

Gladiators and the History of Human Combat

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Entertainment

Midnight Facts for Insomniacs

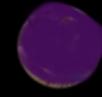
Podcast Transcript

(Note: transcript consists of episode outline)

I want to start by reading a message we received from one of the insomniacs...probably one of my favorite messages we've ever received. I'll redact names and identifiable characteristics.

4:05 ↗

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sam
Active now



Hi there! I started listening to you guys a few months ago, and I am hooked! I've binged almost every episode. You're hilarious. Felt the need to share this story- I listen to your podcast on my way to and from work as a teacher every day. I guess I've started to incorporate MFFI lingo into my regular speech without really noticing it. For example, I often call my students "whackaloons", whisper "jeebus" under my breath, and will refuse to "sanction any buffoonery" in my classroom.

Anyway, as I was grading final exams this semester, I noticed a note at the bottom of one of my mediocre, yet hilarious, student's paper. It said: Please don't find this creepy. Are you part of the midnight masses, Mrs. [REDACTED]? If you are, check "yes". If you have no idea what I'm talking about, forget I ever asked.

The kid bombed the exam. I let him off with a 'B' and wrote "sleep is overrated".

Cheers, dudes!



Message...



So yeah, that's amazing. I love it. We're influencing the youth AND the educators of the youth, every level of the intellectual food chain. Next the babysitters, we've already converted a good number of moms and dads, so the masses are officially pluralizing. Insomniacs are finding each other, drawing together like beads of mercury they're coalescing and expanding. Be afraid, America. There's strength in numbers. We apologize in advance for the chaos we're

unleashing on the world. But you asked for it. Stop sucking, world, and we'll stop exposing how much you suck. Finally, shoutout to Pennsylvania insomniacs, Pennsylvania has overtaken Texas as the number two American state for downloads, almost tied with California. Nice work, PA. Also the city of fountain Colorado, crushing it.

So on to today's episode: Duncan, do you like movies about gladiators? I've always wanted to have a reason to say that line, it's from a movie I don't even enjoy, and I also don't like gladiator movies so luckily movies are not today's topic, but I have always been mildly and weirdly fascinated with actual bloodsports, any version of combat for entertainment. Which IS our topic today...the history of gladiators and combat sports. And there are plenty of combat sports to choose from even in the modern era. Boxing, MMA, even football, rugby, and the TV show wipeout...we humans love to watch other humans physically punish each other for our entertainment. We haven't reached Squid games level yet, but is it just a matter of time? Maybe.

There's no consensus as to when and how combat became entertainment. It's a weird leap, right? Because for the first long stretch of human evolution, fighting always served a direct purpose, with practical goals that could be achieved by the battle itself... battling over limited resources etc.

Similar to how animals clash in the wild, often for territory or food or sexual partners. But when a couple of rams are banging their heads together in a clearing, there typically isn't an audience of other rams cheering and jeering and drunkenly boasting that they could have done a much better job of head-banging than these two losers. And then high-fiving their hoofs and vomiting all over each other. So why and how did the spectator aspect evolve? Well it most likely stems from the tension between human nature and human civilization. Fundamentally we're animals who are genetically primed for combat, but in order to maintain a civilized society we have to suppress those instincts, and watching combat sports allows us to experience violence indirectly. It's cathartic. MMA is basically the purge. The fans get to release all that pent-up aggression by imagining that they're the ones in the octagon choking out their coworkers, and that vicarious release of aggression allows them to go back to the office on Monday and *not* choke out their coworkers.

And combat sports have been incredibly successful throughout human history, both financially and popularity-wise. Wrestling is presumed to be the oldest, and is actually considered to be a "cultural universal"...every major civilization has a version of wrestling, from Japanese Sumo to classic Greco Roman. Similarly, Boxing stretches back to at

