

## AN UNNOTICED GLADIATORIAL PUN IN SUETONIUS<sup>1</sup>

Abstract: The text of Suetonius, Caligula 35.3 does not make perfect sense as it stands. Perhaps it conceals a pun, the expression *calcata lacinia* meaning both “the lappet of his toga having been trod upon” and “his gladiatorial group having been scorned”.

Keywords: Caligula, curse tablets, fans, gladiators, *lacinia*, puns, Suetonius, togas

At the end of a section of his biography of Caligula concerning the emperor’s envious nature, Suetonius includes a humorous episode involving the incensed ruler tumbling down a flight of stairs (35.3):

*Cum quodam die muneris essedario Porio post prosperam pugnam servum suum manumittenti studiosius plausum esset, ita proripuit se spectaculis, ut calcata lacinia togae praeceps per gradus iret, indignabundus et clamitans dominum gentium populum ex re levissima plus honoris gladiatori tribuentem quam consecratis principibus aut praesenti sibi.*

When on one of the days of the show there was rather fervent applause for the chariot-fighter Porius for freeing his own slave after a successful fight, he (Caligula) rushed from the spectacles in such a way that, with the lappet of his toga trod upon, he went headlong down the steps, enraged and shouting that the populace, the master of peoples, was bestowing more honour on a gladiator for a very insignificant matter than to the deified emperors or to the one present with them.

The reason given in indirect speech for Caligula’s consternation is somewhat puzzling. It would be understandable if Caligula simply envied the attention that Porius received just as he had reputedly envied the attention once received by Ptolemaeus upon entering a

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theatre (35.1), but that is not stated to be the case here.<sup>2</sup> Rather the implication is that the audience instead of applauding Porius should be honouring (at that moment, as the present tense of *tribuentem* indicates) the deified emperors (presumably Julius Caesar and Augustus are meant) and Caligula. It makes little sense that as Porius is freeing his slave the crowd's attention should be turned to Caligula (and less so, to deified emperors) or that Caligula should expect it to be so turned and think himself personally offended as the emperor if it is not.

I suggest that the reason given for Caligula's ire has been tacked on to an anecdote which either Suetonius or his source failed to understand properly because it involved a bit of witticism which revolved around an unrecognized pun.<sup>3</sup> Arguably, in a number of passages in the biography of Caligula, Suetonius or his source has misunderstood a word or overlooked a pun, as shown by David Woods.<sup>4</sup> There is no doubt that Suetonius's source material included

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2) E. Gunderson, *The Ideology of the Arena*, CA 15 (1996) 113–51, at 130, took Caligula's rage in both instances to be due to the fact that all the attention was not focused upon him during his shows. D. W. Hurley, *An Historical and Historiographical Commentary on Suetonius' Life of C. Caligula*, Atlanta 1993, 136, simply spoke of "Gaius' envy of the applause for Porius". Incidentally, Porius is known from elsewhere (contra H. Lindsay, *Suetonius. Caligula*, Bristol 1993, 129 and D. Wardle, *Suetonius' Life of Caligula: A Commentary*, Brussels 1994, 15); in fact he became so celebrated that his name survives on Gallic glassware (see G. Ville, *La gladiature en Occident des origines à la mort de Domitien*, Rome 1981, 336). For another occasion when Caligula was angry and left the games, see Cass. Dio 59.13.7.

3) Series of examples in the life of Caligula often end with a climactic punchline or apophthegm; see Wardle (n. 2 above) 24, referencing section 35, among others, and Hurley (n. 2 above) 136–7, considering this passage to be a "perfect climax" for the section on envy. I suggest that since the punchline seemed to be missing here (with the pun unrecognized) an apophthegm was added.

