Palms for the Gladiators : Martial, *Spect.* 31 (27 [29])

Introduction. — In Spect. 31, Martial describes the fight between two gladiators, Priscus and Verus, who were so evenly matched that neither could defeat or would submit to the other. Martial explains that although the crowd sought *missio* for both, the emperor Titus required that they fight *ad digitum*, that is, until one signaled surrender. Yet the match ended happily for all concerned : both yielded together, and, surprisingly perhaps, both were declared victors by the emperor. Here is the standard text (1) :

Cum traheret Priscus, traheret certamina Verus,
esset et aequalis Mars utriusque diu,
missio saepe uiris magno clamore petita est ;
sed Caesar legi paruit ipse suae :
lex erat, ad digitum posita concurrere parma :
quod licuit, lances donaque saepe dedit.
inuentus tamen est finis discriminis aequi :
pugnauere pares, succubuere pares.
misit utrique rudes et palmas Caesar utrique :
hoc pretium uirtus ingeniosa tulit.
contigit hoc nullo nisi te sub principe, Caesar :
cum duo pugnarent, uictor uterque fuit.

Our concern in this paper is with the reading of *parma* in line 5, which is in fact an emendation in place of *palma* (or similar) found in the manuscripts. The poem is preserved in two ninth century manuscripts : the *Haupti florilegium Vindobonense* 227, which has *possita ... palma*, and the *Vossianum florilegium Leidense* Q 86, which has *positam ... palmam*. F. G. Schneidewin dutifully preserved *palma* in his first edition of Martial's epigrams (1842), but emended it to *parma* for the second edition (1853), in agreement with a proposal of P. Wagner. Wagner thought *posita ... palma* meaningless and suggested that *posita ... parma*

(1) See : F. G. Schneidewin, *M. Val. Martialis Epigrammaton Libri*, first edition, Grimae, 1842, second edition, Leipzig, 1853 ; L. Friedländer, *M. Valerii Martialis Epigrammaton Libri mit erklärenden Anmerkungen*, Leipzig, 1886 ; W. M. Lindsay, *M. Val. Martialis Epigrammata*, Oxford, 1903 ; H. J. Izaac, *Martial, Épigrammes. Tome I (livres I-VIII)*, seconde édition, Paris, 1961 ; U. Carratello, *M. Valerii Martialis Epigrammaton Liber*, Rome, 1981 ; D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Martial Epigrams*, Cambridge MA, 1993.

would better explain the *lex* envisioned : that Titus had required a fight until one gladiator was clearly defeated, something which was not going to happen so long as both were equipped with shields. So they would have to drop them and fight on without them (2).

One of the few scholars to question this reading was G. Ville, who found gladiators dropping their shields in this way problematic (3). He suggested, somewhat tentatively, that *palma* should be retained, implying that the palm had been prominently set up in the arena (*posita ... palma*) before the fight commenced to signify to all that there had to be a clear victor declared, or, in other words, that *stantes missi* would not be allowed. W. Ker in his 1919 Loeb had also preferred to leave *palma*, though with no explanation, and offered this translation for the line : "...that law was, when the prize was set up, to fight until the finger was raised". But Ville's views have not won favour from scholars concerned either with Martial's poetry or with Roman *gladiatura* (4). Recently, M. G. Mosci Sassi has specifically rejected his suggestion and observed that the placement of the palm in the centre of the arena in the way that he suggests is unparalleled, while K. M. Coleman has argued that the use of the palm as Ville describes it would have been overly proleptic and awkward (5).

Posita Parma ? — How likely is it that Titus had compelled the two gladiators, Verus and Priscus, to fight without a *parma*? The *parma* was indeed a (small) shield used by some gladiatorial armament types, the *thraex* and the *eques* in particular, and supporters of thracian gladiators were known as *parmularii*, so-called after the shield carried by their heroes (6). Suitably perhaps, Suetonius tells us that the emperor Titus was openly partial to thracian gladiators (7). But not all gladiators carried a *parma*. Other common gladiatorial types, such as the *secutor* and *myrmillo*, carried a much larger shield known as a *scutum*, and supporters of *myrmillones* were known as *scutarii* for this reason (8).