least 3000 BCE in Sumeria. Our topic today—Gladiatorial combat—began before the Roman Republic and would last more than 1000 years. The origins are murky and contested, but many sources point to the Etruscan civilization, which rose in modern-day Italy circa 900 BC. We know that the Campanians—also an ancient Italian culture—hosted gladiatorial schools (individually called Ludus, or plural “ludi”) where gladiators were trained and tested. The largest and most famous of the Ludi would be the Ludus Magnus, which was located near the Coliseum and is my favorite pair of words in this episode because they sound like butt meat. Gluteus Maximus? I’m five. The word gladiator comes from the Gladius, a Latin word for a specific type of short sword often used by gladiators. Although gladiators obviously were also famous for using other, more creative implements like nets and tridents and even a brutal version of boxing gloves called cestus or plural cesti, which consisted of leather strips that were wrapped from fists to forearms and studded across the knuckles with spikes. So not like boxing gloves at all...kind of the opposite, really. Boxing gloves are intended to soften the blow, rather than add puncture wounds to blunt force trauma. It was a different time. “I have an idea, hear me out. How about instead of padded gloves to soften the knuckles we go with cement and razor blades?”

Gladiators were not exactly revered, they were often slaves and prisoners

of war, and even those who were free citizens and/or wealthy were still low status...a far cry from the sporting celebrities of today. They were looked at as brutes and savages and while they may have been admired for their toughness or skill, they weren't celebrated as heroes or role models. But paradoxically Romans were obsessed with the games themselves, it was as if there was only one program on television and everyone watched. It was Game of Thrones with better effects. Life as a gladiator is best described by the famous Thomas Hobbes quote: "nasty, brutish, and short." That was also my dating profile description, pre marriage. But the rewards for a gladiator could be significant. Most notably, a gladiator who performed especially well might be presented with a wooden sword that symbolized freedom, releasing them from their bondage and/or fighting contracts. Many successful gladiators who won their freedom, however, in fact reenlisted; as you can imagine, it's tough to go back to a normal life after years spent committing bloody atrocities in front of ravenous, adoring masses. That's a tough transition. "I guess I'll quit killing in public and go be a barista." You're not really qualified for much. "What was your previous experience? Ah, I see, mostly murder. And now you are applying to work at our...preschool? We'll be in touch." The typical gladiator was a man in his 20s, though women did participate (and as you can imagine, the idea of women fighting

against men was scandalous in the day, and in fact much of the information we have regarding female fighters comes as a result of outraged screeds written by triggered Roman dudes who didn't want to see ladies debase themselves via equality. Acts of violence and senseless carnage, those belong to us. You will not replace us! We demand the right to be the only gender that is regularly dismembered in public. Don't try to shoehorn in on our awfulness.) As mentioned, Gladiators were trained at ludi, which were kind of similar to military training schools, or maybe prison would be a better comparison. Gladiators were fed and housed, but most of them didn't have the ability to come and go at will. Just a few privileged "free" gladiators could leave, which probably made for some awkward moments. "What are you up to tonight, Bill? Oh that's right...you're going to sleep chained to a bunkbed alongside a bunch of large, stinky, hairy men. Cool, cool. I'm going to the pub." To be fair (to be fair) there were conjugal visits allowed, so I guess you had multiple options for releasing tension and stress. Sex AND violence, the pillars of civilized society, and also streaming services. Gladiator schools could be large and elaborate; many featured hospitals, dining areas, forges, armories, and of course the training ground. Training-weapons for gladiators were typically heavier than the standard versions, and this would help the gladiator build up muscle and stamina. Much of the training didn't

actually involve sparring between live combatants, but rather sparring against a 6 foot tall wooden post, similar to the way a boxer works against a heavy bag, pounding away to build up the muscles and endurance required for combat. Extremely effective if your eventual opponent were immobile and inanimate. If you were fighting a scarecrow you had trained appropriately. I hope they had some actual skirmishes.

Life in the training schools seems like it might not have been thoroughly terrible. It was a little like being a prized thoroughbred racehorse, gladiators were massaged and fed and trained and in some ways coddled because they were valuable property. Of course, as a trained combatant the threat of violent death hung over your head every day. A gladiator could expect to fight three or four times a year, and the most elite gladiators might reasonably expect to win their freedom within five years or so. The absolute cream of the crop would be given giant monetary bonuses for victories, and were even bequeathed houses and property by wealthy benefactors like senators and emperors.

