladiators and the ability to provide these traditionally marginalized individuals with a voice will be prevented.

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Appendix:

(English translations by Cooley, unless otherwise stated)

Type	CIL/EDR/ILS or Name	Description	Location and Context	Latin or Greek	Translation
Graffiti – Identifications	CIL IV 2424/ EDR 166750	N/A	New Barracks (VIII.7.16)	<i>Antonius</i>	“Antonius” (<i>Ancient Graffiti Project</i>)
Graffiti – Identifications	CIL IV 2427/ EDR166751	N/A	New Barracks (VIII.7.16)	<i>Felix</i>	“Felix” (<i>Ancient Graffiti Project</i>)
Graffiti – Identifications	CIL IV 2429/ EDR167049	N/A	New Barracks (VIII.7.16)	<i>Faustus</i>	“Faustus” (<i>Ancient Graffiti Project</i>)
Graffiti – Identifications	CIL IV 2432/ EDR167575	N/A	New Barracks (VIII.7.16)	Ἀλέξανδρος	“Alexandros” (<i>Ancient Graffiti Project</i>)
Graffiti – Identifications	CIL IV 2483/ EDR151789	N/A	New Barracks (VIII.7.16)	<i>Mansuetus provocator victor Veneri parmam ferret</i>	“Mansuetus the <i>provocator</i> , if victorious, will bring Venus the gift of a shield.” (Varone, p. 24)
Graffiti – Pictorial	CIL IV 8573/ EDR167471	Image Only	Amphitheatre (II.7)	((: <i>gladiator prospiciens sica et scuto armatus</i>))	“Gladiator armed with a shield and sword.” (<i>Ancient Graffiti Project</i>)
Graffiti – Pictorial	CIL IV 8576/ EDR167661	Image Only	Amphitheatre (II.7)	((: <i>gladiator galea cristata, scuto sicaque armatus et fasciis subligaculo ocreisque indutus</i>))	“Gladiator armed with crested helmet, shield, and sword, and wearing leg-padding, loincloth, and greaves.” (<i>Ancient Graffiti Project</i>)
Graffiti – Pictorial	EDR167776	Image Only	New Barracks (VIII.7.20) Corridor	((: <i>animal et gladiator?</i>))	“Animal and gladiator?” (<i>Ancient Graffiti Project</i>)
Graffiti – Pictorial	EDR168080	Image Only	Amphitheatre (II.7)	((: <i>rete?</i>))	“Net?” (<i>Ancient Graffiti Project</i>)
Graffiti – Wins	CIL IV 4297	N/A	House of the Gladiators (V.5.3)	<i>Celadus Oct(avii) < pugnarum > III, ((coronarum)) III</i>	“Celadus, belonging to Octavus(?), fought 3, won 3.”
Graffiti – Wins	CIL IV 4299	N/A	House of the Gladiators (V.5.3)	<i>V K(alendas) Aug(ustas) Nuceriae Florus vic(it) / XIIX K(alendas) Sept(embres) Herc(u)lanio vicit.</i>	“28 July, Florus won at Nuceria; 15 August, won at Herculaneum.”
Graffiti – Boastful (Also Identifications)	CIL IV 4342/ ILS 5142a/ EDR175482	N/A	House of the Gladiators (V.5.3)	<i>“suspirium pullarum!; Tr.; Celadus Oct. III III;”</i>	“Girls’ heart-throb, <i>Thracian</i> gladiator Celadus, belonging to Octavus(?), fought 3, won 3.”