(2) P. Wagner, *Review of* F. G. Schneidewin, *M. Val. Martialis Epigrammaton Libri 1842* in *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* 72, 1843, col. 569-576, at col. 573. Schneidewin, *Epigrammaton Libri* [n. 1] (1842 : *palma* and 1853 : *parma*). Friedländer (*Epigrammaton Libri* [n. 1], *loc. cit.*) added that *palma* could have entered the manuscripts in imitation of "*palmas*" in line 9.

(3) G. Ville, *La gladiature en Occident des origines à la mort de Domitien*, Rome, 1981 (BEFAR 245), p. 405.

(4) For summaries of earlier views, see : U. Carratello, *Epigrammaton Liber* [n. 1], p. 48.

(5) M. G. Mosci Sassi, *Il linguaggio gladiatorio*, Bologna, 1992, 71 n. 22 and K. M. Coleman, *Missio at Halicarnassus* in *HSCP* 100, 2000, p. 490 n. 12.

(6) See M.G. Mosci Sassi, *Il linguaggio* [n. 5], s.v. "parmularius".

(7) Suetonius, *Tit.* 8, 2, noted also by Friedländer, *Epigrammaton Libri* [n. 1], loc. cit.

(8) See M. G. Mosci Sassi, *Il linguaggio* [n. 5], s.v. "scutarius".

The *retiarius*, of course, wore a *galerus* on his forward shoulder and carried no shield at all. So we would have to suppose either that Martial was using *parma* in a non-technical sense or that Verus and Priscus were both thracians or *equites* and no other type. As Ville observed, unless both Priscus and Verus carried the *parma*, it would have been extremely unfair to compel one to fight without the small *parma* and the other without the larger *scutum* (9).

But even if we assume that Martial could be using *parma* in a non-technical sense to mean vaguely any "shield", it is doubtful that the two gladiators would ever have been compelled to fight without their shields (10). True, such a fight would have been unusual, and emperors liked to do unusual things, but it would have been so unusual as to be improbable. In a famous letter Seneca complains about the spectacles where men, convicts in fact, were compelled to fight each other armed with daggers but lacking any defensive equipment : no skill was required and every blow struck home. Such a fight was not gladiatorial combat, but rather a form of especially bloody execution, which was degrading even to watch (Seneca, *Ep.* 7, 3-4) :

> *Quicquid ante pugnatum est, misercordia fuit. Nunc omissis nugis mera homicidia sunt. Nihil habent quo tegantur, ad ictum totis corporibus expositi numquam frustra manum mittunt. Hoc plerique ordinariis paribus et postulaticiis praeferunt. Quidni praeferant ? Non galea, non scuto repellitur ferrum. Quo munimenta ? Quo artes ? Omnia ista mortis morae sunt.*

Notably, Seneca is describing the vicious noon-time executions of condemned convicts and not gladiatorial combats. For Seneca and many other upper class writers, gladiatorial combat at least provided examples of bravery, skill, and discipline (11). But what most distinguishes these executions from gladiatorial combat was the lack of any defensive equipment. Unlike gladiators, men condemned to death were given nothing with which to protect themselves. So, in addition to serving as an important identifier for the different gladiatorial armament types, the shield also provided the gladiators with a means of self-defense, one of the key features that distinguished gladiatorial combat from a grisly form of execution.

(9) G. Ville, *La gladiature* [n. 3], p. 405. Martial knew this too : 14, 213 : *Parma. Haec, quae saepe solet uinci, quae uincere raro, / Parma tibi, scutum pumilionis erit.*

(10) P. J. Meier (*De gladiatura romana quaestiones selectae*, Bonn, 1881, p. 48, n. 1) first suggested that *parma* could have been used in the non-technical sense to mean a "shield" in general ; K. M. Coleman agreed (*Missio* [n. 5], p. 490-491, n. 12). Nevertheless, terminology of the arena is quite specific and we cannot assume a one-shield-fits-all scenario.

(11) For two recent discussions of Seneca's general appreciation of *gladiatura*, see M. Wistrand, *Violence and Entertainment in Seneca the Younger* in *Eranos* 88, 1990, p. 31-46 and P. Cagniart, *The Philosopher and the Gladiator* in *CW* 93.6, 2000, p. 607-618. Cf. Cicero, *Tusc.* 2, 41 and Pliny, *Pan.* 33, 1 for similar ideas.