So how did gladiatorial exhibitions originate? Gladiatorial contests started as funeral celebrations, weirdly enough. According to Roman Historian Titus Livius—whom we recently discussed due to his authoring of one of the first known examples of alternate history, so I'm not sure how

well that reflects on the accuracy of his claims—he described the first gladiatorial match as taking place in 264 BC during the first Punic war between Rome and Carthage—(we've discussed Hannibal in the past). The gladiatorial exhibition consisted of three bouts staged to honor Brutus Pera, the dead father of Roman Consul Decimus Junius Brutus Scaeva.

Touching tribute to your beloved father, a bloody dismembering. It's what dad would have wanted. There is speculation that the idea of combat as a tribute to a dead relative comes from the idea of blood sacrifice, that the shedding of blood would honor the dead and fortify them in the afterlife, but no one really knows.

Regardless, these funeral games, known as munus, became a phenomenon: wealthy, powerful Romans honored their dead fathers by creating more dead fathers. And sons, and of course widows. It's a strange and for me inexplicable way to mourn the dead, but ok. In some of these cases, as in the case of the 206 BC games sponsored by Roman general Scipio Africanus, warriors actually volunteered to act as gladiators to earn his favor. In this way the relationship between gladiators and their benefactors mirrored and in some ways set the groundwork for the dynamic between the kings and knights of the medieval era.

In 105 BC the Roman Republic itself got in on the action and gladiator games finally went mainstream. The government sponsored a military

training exhibition that was open to the public which featured so-called "barbarian combat," aka gladiators. It was a smash hit. Taking the hint, the Roman government began including gladiatorial combat in the state games, also known as "Ludi" (same name as the schools, so that's confusing), which were held to commemorate religious holidays.

Over time, owning a stable of gladiators became a symbol of wealth and power for the wealthy and powerful, and the justifications for hosting gladiatorial games would become increasingly tenuous. Julius Caesar held a munus for his father in 65 BC...his father at that point had been dead for 20 years. That's such a feeble excuse for throwing a party.

"It's five o'clock somewhere...There's always a dead relative somewhere!

Dammit, I'm running out of dead uncles to "honor" with carnage and debauchery!"

Over subsequent years, gladiator exhibitions became increasingly useful as public-relations-outreach efforts for aspiring politicians. Want to drum up goodwill? Give the masses some free bloodshed. And alcohol. Vote for Tybius of the beer-and-stab party, elect me and there will be so much stab. I promise to lower taxes, raise incomes, and deliver thousands of grisly murders every year. It's a weird platform. Wouldn't go over as well today. Also, the aspiring politician might throw in some beasts...everyone loves animals, right? the gladiator

games were often combined with "beast shows": staged wild-animal hunts known as Venatio (not irrumatio). In the beast shows, hunters would take down a wide and diverse array of animals from lions to elephants, horses, alligators, rabbits, ostrich, dogs, sometimes goats.

Hardcore. "Today we celebrate our hard-fought victory over this ferocious lamb." The animals were mostly taken down at distance, using weapons such as bows and spears...killing dogs from a distance, real manly. Just like all of you hunters who use sniper rifles, so brave. You showed that deer who's boss...you killed it from a mile away using a weapon you bought at

Walmart. Super badass. Anyway. Animal hunts preceded gladiatorial fights and would far outlast them; obviously the tradition of Venatio still survives today as bullfights and to a lesser extent even the rodeo is a type of beast show, with cowboys

attempting to exert mastery over bucking broncos and bulls. And occasionally getting stomped on, much to the delight of me, who is a petty misanthropist and pretty much always rooting for the animal.

So when last we checked in with the history of gladiator games, they had been embraced by the Roman state, and after the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44BC, Caesar's adopted son and great-nephew (the first Roman Emperor Augustus) officially codified the games as religious and civic events, though Augustus did restrict them to certain holidays and also

placed a cap on the amount that could be spent on each exhibition...it was almost like election campaign reform, limiting the amount of public killing that a politician could offer to the public in exchange for popularity and name-recognition. The funeral games —the munus—were limited to only 120 gladiators...lame. How can I properly honor my dead father with only 120 human sacrifices. It's almost embarrassing. Might as well not kill anyone at all. Is that what you want? We should all just *not* force people to brutalize each other for the benefit of someone who doesn't even currently exist? It seems likely that part of the Emperor's motivation was to ensure that the state-sponsored games, which didn't operate under those budgetary restrictions, would always be the most lavish and bloody, and contribute to the popularity and worship of the Imperial Cult. That is in fact how historians refer to the emperor's family and the imperial government which were increasingly being deified and worshiped as greater than human. The official state-sponsored games would continue to grow. By the time Roman Emperor Trajan celebrated his victory over the Dacians with a massive gladiatorial event in 108AD, the state expenditures on these lavish events was out of control and the games themselves functioned primarily as a strategy for pacifying and distracting the masses, with events often lasting months... Trajan's games would span over 120 days and involve over 10,000