Graffiti – Boastful	<i>CIL</i> IV 4345/ <i>ILS</i> 5142b	N/A	House of the Gladiators (V.5.3)	<i>“puellarum decus. Celadus Tr.”</i>	“The girls’ idol, Celadus the Thracian gladiator”
Graffiti – Boastful (Also Identifications)	<i>CIL</i> IV 4353/ <i>ILS</i> 5142e	N/A	House of the Gladiators (V.5.3)	<i>Cresces retia. Puparum nocturnarum</i>	“Crescens the <i>Retiarius</i> , the netter of girls by night.” (Weidemann, p. 26) Or “Crescens the net-fighter, doctor to nighttime girls, morning girls, and all the rest.” (Jacobelli, p. 49)
Graffiti – External	<i>CIL</i> IV 1991/ <i>EDR</i> 150296	Image Only	House of Plotilla (VIII.3.24)	<i>((:figurae duorum gladiatorum, alter retiarius est cum fuscina; alter cum hasta et fortasse cum fuscina armatus est))</i>	“figures of 2 gladiators, The one retiarius is with a trident, the other with a spear and perhaps he is armed with a trident” (<i>Ancient Graffiti Project</i>)
Graffiti – External	<i>CIL</i> IV 1992/ <i>EDR</i> 150297	Image Only	House of Plotilla (VIII.3.24)	<i>((:figura gladiatoris cum galea ac fortasse scuto))</i>	“figure of a gladiator with helmet and possibly with a shield” (<i>Ancient Graffiti Project</i>)
Graffiti – External	<i>CIL</i> IV 7990	Written in black	The Palaestra (II.7.7)	<i>Cn(aeo) Alleio Maio Principi muneraior(um) feliciter</i>	“Good fortune to Gnaeus Alleius Maius, the leading games-giver.”
Graffiti – External	<i>CIL</i> IV 8055a	Depicts Oceanus with a raised shield, directed at Aracintus.	House of L. Ceius Secundus and Fabia Prima (I.6.16)	<i>Oceanus l (ibertus) / (victoriarum) XIII v (icit)</i>	“Oceanus, of free status, victorious 13 times, won.” (Varone, p. 35, 1990)
Graffiti – External	<i>CIL</i> IV 8055b	Depicts Aracintus to the right of Oceanus.	House of L. Ceius Secundus and Fabia Prima (I.6.16)	<i>Aracintus l (ibertus) / (victoriarum) [3] IIII / (periit)</i>	Aracintus, of free status, victorious 4 times, earned a reprieve. (Varone, p. 35, 1990)
Graffiti – External	<i>CIL</i> IV 8056	Depicts two gladiators (Severus and Albanus) engaged in combat.	House of L. Ceius Secundus and Fabia Prima (I.6.16)	<i>Severus l (ibertus) / (victoriarum) XIII / (periit) // Albanus sc (aeva?) L (iber) / (victoriarum) XIX v (icit) //</i>	“Severus, of free status, victorious 13 times, earned a reprieve. Albanus, left-hander, of free status, victorious 19 times, won.” (Varone, p. 35, 1990)
Graffiti – External	<i>CIL</i> IV 10236a	Depicts two gladiators engaged in combat	Porta Nocera	<i>M. Att(ilius)</i>	“Marcus Att(ilius)

		(Marcus Attilius on the left and Felix on the right). One gladiator (Felix) appears to be close to defeat, with one knee resting on the ground.		<i>M. Attilius, (pugnarum) I, (coronarum) I, v(icit) L. Raecius Felix, (pugnarum) XII, (coronarum) XII, m(issus)</i>	Marcus Attilius, fought 1, 1 victory, victor. Lucius Raecius Felix, fought 12, won 12, reprieved.”
Graffiti – External	<i>CIL IV 10237</i>	Depicts two gladiators engaged in combat. Both gladiators are depicted on two feet and closely engaged in battle. Surrounding the combat are several depictions of spectators viewing the combat.	Porta Nocera	<i>Munus Nolae de quadridu(o) M. Comini Heredi(s) Pri<n>ceps Ner(onianus), (pugnarum) XIII, (coronarum) X, v(icit); Hilarus Ner(onianus), (pugnarum) XIV, (coronarum) XII, v(icit) Creunus, (pugnarum) VII, (coronarum) V, m(issus);</i>	“Games at Nola of Marcus Cominius Heres over 4 days. ‘The Chief’, Neronian, fought 13, 10 victories, victor. Hilarus, Neronian, fought 14, 12 victories, victor. Creunus, fought 7, 5 victories, reprieved.”
Graffiti – External	<i>CIL IV 10238a</i>	Depicts two gladiators engaged in combat (Marcus Attilius on the left and Hilarus on the right). Both gladiators are depicted on two feet and closely engaged in battle.	Porta Nocera	<i>M. Attilius, t(iro), v(icit); Hilarus Ner(onianus), (pugnarum) XIV, (coronarum) XII, m(issus)</i>	“Marcus Attilius, novice, victor; Hilarus, Neronian, fought 14, 12 victories, reprieved.”
Epigraphy – Advertisement	<i>CIL IV 1189</i>	Written in red on the exterior wall of the Building of Eumachia at the West end near the Forum	Building of Eumachia, Near the Forum (VII.9.1)	<i>A.bSvettii. cerii aedilis familia gladiatorial pugnabit pompeis pr. K. junias venatio et vela erunt</i>	“The gladiatorial troupe of Aulus Suetlius Certus, aedile, will fight at Pompeii on 31 May. There will be a hunt and awnings.”
Epigraphy – Advertisement	<i>CIL IV 3884/ ILS 5145</i>	Written in red.	West Side of (IX.8.1)	<i>Poly(---) //D(ecimi) Lucreti Satri //Valentis flaminis [[Neronis]] Caesaris Aug(usti) f(ilii) perpetui</i>	“20 pairs of gladiators of Decimus Lucretius †Celer wrote this† Satrius Valens, perpetual priest of Nero and 10 pairs of gladiators of Decimus Lucretius Valens, his