But more than an essential defensive piece of equipment, the shield was also a crucial offensive weapon. Until recently most of what we knew about gladiatorial combat and the use of gladiatorial weapons had to be reconstructed from reliefs and mosaics depicting gladiators in action, from literary descriptions, and from logical inferences derived from their *armatura* : all poor second choices to actual experience. We now have the benefit of the reenactments in gladiatorial combat with reconstructed armour and weapons conducted by M. Junkelmann ([12]). From his experiments he has concluded that much of the fighting was actually done with the heavy shields, pushing, feinting, and striking ([13]). Compelling a gladiator to fight without his shield, therefore, not only deprived him of his primary defensive equipment, but it also deprived him of an important offensive weapon.

But while there are many difficulties in reading *parma*, there are neither theoretical nor grammatical problems in Ville's suggestion of maintaining *posita ... palma*, implying that the palm was set up in the arena before Priscus and Verus rushed at each other to fight. Indeed, both manuscripts say *palma* and there is no good reason to change them. Still, Mosci Sassi's demand for parallels is appropriate and must be addressed before one can argue that the *palma* should be put back into line 5.

Posita Palma ? — The palm branch is commonly found engraved on the tombstones of deceased gladiators. So common is the image of a gladiator, helmet removed and shield set aside, holding a palm branch that L. Robert described the type as *le gladiateur dans sa gloire* ([14]). The gladiator is depicted having just won a victory, holding aloft the palm branch in celebration. Commodus, we are told, won a thousand gladiatorial palms, either by defeating or by killing *retiarii* ([15]). The palm branch was the symbol of his victories. Though monetary rewards were typically forthcoming, the official reward for victory was a palm branch and perhaps a crown. What we do not know is exactly when or how these rewards were presented. Though there are numerous depictions of gladiators

(12) M. Junkelmann, *Das Spiel mit dem Tod*, Mainz am Rhein, 2000, especially p. 129-155 ; M. Junkelmann, *Familia Gladiatoria : The Heroes of the Amphitheatre* in E. Köhne and C. Ewigleben, *Gladiators and Caesars. The Power of Spectacle in Ancient Rome*, Berkeley, 2000, p. 31-74 ; and M. Junkelmann, *Gladiatorial and Military Equipment and Fighting Techniques : a Comparison* in *JRMES* 11, 2000, p. 113-117.

(13) M. Junkelmann, *Das Spiel* [n. 12], p. 145-155, and M. Junkelmann, *Familia Gladiatoria* [n. 12], p. 67. Servius (ad *Aen.* 11, 284) comments on the use of the shield in combat.

(14) L. Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec*, Paris, 1940, p. 47.

(15) SHA, *Comm.* 12, 11 : *item postea tantum palmarum gladiatoriarum confecisse uel uictis retiariis uel occisis, ut mille contingeret.* See also Martial, *Spect.* 36 (32) : *cedere maiori uirtutis fama secunda est. / illa grauis palma est, quam minor hostis habet.*

with crowns and palms, curiously none (known to me) depict an official actually awarding these prizes to the victorious gladiator. Without clear illustrations or depictions, we cannot be sure when the awarding of the palm took place. The world of Greek athletics, however, may offer some helpful parallels. With respect to the Olympic Games, H. Lee has shown that the olive crowns were presented to the victorious athlete by the *hellanodikai* immediately after the contest and not at a larger "awards ceremony" at the end of the festival, as some have thought ([16]). Pausanias tells us, with respect to Greek competitions at least, that everywhere the palm branch is placed in the victor's right hand : *ἐς δὲ τὴν δεξιάν ἐστι καὶ πανταχοῦ τῷ νικῶντι ἐστιθέμενος φοῖνιξ* ([17]). It is probable that gladiators were also awarded – or could assume – their palm immediately upon being declared victors.