4) Misunderstood words may occur at 21 (Seven Notes on the Reign of Caligula, in: C. Deroux [ed.], *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History XVI*, Brussels 2012, 437–71, at 462–7 [taking *regia* to mean "palace" rather than "household"]), 23.1 (Caligula on Augustus' Alleged Incest with Julia, RhM 152 [2009] 400–4 [confusing Augustus's daughter Julia with his wife Livia, also known as Julia]), 25.3 (Caligula Displays Caesonia [Suet. Calig. 25.3], RhM 157 [2014] 27–36 [taking *nuda* to mean "naked" rather than "unarmed"]), 32.3 (Seven Notes, 452–4 [confusing the name Sacerdos with the role of *sacerdos* or priest]; for a rebuttal, see T. Power, *Caligula and the Bludgeoned Priest*, Mnemosyne 68 [2015] 131–5), 37.1 (Seven Notes, 459–462 [taking a reference to golden dishes to refer to food rather than to plates]), 45.2–3 (Seven Notes, 444–52 [taking a lost *studiosus* to

many puns, and Suetonius was not averse to repeating at least some of them. One basic type of pun in Latin (as in English) relies on a word having more than one meaning.<sup>5</sup> This may be termed an “equivoque” and is found a number of times in the *Lives*.<sup>6</sup> An example (whose authorship is uncredited, but is known to be by the inveterate punster Cicero) occurs in the life of Augustus (12): some said of him *ornandum tollendumque iactassent*, that is, that they should have gotten rid of the one to be honoured and extolled, or else the one to be removed, playing on the double meaning of *tollere*.<sup>7</sup> Common targets of word

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mean “scholarly” rather than “eager”), and 46 (Caligula’s Seashells, G&R 47 [2000] 80–7 [taking *conchae* to mean seashells rather than small boats]; for a refutation, see S. J. V. Malloch, Gaius on the Channel Coast, CQ 51 [2001] 551–6, esp. 551–2). Overlooked puns may occur at 33 (Seven Notes, 454–9 [taking *maximus* as an adjective rather than a title]), 47 (Caligula’s Gallic Captives [Suet. Calig. 47], Latomus 66 [2007] 900–4 [punning on Ἀτριβάτιοι and Ἀθριάμβευτοι]), and 55.3 (Caligula, Incitatus, and the Consulship, CQ 64 [2014] 772–7 [not realizing that the supposed consulship of the horse Incitatus was a sly reference to Asinius Celer]).

5) J. D. Sadler, Latin Paronomasia, CJ 78 (1982–3) 138–41, at 138, specified three types of puns found in ancient Latin authors: the use of one word in two senses, the use of two words with the same spelling or sound, and the use of two words with a different spelling or sound. He provided a number of examples, though none from Suetonius. For the second type in Suetonius, see Nero’s joke (Nero 33.1) that once Claudius had died *morari eum desisse inter homines*, either “he had ceased to remain among men” or “he had stopped being foolish in the midst of people”, conflating *morari* and *mōrari*. Sometimes such puns are bilingual, like the ἀρκεῖ (“it suffices”) supposedly written on one of the arches of Domitian who was said to have built too many of them (Dom. 13.2). Note also the pun on Florus and Flaurus (φλαῦρος) at Vesp. 22; T. L. Zinn, A Pun in Suetonius, CR n. s. 1 (1951) 10, identified another bilingual pun directly afterwards in the same passage (*adamato* for ἄδαμάτω), but see the objections of A. Hudson-Williams, Suetonius, Vesp. 22, CR n. s. 2 (1952) 72–3. For the third type of pun in Suetonius, see the nickname Biberius Caldius Mero for Tiberius Claudius Nero at Tib. 42.1 (also in Aurel. Vict. Epit. 2.2).

6) See E. S. McCartney, Puns and Plays on Proper Names, CJ 14 (1919) 343–58, at 344–6, with many examples (including some from Suetonius at 345 n. 3). J. Brown, Eight Types of Puns, PMLA 71 (1956) 14–26, distinguished between various types of equivoques, depending on whether the word’s meanings are literal or metaphoric, and in regard to syntax and/or sense, as well as whether the syntax of the sentence in which the word occurs is literal or metaphoric to sense.