				<i>glad(iatorum) par(ia) XX et D(ecimi) Lucreti Valentis fili(i)glad(iatorum) par(ia) X pugna Pompeis ex a(nte) d(ie) Nonis(!) Apr(iles) venatio et vela erunt</i>	son, will fight at Pompeii on 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 April. There will be a regular hunt and awnings. Aemilius Celer wrote this on his own by the light of the moon.”
Epigraphy - Advertisement	<i>CIL</i> IV 7991	Written in black and red.	House of Aulus Trebius Valens (III.2.1)	<i>Cn(aei) Allei Nigidi Mai quinq(uennalis) sine impensa publica glad(iatorum) par(ia) XX et eorum supp(ositicii) pugn(abunt) Pompeis</i>	“20 pairs of gladiators of Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius, quinquennial, and their substitutes will fight without any public expense at Pompeii.”
Epigraphy – Advertisement	<i>CIL</i> IV 7992	Written in black and red.	House of Trebius Valens (III.2.1)	<i>D(ecimi) Lucreti Satri Valentis flaminis [Neronis] Caesaris Aug(usti) filii) perpetui glad(iatorum) par(ia) XX et D(ecimi) Lucreti Valentis fili(i) glad(iatorum) par(ia) X pugn(abunt) Pompeis ex a(nte) d(iem) V Nonis Apr(ilibus) venatio et vela erunt // Poly[bius(?)]</i>	“20 pairs of gladiators of Decimus †Poly(bius?)† Lucretius Satrius Valens, perpetual priest of [[Nero]] Caesar, son of Augustus, and 10 pairs of gladiators of Decimus Lucretius Valens will fight at Pompeii on 4 (?) April. There will be a hunt and awnings.”
Epigraphy – Advertisement	<i>CIL</i> IV 7995	Written in black and red.	House of M. Satrius (III.6.2)	<i>D(ecimi) Lucreti Satri, Valentis flaminis [[Neronis]] Caesaris Augusti filii) perpetui glad(iatorum) par(ia) XX et, D(ecimi) Lucreti Valentis fili(i) [glad(iatorum)] par(ia) X, ex a(nte) d(iem) V K(alendam) April(es) venation et vela er[unt]</i>	“20 pairs of gladiators of Decimus Lucretius Satrius Valens, perpetual priest of [[Nero]] Caesar, son of Augustus, and 10 pairs of [gladiators] of Decimus Lucretius Valens, his son, on 28 March. There will be a hunt and awnings.”