gladiators and exponentially more animals. Occasionally, an emperor would attempt to rein in the cost and scope of the games but the public wasn't having it...in 177 AD Emperor Marcus Aurelius attempted to pass some modest laws that would have placed limitation on gladiatorial expenses, but they were ignored by his son Commodus. And if those names sound familiar you are probably associating them with the popular Ridley Scott film Gladiator, a movie which revels in the butchering of humans and tigers and also history, because as you've probably guessed, it was mostly a load of bollocks. The main character—Russel Crowe's Maximus—did not exist, the emperor Marcus Aurelius wasn't planning to reinstate the Roman republic, and the film's villain, Commodus, didn't kill his father. In fact, his father voluntarily appointed him as co-emperor in 176 and they ruled together until his father's death in 180AD. Commodus was, though, a controversial figure. His full name was Caesar Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus Augustus, and to give you a sense of his modest nature, according to Roman historian Lucius Cassius Dio, every time he sent a message to the senate he began with "The Emperor Caesar Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus Augustus Pius Felix Sarmaticus Germanicus Maximus Britannicus, Pacifier of the Whole Earth, Invincible, the Roman Hercules, Pontifex Maximus, Holder of the Tribunician Authority for the

eighteenth time, Imperator for the eighth time, Consul for the seventh time, Father of his Country, to consuls, praetors, tribunes, and the fortunate Commodian senate, Greeting." A humble, down-to-earth guy. Also, it's true that he was the first emperor to ever compete in the gladiatorial games...but with a caveat.

"Commodus didn't fight to the death in public. He'd compete with a wooden sword against other athletes and gladiators, collecting a handsome sum of a million sesterces a day from the gladiatorial fund, writes Cassius Dio, adding that Commodus "of course" won all these sparring matches." His participation in the games, however, was scandalous because as we've mentioned, gladiators were not high status. Now it's important to keep in mind that at the time, history was written by the wealthy and educated, and Commodus was famously hated by the Senate and the wealthy elite of his time, so it's hard to say how much of his bad press was just sour grapes...he seems to have been beloved by the people, partly because he taxed the wealthy and threw elaborate games and celebrations. To be fair, he eventually all but bankrupted Rome, so the wealthy elite may have had some legitimate gripes.

So what did the games themselves look like? The first venues for gladiatorial games were public squares or small temporary pavilions. But

eventually the population of Rome swelled to over 1 million and the vast majority of Romans wanted to attend. Thus, the circus Maximus and eventually the Colosseum. Initially the games were gender integrated, but Augustus would segregate the games, and women would be relegated to the cheap seats, far away from the sweaty, sexy gladiators that might prove a temptation. And there were also special sections of the stands for senators, nobleman, and soldiers. something I didn't know is that there was often musical accompaniment, a band would play during gladiatorial matches. Instruments included Roman trumpets, known as tubas but not actually tubas—confusing—and water organs. I'm trying to picture battles set to trumpet and organ jams. Murder jams '93. All the greatest hits and stabs. I hope that some snarky conductor snuck in a medieval version of Yakety sax. or maybe a romantic ballad, and some Cinemax Waka Waka porn. Sidenote: you may have been under the impression that gladiators would salute the emperor or sponsor of the games via the famous quote "those of us who are about to die salute you". There's only one historical documented instance, and it wasn't spoken by gladiators but rather by convicted convicts who were about to reenact a battle in front of Emperor Claudius, and most likely was just an attempt to get on the good side of the emperor. It was some creative sucking up and it worked, on that particular day the few survivors of the battle