7) See Cic. Fam. 11.20.1 and Vell. Pater. 2.62.6. In another instance, in an epigram, the same equivoque is repeated twice, each time with a different meaning (Nero 39.2 = Versus populares 14a Courtney): *Quis negat Aeneae magna de stirpe Neronem? / Sustulit hic matrem, sustulit ille patrem* (“Who denies that Nero comes from the lofty lineage of Aeneas? While one carried off [that is, killed] his mother, the other carried off [that is, lifted away] his father”).

play are proper names; one instance is found in Suetonius's discussion of the uprising of Vindex in A. D. 68 (Nero 45.2): *Iam noctibus iurgia cum servis plerique simulantes crebro Vindicem posebant*. Since in the original Latin no distinction could be made between common and proper nouns, this can be read to mean, "Moreover during the nights, many, feigning quarrels with their slaves, would often request a defender" or else "would often beg for Vindex".<sup>8</sup> Other examples of equivoques rely on the ambiguity of more than a single word, including sequences of two or even three words which can each be read in two different ways. Suetonius reports (Tib. 57.2) that when someone complained that the legacies which Augustus had promised had not been distributed, the emperor Tiberius ordered that he *recipere debitum*, which can mean both "get the money owed him" and "receive his due punishment".<sup>9</sup> A three word example referencing Nero is found in the same passage concerning Vindex's uprising quoted above (Nero 45.2): *Ascriptum et columnis, etiam Gallos eum cantando excitasse*. This can be understood to mean, "It was also written on columns that he had even roused (to rebellion) the Gauls by singing" or else "woken up roosters by crowing". Either way the line seems to poke fun at Nero's musical pretensions.

I propose that a sequence of two equivoques may be concealed in Suetonius's passage on Caligula's tumble down the stairs. Caligula, angered at the attention given to the chariot-fighter Porrius, leaves and trips "with the lappet of his toga trod upon" (*calcata lacinia togae*). While another passage of Suetonius (Claud. 15.3) also has the same pairing *lacinia togae* (in the context of people pleading with Claudius by holding him back by his clothes), a third passage (Nero 19.1) does not further define the *lacinia* of Nero which "got stuck" (*obhaesit*) as he was getting up. The omission in the third passage of the word *togae* could possibly indicate that the instances

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8) Compare the pun on *rex* meaning "king" and Rex as a proper name at Jul. 79.2 (already found in Cic. Attic. 1.16.10 and Hor. Sat. 1.7). Note also the word play on Frugi at Cal. 37.1 (A. A. Barrett, *Caligula: The Abuse of Power*, London / New York 2015, 287) and on Ahenobarbus at Nero 2.2 (V. J. Matthews, *Some Puns on Roman Cognomina*, G&R 20 [1973] 20–4, at 23).

9) See T. Power, *Pyrrhus and Priam in Suetonius' Tiberius*, CQ 62 (2012) 430–3, at 431. Another example is arguably the *hasta pura* or headless spear given to a eunuch at Claud. 28, which seems to play on his pristine penis; see W. M. Calder, III, *Suetonius, Claudius 28*, LCM 8 (1983) 100.

of *togae* in the other two passages are intrusive glosses clarifying the meaning of *lacinia*.<sup>10</sup> This might have been necessary as Suetonius's *lacinia* would have likely been a sartorial feature unfamiliar to medieval readers, since, as the parts of each end of the garment hanging down, *lacinae* were peculiar to the toga.<sup>11</sup> Alternatively, Suetonius or his source may have added the rather superfluous *togae* in this passage to emphasize how the formal garment had been degraded through the emperor's loss of dignity, without realizing that in so doing a pun was being obscured.<sup>12</sup> In any case, with *togae* omitted, the words *calcata lacinia* on their own could arguably be understood to refer to Caligula's gladiatorial favourites being scorned.

First off, the metaphorical meaning of *calcatum* as "scorned" is clearly attested in other authors.<sup>13</sup> Obviously it relies upon the notion that disdain for a thing can be displayed by trampling over it, and Suetonius himself (Vesp. 5.3) uses the image of the state being trod upon (that is despised) as well as forsaken (*proculcatam desertamque*) during the civil war of A. D. 69.

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10) Such interpolations have long been identified in a number of passages of Suetonius's lives; see the various suggestions in G. Becker, *Quaestiones criticae de C. Suetonii Tranquilli de vita Caesarum libris VIII*, Memel 1862, xviii–xxi. Just in the life of Caligula, M. Ihm (ed.), *C. Suetoni Tranquilli Opera*, vol. 1, Leipzig 1933, placed square brackets around *auctor* at 8.5 (157), *serpentis id genus* at 11 (159), and *hoc est inuerecundiam* at 29 (172). See also the comments of M. E. Deutsch, *Suetonius and Caesar's German Campaigns*, TAPA 47 (1916) 23–33, at 28 and n. 10. Admittedly, the collocation is found in other authors, such as Vell. Pater. 2.3.1 (*togae lacinia*) and Paul. Fest. s. v. *armita* 4.1 Lindsay (*lacinia togae*).