Epigraphy – Funerary Monuments	14 EN	Tomb itself is unrelated to gladiatorial combat but contains three sets of graffiti depicting gladiatorial combat. See <i>CIL IV 10237</i> , <i>CIL IV 10238a</i> , and <i>CIL IV 10236a</i> .	Porta Nocera	See <i>CIL IV 10237</i> , <i>CIL IV 10238a</i> , and <i>CIL IV 10236a</i> .	See <i>CIL IV 10237</i> , <i>CIL IV 10238a</i> , and <i>CIL IV 10236a</i> .
Epigraphy – Funerary Monuments	HGW17	This monument contains a large frieze divided into five separate panels. The three uppermost panels depict scenes related to beast hunts. The fourth panel depicts eight pairs of gladiators engaged in combat with their names, school, and number of combats they had completed inscribed above their depiction. The bottom most panel depicts additional scenes from a beast hunt.	Herculaneum Gate – West Side	N/A	N/A
Epigraphy – Funerary Monuments	SG6	This monument is overall rectangular in nature but also has inward curvature on the three excavated sides. The inscription is 4 meters long and consists of 7 rows. It does not contain the name of the deceased individual but describes accomplishments and achievements during their life. Due to its size	Porta Stabia	<i>Hic togae virilis suae epulum populo Pompeiiano triclinis CCCCLVI ita ut in triclinis quinideni homines discumberent (hedera). Munus gladiat(orium) / adeo magnum et splendidum dedit ut cuivis ab urbe lautissimae coloniae conferendum esset ut potecum CCCXVI gladiatores in ludo</i>	“On occasion of assuming the <i>toga virilis</i> he offered to the Pompeiian people a banquet on 456 three-sided couches so that upon each couch fifteen persons reclined. He offered a gladiatorial show of such grandiosity and magnificence as to be able to be compared with (that of) any of the most noble colonies founded by Rome, since 416 gladiators participated. Now, because his generosity coincided with a famine, for this reason he fed them for 4 years, and

		<p>and content, it has been linked with the relief found at tomb SG7. The working theory is that the relief sat atop this rectangular monument.</p>	<p><i>habuer(it ?) et cum / munus eius in caritate annonae incidisset, propter quod quadriennio eos pavit, potior ei cura civium suorum fuit quam rei familiaris; nam cum esset denaris quinis modius tritici, coemit / et ternis victoriatibus populo praestitit et, ut ad omnes haec liberalitas eius perveniret, viritim populo ad ternos victoriatos per amicos suos panis cocti pondus divisit (hedera). Munere suo quod ante /senatus consult(um) edidit, omnibus diebus lusionum et conpositione promiscue omnis generis bestias venationibus dedit (hedera) / et, cum Caesar omnes familias ultra ducesimum ab urbe ut abducerent iussisset, uni / huic ut Pompeios in patriam suam reduceret permisit. Idem quo die uxorem duxit, decurionibus quinquagenos nummos singulis, populo denarios augustalibus vicenos pagan(is) vicenos nummos dedit. Bis magnos ludos sine onere / rei publicae fecit; propter quae postulante populo, cum universus ordo</i></p>	<p>the care he showed his fellow citizens was greater than that for his own patrimony; when a peck of wheat was quoted at 5 <i>denarii</i>, he bought it and made it available to the people for 3 <i>victoriati a modius</i>. Further, so that his generosity would reach everyone, through his friends he distributed to the people one by one an amount of baked bread worth 3 <i>victoriati</i>. On the occasion of his show, which he had organized prior to the <i>senatus consultum</i>, for every day of the games and for every combat event he provided animals of all species, without distinction, for the hunts. And when Caesar had ordered that they depart from the City beyond the two-hundredth mile all the gladiatorial households [schools] to this man alone, he [Caesar] granted that he restore the two persons named Pompeius to their home town. On the occasion of his wedding, he gifted the sum of 50 bronze <i>nummi</i> to every single decurion, to the people he gave 20 silver <i>denarii</i> for each <i>Augustalis</i>, and 20 <i>nummi</i> for each <i>paganus</i>. He organized great spectacles on two occasions without any burden upon the community. For these things, with the people demanding it, when the entire local senate agreed that he should be coopted as patron, and the <i>duovir</i> put the</p>
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				<p><i>consentiret ut patronus cooptaretur et Ilvir referret, ipse privatus intercessit dicens non sustinere se civium suorum esse patronum.</i></p>	<p>issue to the local senate for a vote, he himself in a private capacity intervened and said that he was unable to allow that he be a patron of his own citizens. Now, since his munificence had coincided with a famine, for this reason, for four years, he fed them; for him the concern for his fellow citizens was greater than his concern for his own patrimony; in fact, having quoted a five denarii bushel of wheat, he bought it and placed it at the disposal of the people at three victors (at the bushel). And so that this liberality might reach everyone, he distributed to the citizens individually through his friends a quantity of baked bread equivalent to three victors. On the occasion of his show which he had organized before the senate, for all the days of the games, for every type of fight (scheduled) he supplied animals of all species without distinction to the hunts. And since Caesar had given orders to deport all the (condemned) families from the city beyond the two hundredth mile, he allowed only the latter to bring the Pompeii back to their homeland. On the occasion of his marriage he bestowed the sum of fifty <i>nummi</i> to each single decurion, as regards the people twenty <i>denarii</i> for each augustal and twenty <i>nummi</i> for each <i>pagus</i>.</p>
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					<p>On two occasions he organized great shows without any burden on the community.</p> <p>For all these things, based on the citizenship request, all decurions agreeing that he was co-opted as patron, while the duovir reported (to the assembly) himself, as a private citizen, opposed his veto, stating that he was not able to be patron of its citizens.” (Massimo Ossana, p. 314 (2018).)</p>
Epigraphy – Funerary Monuments	SG7	<p>Tomb with relief depicting gladiatorial combats.</p> <p>Presumed to be top piece that was attached to a tomb (maybe attached to tomb SG6. Determined by the length of both monuments) and measures 1.5 m high and 4.23 m long.</p> <p>Divided into three registers. The first shows events prior to the start of <i>munera</i> including the procession of gladiators and animals that will be displayed. The inspection of the weapons by the editor (<i>probatio armorum</i>) is also displayed.</p> <p>The second register shows 5 pairs of gladiators engaged in combat.</p>	Porta Stabia	N/A	N/A