were spared, so maybe it *should* have become a tradition. But it seems to have been a one-off. Similarly, the idea of the emperor giving a thumbs up or thumbs down to spare or sacrifice a defeated opponent has most likely been misinterpreted...in fact the meaning behind the gestures may have been the opposite of what we commonly believe: a thumbs up seems likely to have been the symbol to strike the killing blow--like go for it--while a closed fist was the symbol for mercy. However, it is true that it would frequently fall to the emperor or sponsor of the games to determine whether a defeated gladiator died or was spared. And to bust another myth, while death in the arena was a virtual guarantee if you were a convict or unfortunate animal, death among gladiators was uncommon. This was the most shocking fact of the episode for me, the one that blew my fragile little mind: Gladiators were expensive property and training and feeding them wasn't cheap, so according to National Geographic, "the goal of most gladiatorial combat was not to kill; in fact, 9 out of ten gladiators survived a match." Quite a few historians disagree with this exact percentage, and the lethality of the games has been frequently contested, but most modern scholars will tell you that gladiatorial games were always bloody but rarely lethal. Some emperors—even notoriously sadistic tyrants like Nero—even held games in which they forbade the intentional killing of any gladiator by another. In the rare event

that a gladiator WAS ordered to strike the killing blow, his defeated opponent was expected to offer his neck voluntarily with bravery and dignity—as much dignity as you can muster while having your head hacked off—an act of bravery that was celebrated and led to posthumous respect, samurai style. *Posthumously* is always the best way to earn respect, it does you a lot of good when the worms are digging through your chestmeat to know that people really enjoyed the way you acted in the five seconds before your body was separated from your head.

When you read about gladiators, you'll notice that you're often coming across the phrase "pairs of gladiators." As in, Emperor so-and-so pitted 500 pairs of gladiators against each other in the coliseum. This is because gladiators were divided into categories, and only specific types of gladiators were allowed to engage each other in combat. Kind of similar to weight classes today. You wouldn't throw a fully armed gladiator on horseback against a guy with spiked boxing gloves. That would have been briefly entertaining, but the truth is that the gratuitous craziness of battles depicted in Hollywood, with an arena full of gladiators fighting with various weapons alongside wild animals etc... that just didn't happen. gladiator fights were almost exclusively one on one affairs. Two trained combatants battling to a finish. The idea that any single gladiator could defeat a group of similarly armed and trained combatants is Hollywood lunacy. It's

true that there would occasionally be multiple pairs of gladiators dueling simultaneously, but it wasn't a free-for-all, they were each battling only

against their particular opponent.

Some of the most common gladiator types included the *retiaruus*, who fought with a net and Trident, there were the *Andabata*, who fought blindfolded. The *cestus* (boxers), the *scissor* who fought with a dual-bladed sword like a pair of scissors, and the *murmillo*, a heavily armed gladiator who fought with a gladius and a rectangular shield known as a scutum.

The *murmillo* was the gladiatorial tank, basically: they also sported an arm-protector of some type—possibly scaled or segmented plates—on the sword arm, a thick leather belt like a weight belt, shin padding, and a large helmet with a decorative plume.

Usually the *murmillo* were pitted against the similarly-armored *thraex*, with the primary difference being that the *Thraex* utilized a blade that was

more curved. Spartacus famously was a *murmillo*. We'll get to that.

There were other interesting weapon combinations; there were gladiators who fought with two swords—one in each hand—and no shields; that must have been wild to watch. But again, unlike in the movies, it wasn't chaos; typically gladiators were only matched up against their counterpart or maybe a similar type of gladiator that seemed to offer a fair fight.

The idea that there was a specific hierarchy of gladiators featuring champions etc is another

misconception. There were favorites, and there was a loose system of tracking wins and losses, but there was no undisputed gladiatorial champion. And this lends credence to the idea that there wasn't a lot of murder in these fights, or you would have ended up with a champion by default...the guy who keeps not being dead is obviously the most successful gladiator. But it just didn't work that way.

So what did the games themselves look like? What could you expect if you went to the Colosseum in the year 100 BCE? Let's start with a few words about the coliseum, because you can't separate the venue from the spectacle. First, it's an oval, did you know that? I could have sworn it was round. It held a maximum of 80,000 people at its peak, the average crowd was around 65k, and was constructed directly in the center of the city.