Detailed descriptions of what actually went on in the arena are rare : most upper class authors did not care to discuss such spectacles ([18]). In fact, Martial's poem currently under discussion is so important in part because it is one of the very few descriptions of a gladiatorial fight. But we might also glimpse the world of the arena in the vision of Perpetua, a young Christian woman martyred in Carthage in 203. While awaiting execution, Perpetua dreamt that she was led into the amphitheatre where she was to fight an enormous Egyptian. After both had prepared for their match, an enormous and distinguished man entered the arena, wearing a tunic with purple *claui*, and gold and silver shoes, and carrying a stick and a green branch with golden apples on it (*Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 10, 8) :

> *...et ferens uirgam quasi lanista, et ramum uiridem in quo erant mala aurea...*
> *...ἐβάσταζεν δὲ καὶ ῥάβδον ὡς βραβευτὴς ἢ προστάτης μονομάχων, ἔφερεν δὲ καὶ κλάδους χλωροὺς ἔχοντας μῆλα χρυσᾶ...*

He asked for silence and then explained the contest and the rewards in these words (10, 9) :

> *"Hic Aegyptus, si hanc uicerit, occidet illam gladio ; haec, si hunc uicerit, accipiet ramum istum."*
> *"Οὗτος ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ἐὰν ταύτην νικήσῃ ἀνελεῖ αὐτὴν μαχαίρᾳ· αὕτη δὲ ἐὰν νικήσῃ αὐτὸν λήψεται τὸν κλάδον τοῦτον."* ([19]).

(16) H. Lee, *The Program and Schedule of the Ancient Olympic Games*, Hildesheim, 2001 (Nikephoros Beihefte Bd. 6), p. 69-74.

(17) Pausanias 8, 48, 2. Cf. *RE* XX 1 s.v. "Phoinix" esp. 401-2 and *Der Neue Pauly* 9, 338-339 s.v. "Phoinix".

(18) Cassius Dio (78, 13) even apologizes to his readers for his lengthy description of Commodus' great *munus* in 192. Tacitus (*Ann.* 13, 31, 1 ; cf. 13, 49, 1 and *Dial.* 29) explains : history is about *res inlustres* and specifically not about amphitheatres and gladiators.

(19) An alternate (Latin) reading is : *hunc ramum*. See C. van Beek, *Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, Nijmegen, 1936, *loc. cit.*

"The Egyptian, if he defeats her, will kill her with a sword. This woman, if she defeats him, will receive this branch."

The text exists in both Greek and Latin and scholars debate which language should be given priority, some even suggesting the (lost) original was in Punic ([20]). Nevertheless, in both the Latin and the Greek versions, our attention is directed to the branch with a demonstrative, indicating that it was pointed out or shown to the two combatants and to the entire crowd gathered to watch. The fight ended with Perpetua's victory, after which "she approached the official and took the branch" while her comrades sang in joy ([21]).

There is some confusion about what actually is described. L. Robert argued that Perpetua's dream describes a *pankration* and not gladiatorial combat ([22]). He also argued that the (palm) branch and the golden apples were prizes appropriate to an *isopythian agon*, a Greek athletic and musical competition modeled on the Pythian Games at Delphi, which was celebrated in Carthage at this time ([23]). Nevertheless, as B. D. Shaw and others have recently noted, there is also much that is gladiatorial about Perpetua's vision ; elements of both *agon* and *munus* help to flesh out the details of the dream ([24]). If Perpetua's vision was indeed modeled on a gladiatorial combat, at least in part, then the fact that she was shown a (palm) branch as the token of victory before her fight actually began might shed some light on Martial's poem. Can her vision, then, be described as a sort of gladiatorial event? Several features suggest that such an interpretation is valid.

First, the location of the fight is not a stadium but the amphitheatre, and the event is described as a φιλοτειμία in the Greek version and as a *munus* in Latin ([25]). The regular way to refer to a gladiatorial *munus* in Greek is φιλοτειμία ([26]). And after her victory, Perpetua left through the 'Gate of Life', the *Porta*

(20) For a useful and recent summary of this debate, see H. Vierow, *The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas* in *Latomus* 58, 1999, p. 600-601 n. 4.

(21) *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 10, 12 : Latin : *et accessi ad lanistam et accepi ramum* and Greek : καὶ προσῆλθον τῷ βραβευτῇ καὶ ἔλαβον τὸν κλάδον.