11) One end fell from the left shoulder in the front, while the other end (once the garment was wrapped about the body) fell at the back (see L. Cleland / G. Davies / L. Llewelyn-Jones, *Greek and Roman Dress from A to Z*, London / New York 2007, 191 and U. Rothe, *The Toga and Roman Identity*, London 2020, 26–7). If the toga was improperly draped, one of the *lacinae* could trail on the ground (Macr. Sat. 2.3.9), and the wearer could potentially trip on it. *Lacinia* is often mistranslated as a hem, border, or fringe, making it seem like a feature which could be found on all sorts of different types of common clothing. However, it is properly a lappet, or hanging part; compare the *lacinae ... dependentes* or hanging dewlaps of she-goats at Plin. 8.76.202.

12) As suggested to me by Tony Barrett per litteram.

13) See, for instance, Suetonius's older contemporary Statius at Theb. 3.208–9: *nec adhuc calcati foederis Argos / fama subit* ("the report of the trodden upon / scorned treaty has not yet reached the Argives").

On the other hand, while the term *lacinia* is certainly connected to arena spectacles in epigraphic sources, its exact meaning, or rather its range of meanings, has yet to be properly elucidated. A tombstone from Ancona dating to the early second century A.D. (and thus roughly contemporaneous with Suetonius) reads: *D(is) m(anibus) | Ti(berio) Claudio | Celeri pr(a)e|coni ex lac(inia) Cl(audi) Sat(ur)ni Be(ryllus) secun(da) rudis et o(ffic)iales cun(c)|ti b(ene) m(erenti)* (“For the shades of the dead. To Tiberius Claudius Celer the well-deserving announcer, from the *lacinia* of Claudius Saturninus, Beryllus the second-tier referee and all the officials [made this]”).<sup>14</sup> Patrizia Sabbatini Tumolesi further restored the word *lacinia* on a now lost gladiator’s epitaph from Verona.<sup>15</sup> It runs: *D(is) m(anibus) | Aedoni secutoris | pug[n(arum)] VIII | ex lacinia Arianillae | qui vix(it) an(nis) XXVI* (“For the shades of the dead of Aedonius the pursuer with 8 fights, from the *lacinia* of Arianilla, who lived 26 years”).<sup>16</sup>

These two inscriptions indicate that *laciniae* were named after people and that they could include within their ranks a gladiator as well as an announcer. Logically, Walter O. Moeller understood the deceased Celer to have been part of a *familia gladiatoria* (gladiatorial troupe).<sup>17</sup> Other scholars have similarly interpreted the *lacinia* as some sort of division of a gladiatorial *ludus* (school) or of a *familia* (troupe).<sup>18</sup> Some gladiators at the same school or who

14) CIL 9.5906 = ILS 5128 = EAOR 3.63.

15) P. Sabbatini Tumolesi Longo, A proposito di alcune iscrizioni gladiatorie Veronesi, AIV 133 (1974–1975) 435–48, at 438–9. See also P. Sabbatini Tumolesi, Gladiatorium Paria: Annunci di spettacoli gladiatorii a Pompeii, Rome 1980, 148 n.101.

16) CIL 5.3459 (read as *exaccina*[?]) = EAOR 2.49 (read as *ex lacinia*).

17) W. O. Moeller, Juvenal III 29–40 and 152–9, Mnemosyne 22 (1969) 383–8, at 384 n. 2. J.–C. Golvin / C. Landes, Amphithéâtres et gladiateurs, Paris 1990, 181, took the *familia* to be named Lacinia.