		The third and final register depicts scenes of a beast hunt (<i>venatio</i>), with wild boar, deer, dogs, and a bull) and <i>bestiarii</i> .			
Epigraphy – Funerary Monuments	VGJ	<p>This tomb contains two depictions of gladiators on the inner side of the west wall. The background of the wall is painted red and shows a victorious gladiator (left) standing over his defeated opponent (right).</p> <p>The victorious gladiator wears a loincloth, and a transparent off-white tunic covering his chest. The right arm is covered in a <i>manica</i> and he has a <i>sica</i> in hand. The left arm is bare but holds a shield. The legs are covered with high leggings (<i>ocreae</i>) and the thighs are wrapped with decorated bands. On the head is a brimmed helmet with a yellow plume and based on this armor this gladiator is identified as a <i>Thraex</i>.</p> <p>The defeated opponent has fallen on the ground and leans against his left arm that grips his shield. The right hand holds a</p>	Porta Vesuvio	<p><i>C(aio) Vestorio Prisco aedil(i)</i> <i>Vixit annis XXII</i> <i>Locus sepulturae datus et in</i> <i>funere (sestertium) duo milia</i> <i>D(ecreto) D(ecurionum)</i> <i>Mulvia Prisca mater p(ecunia) s(ua)</i></p>	<p>“To Gaius Vestorius Priscus, Aedile. He lived 22 years. His burial place was granted along with 2,000 sesterces for his funeral by decree of the town councillors. Mulvia Prisca, his mother, set this up at [her own] expense.”</p>

		<p>short sword (<i>gladius</i>). This gladiator wears the same loincloth with a transparent off-white tunic as his opponent. The legs of this gladiator are covered with shorter boots, and he has only one decorated band on his left knee. The helmet has an angular crest, a wavy brim, without a plume. Based on this armour, this gladiator is identified as a <i>hoplomachus</i>.</p>			
Physical Representation – Private	House of Anicetus	<p>Three separate depictions of gladiators. First is the fresco depicting the Riot of the Amphitheatre between Pompeians and the Nuceriens in 59 CE. The second and third depictions show two combat scenes at the end of battle, with each defeated gladiator on their knees. Both the second and third depiction frame either side of the fresco. The second and third depictions are now lost.</p>	(I.3.23): On western wall of courtyard (peristyle, not near entryway)	N/A	N/A
Physical Representation – Private	House of the Priest Amandus	<p>Depicts two individuals on horseback and two additional people on foot who were armed</p>	(I.7.7): Right hand wall of long vestibule (near entryway)	N/A	N/A