Games at the coliseum were an all day affair. You'd want to pack a lunch. And have a strong stomach to keep it down when the gore started flying. We've busted the myth of gladiators killing each other willy nilly, but there was no shortage of carnage. So in the morning there would often be a drawing of lots to determine which gladiators would face off against which, also a public inspection of weaponry, there would be the warm-up sessions in which gladiators flexed and sparred and loosened up for the benefit of the fans. Next there might be a beast hunt or possibly a comedy show, known as a *mimus*, some of

which have been depicted as featuring "horn-blowing chickens" and a bear playing a flute. This is already better than any public performance I've ever attended. After the horn blowing chickens, then the human carnage begins...kind of an anticlimax, honestly. You'd probably first get to witness a few short and messy battles consisting of untrained convicts pitted against each other as punishment for their crimes. Speaking of convicts, there were often public executions; burning alive was popular. You might also be treated to reenactments of historical battles or even fanciful stage productions with hundreds of combatants dressed as gods or foreigners. These were messy bumbling slaughters that served a couple of purposes: entertainment, and also the elimination of undesirables... Prisoners of war, criminals, convicts, etc. The main event would be a series of gladiator matches, after which all of you inebriated spectators would stumble out of the coliseum, vomit in the streets and head back to your filthy, miserable hovels and your filthy, miserable lives. Occasionally the meat from the beast hunts would be cooked and distributed among the poorer attendees to engender more good will. It does seem likely that a few chunks of meat in the BBQ were not animal in origin, because the slaughters and cleanups were pretty haphazard, there would be cross contamination. So if you were destitute in Rome the highlight of your year might include

watching a bunch of convicts hack each other apart and then engaging in involuntary cannibalism. Makes it all worthwhile. Huzzah!

Let's talk about the most famous and naughty of gladiators, Spartacus. Spartacus is a bit of an enigma, the best guess is that he was a Thracian who served briefly as a Roman soldier before deserting and ending up enslaved, and due to his size and ability was sold as a gladiator. It's possible that his wife was enslaved with him as well. Or it's possible that none of this is the case and he had just been a prisoner of war who trained as a gladiator but never competed; sources differ.

Spartacus was a murmillo, as we discussed, so he must have been powerfully built to handle that tank-like armor.

One thing we know for sure—Spartacus never competed in the Coliseum. We covered this in an after midnight episode...he lived more than a century before the coliseum was built. We know he trained in a gladiatorial school near Capua in southern Italy, but as noted there is a decent amount of evidence indicating that Spartacus never actually fought as a gladiator. Instead he quickly began stirring up trouble and organized a slave uprising that started in the ludus, when gladiators commandeered kitchen implements and fought their way out. That's so badass, I imagine a bunch of gladiators busting out of the gate

brandishing spoons and whisks. Upon escaping, Spartacus began recruiting local slaves and disgruntled soldiers, and fled to mount Vesuvius. The rebels were lucky in that Roman legions were busy putting down a revolt in Spain, and also lucky that Rome drastically underestimated them as a threat. When Rome finally sent a militia to the volcano, Spartacus directed his troops to create ropes from vines and scaled down the mountain to the Roman encampment to take them by surprise. It worked. He was a gutsy and gifted tactician, and would spearhead a remarkable run of victories. His forces eventually grew to between 70,000 and 100,000 troops. It was an unlikely and legendary run of success, but when Roman general Crassus and the recently-returned Roman legions finally cornered his forces by the banks of the Sele river, his luck ran out. Spartacus was presumed killed in the battle though his body was never recovered, and Crassus ordered 6,000 of the slaves to be crucified as an example. This would mark the end of the third servile war, the third and final time that a slave uprising would actually threaten the Roman Empire. They wised up. Uprise once, shame on me, uprise three times, we kill you all.

Gladiator games and would finally come to an end in Rome when emperor Honorious banned them in 404 AD, which sounds like an honorable act—eh?—but in fact Honorious was a disaster of an emperor. Rome was sacked during his

reign, and Honorious was devastated at the news...because when he was told about the sacking of Rome he initially misunderstood, thinking that he'd instead been informed about the death of his favorite chicken.

From the Greek scholar **Procopius of Caesarea**: "At that time they say that the Emperor Honorius in Ravenna received the message from one of the eunuchs, evidently a keeper of the poultry, that Rome had perished. And he cried out and said, 'And yet it has just eaten from my hands!' For he had a very large cock, Rome by name; and the eunuch comprehending his words said that it was the city of Rome which had perished at the hands of Alaric, and the emperor with a sigh of relief answered quickly: 'But I thought that my fowl Rome had perished.' So great, they say, was the folly with which this emperor was possessed."