(22) L. Robert, *Une vision de Perpétue martyre à Carthage en 203* in *CRAI*, 1982, p. 253-256. G. Ville (*La gladiature* [n. 3], p. 471) also recognized the vision as a gymnic *agon*, though most scholars have interpreted Perpetua's battle as a sort of gladiatorial bout.

(23) L. Robert, *Une vision* [n. 22], p. 268-272.

(24) See B. D. Shaw, *The Passion of Perpetua* in *P&P* 139, 1993, p. 28 with n. 63 and P. Habermehl, *Perpetua und der Ägypter*, Berlin, 1992, p. 164-167. As a younger woman before her conversion, Perpetua may have attended gladiatorial *munera* and athletic *agones*.

(25) L. Robert (*Une vision* [n. 22], p. 255) too readily dismisses the significance of the amphitheatre-setting, simply saying that Perpetua dreamt of this location only because she knew that she was destined to perish there.

(26) L. Robert, *Les gladiateurs* [n. 14], p. 278 ; L. Robert, *Une vision* [n. 22], p. 236 ; and M. G. Mosci Sassi, *Il linguaggio* [n. 5], p. 141 n. 215.

Sanauiuaria (rendered in Greek : *πρὸς πύλην τὴν λεγομένην Ζωτικήν*), the same way that victorious gladiators and others left the arena (27). Second, although perhaps competing in a sort of *pankration*, Perpetua nevertheless faced execution by the sword if she lost – the same, noble, death allowed to gladiators when compelled to die, but not something ever faced by a defeated athlete (28). Third, the man who introduced the fight is described in Latin as appearing *quasi lanista*, and in the Greek version like either a *βραβευτής* or a *προστάτης μονομάχων*. It is certain, however, that *summa rudis* was meant in the Latin version, not *lanista*, since a *lanista* was an unsavory *infamis*, who trained and maintained stables of gladiators (29). While a *lanista* would never have appeared publicly in the arena arrayed in such finery, the *summa rudis*, a referee who supervised gladiatorial combats, could achieve high social status and clearly did appear dressed in this way in the arena (30). The *summa rudis* is commonly depicted in mosaics and reliefs wearing a white tunic, with purple *claui*, and holding a stick or switch with which to signal fouls or stop the fight. It was the *summa rudis* who stopped a fight once a gladiator submitted by raising a finger. Furthermore, his appearance fits Perpetua's description of the supervising official. The *βραβευτής* was a judge at a Greek *agon* who, as Robert demonstrated, also presented the victor with a palm, while a *προστάτης μονομάχων* was clear-

(27) The so-called "Gate of Life" is known only from two places in the *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* : 10, 13 (Perpetua's dream) and 20, 7 (where one of the condemned leaves having been freed though the intervention of the crowd), though the corresponding "Gate of Death", the *Porta Libitinensis*, is known from other sources (SHA, *Comm.* 16, 7 and Dio 73, 21, 3). See D. L. Bomgardner, *The Carthage Amphitheater : a Reprisal* in *AJA* 93, 1989, p. 89.

(28) T. Wiedemann, *Emperors and Gladiators*, London and New York, 1992, p. 35. Note that those executed in the arena by wild animals typically had their throats cut outside the arena or at its edge, just to ensure that they were dead. Perpetua and her fellow martyrs were to have suffered this same end had the crowd not wanted them recalled to be finished off before their eyes in the middle of the arena (*in medio*) (*Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 21, 6-8).

(29) L. Robert, *Une vision* [n. 22], p. 262, and G. Ville, *La gladiature* [n. 3], p. 276 : the use of *lanista* here is catachrestic ; the phrase *quasi lanista* is only intelligible if we understand "*quasi summa rudis*". Cf. M. G. Mosci Sassi, *Il linguaggio* [n. 5], s.v. "lanista".