		with shields, helmets, and swords. Has been argued to a military scene and not gladiatorial combat.			
Physical Representation – Private	House of Loreius Tiburtinus or House of D. Octavius Quartio	Depicted a victorious gladiator and a defeated competitor who lost his shield. On a yellow background. – Now lost.	(II.2.2): On the façade to the right of rear entrance to a large garden (near entryway)	N/A	N/A
Physical Representation – Private	House of Holconius Rufus	One gladiator depicted with a rectangular shield, helmet, and sword. – Now lost.	(VIII.4.4): Lower portion of wall (peristyle, not near entryway)	N/A	N/A
Physical Representation – Private	House of the Red Walls	This shrine (<i>lararium</i>) contained a tympanum decorated with weapons used by gladiators including helmets, greaves, shields, and daggers. The shrine itself remains, but the decoration of gladiatorial arms has since deteriorated.	(VIII.5.37): On the tympanum in the atrium (near entryway)	N/A	N/A
Physical Representation – Private	House of the Sculptor or <i>Casa dello Scultore</i>	Depicts combat between a pair of gladiators. Both armed with rectangular shields and swords. – Partially deteriorated.	(VIII.7.24): Eastern wall of large peristyle adjacent to a small theatre (not near entryway)	N/A	N/A

Physical Representation – Private	House at IX.9.d	A pair of gladiators engaged in combat. – Now lost.	(IX.9.d): To the left of outer wall (near entryway)	N/A	N/A
Physical Representation – Public	Thermopolium	A pair a gladiators engaged in combat. – Now lost.	(I.4.27) Location not documented during excavation	N/A	N/A
Physical Representation – Public	Bar	Two separate scenes. First on the left-hand side is a depiction of a pair of gladiators (suggested to be a <i>murmillo</i> and a <i>Thracian</i>). The <i>Thracian</i> stands upright with his shield, while the <i>murmillo</i> who has lost his shield signals for mercy. The second scene on the adjacent wall partially depicts another individual. Based on what remains, it is suggested that the individual is an umpire overseeing the combat.	(V.8): Beneath a staircase to the left of the entrance (front room, near entryway)	N/A	N/A
Physical Representation – Public	Shop	Depicted a scene of gladiatorial combat and beast hunts. - Now lost.	(VII.4.26): Cubiculum off of the atrium (not near entryway)	N/A	N/A
Physical Representation – Public	Thermopolium	Two separate depictions. One pair of gladiators engaged in combat at the end of their battle. The second	(VII.5.14): Façade (near entryway)	N/A	N/A

		depiction shows the same pair of gladiators, (although much smaller and in the background), preparing for the combat. – Now lost.			
Physical Representation – Public	Suburban Baths	Multiple depictions of gladiators. Due to poor preservation, the depictions are difficult to reconstruct. Although, one depiction likely shows the end of combat as one gladiator is seen lying on the ground.	(VII.16.a): In the corridor connecting the changing rooms to the rest of the building (Vestibule, near entryway)	N/A	N/A
Physical Representation – Public	Caupona and Dwelling	A pair of gladiators engaged in combat. – Now lost.	(IX.3.13): On western wall of front room, on the left of the entrance (front room, near entryway)	N/A	N/A
Physical Representation – Public	Room and Bar	A pair of gladiators at the end of combat. The victorious gladiator appears to be about to make the final strike against his defeated opponent.	(IX.9.8): Behind marble counter on the left (front room, near entryway)	N/A	N/A
Physical Representation – Public	Caupona of Purpurio	A pair of gladiators at the end of combat. The victorious gladiator is depicted without his weapons, bleeding from his leg, and signaling for mercy.	(IX.12.7): Immediately to the right of entryway	N/A	N/A