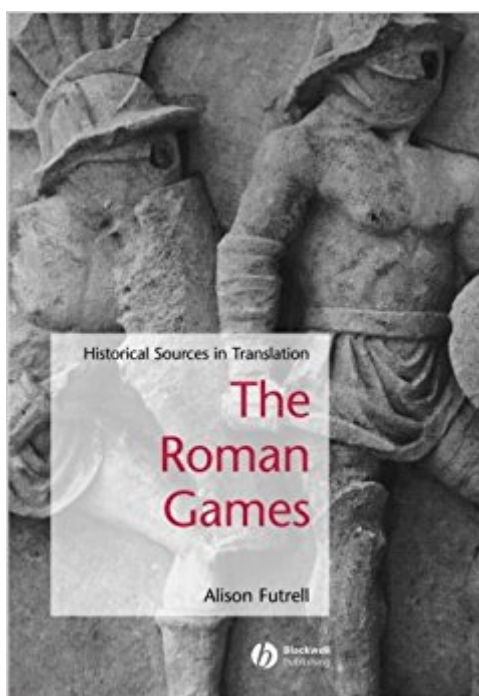


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# The Roman Games: A Sourcebook (Blackwell Sourcebooks In Ancient History)



## Synopsis

This sourcebook presents a wealth of material relating to every aspect of Roman spectacles, especially gladiatorial combat and chariot racing. Draws on the words of eye-witnesses and participants, as well as depictions of the games in mosaics and other works of art. Offers snapshots of "a day at the games" and "the life of a gladiator". Includes numerous illustrations. Covers chariot-races, water pageants, naval battles and wild animal fights, as well as gladiatorial combat. Combines political, social, religious and archaeological perspectives. Facilitates an in-depth understanding of this important feature of ancient life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A lively and wide-ranging collection of sources on Roman public spectacle. Alison Futrell has made an excellent selection and she introduces and links the extracts with very lucid and helpful commentary. This book will be enormously beneficial for students and helpful to scholars too." Jonathan Edmondson, York University, Toronto "This excellent book promises to be an invaluable resource for anyone interested in the violent entertainments of the Roman arena. Futrell's collection of sources enables readers to see the broader context of the games, offering a first rate collection of material for life outside the amphitheater, as well as for events that took place within it." David Potter, University of Michigan "Futrell's main purpose is to provide interesting, unusual material, and this she does ... Her brief explanatory notes are insightful, learned and intended to provoke further research. Those interested in ancient Rome will welcome this fine sourcebook ... Highly recommended." Choice "This very useful book provides a

wide-ranging collection of sources of different types on this ever-popular branch of Roman civilisation, offering valuable insights into aspects of Roman public entertainment. . . a worthwhile purchase for the school library." *Journal of Classics Teaching*

This sourcebook presents a wealth of material that casts light on the rich tradition of Roman spectacle, with special focus on gladiatorial combat and chariot racing. Drawing on literary descriptions, inscriptions, reliefs, mosaics, and archaeological features, *The Roman Games* offers a range of political, social, and religious perspectives. Featuring the accounts of eyewitnesses and participants, the book reconstructs the experience of "a day at the games" and the expectations of "the life of a gladiator." The editor provides historical framework and analytical commentary for each of the entries, as well as a glossary of technical terms and a timeline to give additional context for students and general readers.

This Blackwell Publishing series "Historical Sources in Translation" is a true treasure for the student of particular periods, personalities or subjects such as Alexander the Great or the ancient Near East. This volume is dedicated to the Roman Games, and just like the other books, it gives translations of many important texts and epigraphic inscriptions with useful comments by Alison Futrell. Instead of just receiving the information as a "fact", the reader/student can understand where we get the information. He can feel the source and it will transport the reader to the life and minds of those who experienced the Roman Games. Several aspects are detailed including the beginnings of the games and the political importance; the venues where the games were displayed both temporary and permanent, in Italy and throughout the empire, why there were much more venues specifically dedicated to munera in the western world; how a typical day at the games was and what qualified as good or bad spectacle; how did gladiators live, how they've become gladiators, what was their survivability rate; the persecutions of the Christians and the details regarding the games we can find out in the martyr acts and other Christian texts; the author also gives some information regarding chariot races, water displays, fan clubs and spectator violence among many other issues. It is well annotated and have a nice further reading guide and timeline of roman history (highlighting relevant games related events). There are some minor mistakes such as stating that the colony of Urso in Baetica is situated in modern day Portugal (in fact it is in Spain, in Osuna), but it's a wonderful way to get acquainted with some primary sources

and learn about the Roman games.

I enjoyed it thoroughly. It was fascinating. If my recommendations mean anything, I endorse the book if your interest is ancient Rome.

Great format. The way it is formatted (showing primary source quotes and then analysis) is very helpful.

This book met my expectations and was useful for my research on the use of sport and spectacle in Rome.

This book provides numerous accounts of ancient Roman sources, from Ovid to Cicero. The author's work is thorough--Futrell's guiding passages are juxtaposed between translated passages from Ancient Rome, weaving the entire book together. This book is excellent for researching the overt political nature of Roman games and probably one of the best guides for researching the nature of the gladiator. The ancient passages which Futrell selects are entertaining and informative. Just remember that poets, such as Ovid, have been translated for a strictly serviceable purpose of illuminating the games, and have been stripped of their poetic appeal. This actually helps the book, as it merges with the lively and scholarly prose without turning it into a laborious effort of poetic study. As a book to use for both academic work and reading, this is a fulfilling text. There are many excellent passages and a clearly defined bibliography in the back, making it easy for inquisitive readers to find source texts and pursue their own branches of research. Highly recommended.

This wonderful book will answer all your questions about the Roman games. Included are pictures of various Roman arenas and many well chosen early sources about the games. Spectacle and pagan religious rites combined in the games, and the games themselves grew ever more lavish, and ever bloodier, as the empire expanded. "From fairly early days, animals had been part of the religious festivals...meant to guarantee the good-will of Rome's gods" (p 7). Futrell examines the politics behind the games, with men like Caesar currying support of the mob by putting on games. "The shows offered the opportunity for the audience to express popular feeling on important matters" (p 24) although Cicero acknowledges that "cliques could, through rehearsed chants, manufacture a false 'will of the people'" (p 25). Among the many condemned who were dragged to the arena to be killed were Christians. "The real crime committed by the Christians was...refusing to

participate in public religion, Christians threatened everyone by provoking the rage of the gods" (p 162). To give you an idea of just how popular the games were in ancient Rome, consider this: One temporary amphitheater collapsed, according to Tacitus and Dio Cassius, and that killed 50,000 people. Chariot races, gladiators, and water sports are also included in this in depth exploration of the games.

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