18) Sabbatini Tumolesi Longo (n. 15 above) 438–9, M. Buonocore, Epigrafia anfiteatrale dell’occidente romano, vol. 3, Rome 1992, 93, M. Grazia Mosci Sassi, Il linguaggio gladiatorio, Bologna 1992, 123–4 (following Ville [n. 2 above] 274 n. 100), A. Gabucci (ed.), The Colosseum, tr. M. Becker, Los Angeles 2001, 58, and A. Cristofori, Non arma virumque, Bologna 2004, 111–2. The term *lacinia* is used to refer to a sub-group by Columella, who recommends that a flock of sheep be divided *in lacinias* (7.5.3) while she-goats should be bought as a whole herd so that they do not become separate *laciniae* when grazing in the pasture (7.6.5).

were part of the same troupe were evidently separated, due to their particularized training, and presumably to keep away from fellow gladiators whom they would have to face and fight in the arena.<sup>19</sup> Also different announcers may have represented various sections of a school or troupe.<sup>20</sup>

While the interpretation of *lacinia* as a part of a gladiatorial school or troupe makes sense in the context of these two tombstones, another inscription (not cited by the scholars mentioned above) points to a different meaning for the term in relation to arena shows. A lead curse tablet found in the amphitheatre of Carthage dating to the third century A.D. which targets the beast-hunter Sapautoulus, son of Pomponia, includes the following imprecations: *implicate lacinia(m) Sapautoulo in cavea corona amp(h)itheatri* (“bind the lacinia for Sapautoulus in the seating-area crowd of the amphitheatre”) and *lacinia illi implicetur obligetur* (“may the

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19) See G. G. Fagan, Training Gladiators: Life in the Ludus, in: L. L. Brice / D. Slootjes (eds.), *Impact of Empire: Roman Empire, c. 200 B.C.–A.D. 476. Aspects of Ancient Institutions and Geography*, Leiden 2015, 122–44, esp. 131–2, quoting *Juv. Sat.* 6.107–13 for gladiator separation. Compare K. Coleman, *Bonds of Danger: Communal Life in the Gladiatorial Barracks of Ancient Rome*, Sydney 2005, 10, on the possibility of segregation, and 11, on the “unit of cohesion” being the gladiator type or armature. Note further the tombstone put up for a Thracian gladiator by the whole group of Thracian style gladiators (CIL 6.10197 = EAOR 1.97 [*armatura Thraecum universa*]). There were also separate trainers for different gladiator types; see, for instance, the *doctor Thraec(um)* Threption at CIL 6.10192.10–11 = ILS 5091.10–11 = EAOR 1.61.10–11. Within the various separate armatures, gladiators were further separated by palus ranking; see M. Carter, *Gladiatorial Ranking and the SC de Pretiis Gladiatorum Minuendis* (CIL II 6278 = ILS 5163), *Phoenix* 57 (2003) 83–114, esp. 91–3, and Coleman (see above) 13.

20) Moeller (n. 17 above) argued that *praecones* were gladiators. S. A. Bond, *Trade & Taboo: Disreputable Professions in the Roman Mediterranean*, Ann Arbor 2016, 33, noting that there is little evidence for *praecones* working independently of troupes, suggested that they acted as brokers who contracted out for the troupes. Interestingly in the third century A.D. one *πράικων* named Platanos set up a tombstone for a Euchrous, who was a *retiaris* as seen from his image (I. Smyrna 414 in: L. Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l’Orient grec*, Paris 1940, 212, no. 249 = C. Mann, “Um keinen Kranz, um das Leben kämpfen wir!”. *Gladiatoren im Osten des römischen Reiches und die Frage der Romanisierung*, Berlin 2011, 237, no. 125). For the *praeco* / *πράικων*, see also *Juv. Sat.* 3.157, Robert (see above) 228, no. 294 = Mann (see above) 249, no. 156, and Mann (see above) 200, no. 45.

*lacinia* for that man be bound and restrained”).<sup>21</sup> Since the *lacinia* is found among the seating area it was presumably composed of audience members and since it is said to be “for” Sapautoulus (and Sapautoulus is not said to be “from” it as in the other two inscriptions) it is likely a group of fans.<sup>22</sup> The fan clubs of pantomimes and of actors were known as *factiones*, a term Suetonius himself used when speaking of the problems they caused (Tib. 37.2 and Nero 16.2; see also Paul. Fest. s. v. *factio* 76.23–4 Lindsay). Apparently the equivalent term for a beast-hunter’s fan club (or “hangers-on”) was a *lacinia*. Such a fan club evidently could focus on a lone fighter, like Sapautoulus, and similarly single-minded gladiator fans are attested by the term *amatores* in inscriptions.<sup>23</sup> However, just as sports aficionados today may have favourite teams as well as favourite players, ancient fans sometimes followed a favourite sodality of beast-hunters or a preferred type of gladiator, rather than simply one individual.<sup>24</sup> Thus as Suetonius stated (Titus 8.2), the