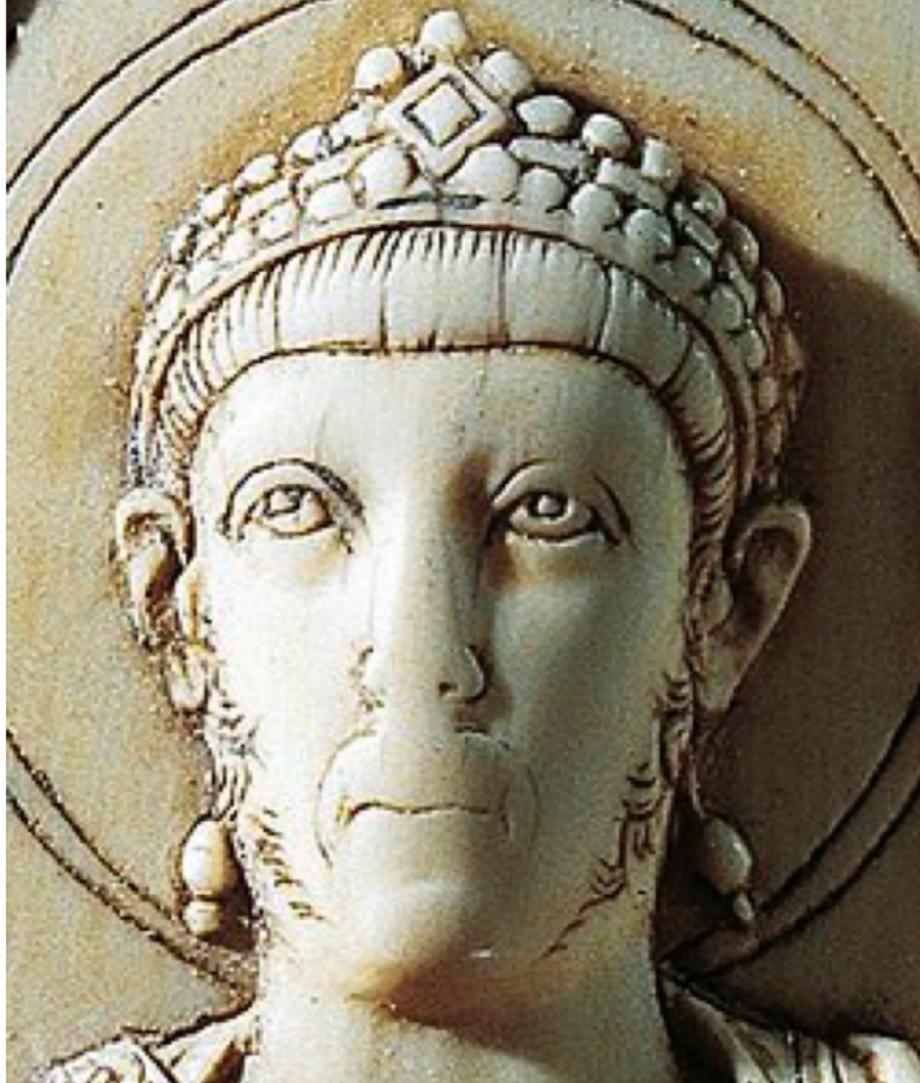
I feel you, Honorious. I too to care about my pets more than ancient cities. Or modern ones. If you gave me a choice between saving the life of my pet or saving Santa Cruz from getting sacked...no contest. Sack away. I'll join in on the sacking, grab a tv.

Incidentally, along with banning the gladiatorial games, Honorious also banned Roman men from wearing trousers. The man had priorities.

Ending violence, ending pants, loving chickens. Saving lives, saving beaks, and freeing balls. I have a photo of a bust of Honorious, and I think we should end this episode with something that only you will be able to appreciate because this is an audio-only

episode, but I'll post it in the discord.

This is the man who killed the killing:



He looks like an extraterrestrial

orangutan.

9:21



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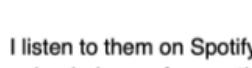
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