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21) A. Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae*, Paris 1904, 348, no. 252.11–2 (ειπλικατε λακινια | Σαπαυτούλο τν καρνα κορονα αμπιθεατρι) and 36–7 (λακινια ιλλι ινπλικητουρ | οβλιγητουρ) = IGRRP 1.946.11–12 and 36–67; as can be seen here, the original text is composed in Latin but written in Greek letters. See also the restored *lacinia* at Audollent (see above) 352, no. 253, l. 58 (which is left blank in IGRRP 1.947.58). These curse tablets are also found in A. Kropp, *Defixiones. Ein aktuelles Corpus lateinischer Fluchtafeln*, Speyer 2008, n.p., nos. 11.1.1/27 and 11.1.1/28. Audollent (see above) 349, took Sapautoulus to be a gladiator but the reference to an *ursellus* (“little bear”) at no. 252.37 as well as the evidence from other similar curse tablets from Carthage show that he was a beast-hunter; see J. Tremel, *Magica agonistica: Fluchtafeln im antiken Sport*, Hildesheim 2004, 260 and A. Sparreboom, *Venationes Africanae: Hunting Spectacles in Roman North Africa: Cultural Significance and Social Function*, PhD Thesis, Amsterdam 2016, 142–8 and 156–60.

22) Tremel (n. 21 above) 231, implausibly took the *lacinia* to be pieces of cloth (“Stofffetzen”) which were to be bound around Sapautoulus. See also TLL 7.2, 835.

23) A tombstone from Milan (CIL 5.5933 = ILS 5115 = EAOR 2.50) for the *secutor* Urbicus set up by his family members enjoins his fans to celebrate his spirit (*colant Manes amatores ipsius*) and fans (*amatores*) helped set up a tombstone for a gladiator in Verona (CIL 5.3466 = ILS 5121 = EAOR 2.47). Compare Tertullian’s description (Spect. 22) of performers (*amatissimos, quibus viri animas, feminae autem illis etiam corpora sua substernunt*: “exceedingly loved, to whom men surrender their souls and women even their bodies”).

24) For sodalities of beast-hunters and their fans, see Sparreboom (n. 21 above) 178–84. J. L. Franklin, Jr., *Pantomimists at Pompeii: Actius Anicetus and his Troupe*, *AJP* 108 (1987) 95–107, at 106, pointed out that gladiatorial fans formed “loose *sodalicia* or *collegia*”. See also G. G. Fagan, *The Lure of the Arena: Social Psy-*



emperor Titus could not conceal his *studium armorum Thraecum* (“enthusiasm for the Thracians’ armature”). Presumably the division (*lacinia*) of the *ludus* or *familia* which was made up of Thracians could be confounded with the group of fans of that armature (arguably also *lacinia*, if the term in fact could apply to gladiator fans as well as beast-hunter fans). By using the word *lacinia* for their own association, supporters could present themselves as part of the same group to which their favourite arena fighter belonged.

It follows then that the polysemous quip *calcata lacinia* could be understood in terms of Caligula’s intense involvement in gladiatorial shows.<sup>25</sup> Unlike most other emperors, Caligula was not simply a provider of such shows; he also oversaw his own gladiators and considered himself a gladiator. According to Pliny the Elder, Caligula had his own *ludus* (11.54.144 [of 20 or 20,000 pairs of gladiators depending on the reading]), among whom was a Thracian gladiator named Studiosus (11.99.245).<sup>26</sup> Caligula even fought as a gladiator (Cass. Dio 59.5.5), appearing as a Thracian (Suet. Cal. 54.1), and once, as a Thracian, he faced in a sparring exhibition a *murmillo*, whom he stabbed even though he had already yielded (32.2). Presumably it was as a Thracian fan that he depreciated the *murmillones* (55.2), the regular opponents of the Thracians.<sup>27</sup> Thracian fans, which included the emperor Titus as indicated above,

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chology and the Crowd at the Roman Games, Cambridge / New York 2011, 219–20 and 261, who noted that the paucity of the evidence for gladiator partisanship shows that it was not as widespread as that for circus teams.

25) See Ville (n. 2 above) 168–9.

26) Interestingly a Thracian gladiator named Studiosus set up a tombstone in Cordoba for his “brother” (*frater*), the *murmillo* Ampliatus (CIL 22.7.356 = EAOR 7.22), despite their traditional rivalry (see n. 27 below).

27) Among others, Wardle (n. 2 above) 349, believed that Caligula reduced the amount of armour worn by *murmillones*; however, *murmillonum armorum recidit* should be read as “he diminished in importance the gladiatorial type of the *murmillones*” (see E. Teyssier, *La mort en face: le dossier gladiateurs*, Arles 2009, 12). Ausonius (12.12.3 = 12.103) mentions the Thracian as the main opponent of the *murmillo*, and the pairing is also attested in Cic. Phil. 6.13 and 7.17, Suet. Dom. 10.1, and CIL 4.2508. See further Teyssier (see above) 97–107 (for the genesis of this pairing and its great popularity in the first century A. D.) and 290–6 (for the combat techniques involved), who cited evidence from depictions as well. For Caligula as a likely Thracian fan, see Ville (n. 2 above) 444, who pointed out that no source states explicitly that he was such a supporter.

were numerous enough to have their own term applied to them: *parmularii*.<sup>28</sup> Suetonius even reports that Caligula put Thracian gladiators in command of his German bodyguards (55.2), and these Thracians would have presumably accompanied him as a protective detail to the arena, clearly exhibiting to all Caligula's gladiatorial allegiance.<sup>29</sup>

According to this interpretation of Suetonius's passage – as it might have stood in its original context without the word *togae* or the section at the end with indirect speech – Caligula was not angry that Porius the chariot-fighter was being praised and he was being ignored even though he was the emperor, but he was infuriated that he was being insulted as a Thracian gladiator and fan, presumably since highly enthusiastic applause was to be reserved only for his Thracians.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps when Caligula tripped after storming off, some now anonymous wag devised a pun later unrecognized and then obscured in the expanded retelling of the story: at the same time, the Thracian division of Caligula's school or else his Thracian

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28) Suet. Dom. 10.1 (only here is the term explicitly linked to Thracians), Quint. Inst. 2.11.2, Marc. Aurel. Med. 1.5 (παλμουλάριος), and CIL 6.9719.12 = ILS 7492.12 (a tombstone from Rome). The name comes from the Thracian's shield, the *parma* (Plin. 33.45.129, and see Mart. Epigr. 9.68.8 and 14.215) or *parmula* (Suet. Dom. 10.1 and Paul. Fest. s.v. *Thraeces* 503.23–4 Lindsay, and see Quint. Inst. 2.11.2).

29) Although the bodyguards were horsemen, when necessary they went on foot, as they accompanied the emperor wherever he went (see M. P. Speidel, *Riding for Caesar: The Roman Emperors' Horse Guards*, Cambridge, Mass. 1994, esp. 129–30). The head of Caligula's bodyguards was the gladiator Sabinus (Jos. Ant. 19.1.15 = 19.122 and Cass. Dio 60.28.2).

30) After all, it would only make sense for Studiosus the Thracian to garner *studiosus* ("fervent") applause. Compare Suet. Cal. 30.2 on Caligula once being *in-fensus turbae faventi adversus studium* ("upset at the crowd for favouring an opposing team"). Note also Pliny the Younger's comment on Domitian (Pan. 33.4): *se despici et contemni, nisi etiam gladiatores eius veneremur, sibi male dici in illis, suam divinitatem suum numen violari interpretabatur* ("he considered himself to be slighted and disdained unless we revered his gladiators, interpreting anything said negatively of them to reflect on himself, with his own divinity, his own godhead being dishonoured"). Wardle (n. 2 above) 274, suggested that "the crowd gave Porius more applause than Caligula", and Barrett (n. 8 above) 305, proposed that the audience gave Porius "a thundering round of applause, apparently more voluble than the one they had earlier given Caligula"; instead they might have given less applause to Caligula's team than to Porius.

fan club had been scorned (*calcata lacinia*) and also the lappet of his toga had accidentally been trod upon (*calcata lacinia*), a terrible situation indeed for an egomaniacal emperor.

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