(30) L. Robert (*Les gladiateurs* [n. 14], p. 263 and also *Une vision* [n. 22], p. 262-263) believed the *summa rudis* (and the junior *secunda rudis*) to be ex-gladiators (*rudiarii*). G. Ville (*La gladiature* [n. 3], p. 326 and 370) argued against identifying the *rudiarius* with the *summa* or *secunda rudis* and he stated that the social status achieved by a number of known *summae rudes* is not consistent with the status of a gladiator, even retired. But given the high level of technical knowledge required of the *summa rudis*, it is probable that Robert is right and that such men were drawn primarily from the ranks of retired gladiators and instructors, whose experience provided them with the requisite expertise. This is not to suggest that all *rudiarii* or gladiatorial instructors necessarily became *summae* and *secundae rudes*.

ly one who presided over gladiators (31). While it is possible that Perpetua dreamt that she was to compete in a sort of *pankration*, nevertheless her dream is also informed by the images and symbols of the gladiatorial *munus*. The worlds of the Greek *agon* and Roman gladiatorial *munus* were similar enough to her for the two to be easily merged : an early Christian would hardly have cared to make academic distinctions in the technical terminology of the two institutions, since both were, above all else, fundamentally pagan celebrations.

So, it is quite possible that the description of the (palm) branch as the reward may very well have come from the gladiatorial arena. In fact, it is probable that the exhibition of the palm before the fight was an image that Perpetua did borrow from the gladiatorial world of the arena rather than from the athletic world of the stadium, since an athlete presumably knew what awards awaited him if he was victorious, whereas a gladiator and the crowd watching did not necessarily know what sort of combat was to ensue. Perpetua was fighting for victory (palm) or death (by the Egyptian's sword). Gladiators and spectators needed to know what was at stake in the combat to ensue.

If the palm branch was exhibited to the combatants and proclaimed as the reward for victory before the fight began, it would then have been set up or set aside somewhere, probably, though not necessarily, in a visible location. This is especially so since a *brabeutes* or *summa rudis* was the one who had displayed the palm to the combatants at the outset. This official then had to referee the fight. It would have been ludicrous to expect the official to hold both his switch and a palm branch while officiating a gladiatorial bout. But the palm branch need not have been set up in the middle of the arena in full view of everyone, as Ville implies (32). Indeed, that is both unnecessary and unlikely, since the palm had already been shown to all as the reward before the fight began (recall that the official sought silence before he announced the prizes) and, if it had been somehow set up in the middle of the arena, it would possibly have obstructed the combat. Instead, the palm branch would either have been set aside at the edge of the arena, whence it could be retrieved immediately by the *summa rudis* or gladiator himself after the fight was over, or (more likely) deposited with the *munerarius* who presided over the show. In our poem, it was Titus himself who is said to have delivered (*misit*) the palms to Priscus and Verus. The possibility that the

(31) L. Robert (*Une vision* [n. 22], p. 263-266) and G. Ville (*La gladiature* [n. 3], p. 471) both suggested that the phrase *ἡ προστάτης μονομάχων* may be a gloss added to the Greek version to explain *lanista* in the Latin translation. Yet even if the phrase is a gloss, the *βραβευτής* appeared similar enough to an official from the gladiatorial arena that the use of *lanista* as a translation was satisfactory in the Latin version (assuming, as Robert and Ville do, that the Greek is the primary version).

(32) So G. Ville, *La gladiature* [n. 3], p. 405 : "...sans doute faut-il entendre que la '*palma* a été déposée' dans l'arène, pour bien signifier qu'il devra y avoir un vainqueur et un vaincu ... et la palme, symbole de cet enjeu, est mise sous les yeux de tous...".

palm had not actually been set up somehow in the arena with the contending gladiators may further explain the lack of depictions of the palm branch in the midst of gladiatorial combat : it was simply not usually right there in the middle of the arena with the combatants. After her victory, the palm was Perpetua's to claim, something which she, like a victorious athlete or gladiator, immediately did ([33]).

So this is probable the sequence of events : the palm branch would be announced and shown, perhaps by the officiating referee, to the combatants and to all the spectators as the prize for victory, thus indicating that a clear victory was required ([34]) ; the palm branch would then be set aside (*posita ... palma*) and the fight begun ; finally, once his opponent had been defeated (having surrendered or been killed), the victor would claim and be awarded the prize. Titus is said to have sent or delivered the palms (line 9) : both Priscus and Verus needed one. This is the victory-image captured on so many gladiatorial tombstones : *le gladiateur dans sa gloire*.

Conclusion. — Ville suggested that *palma*, the reading found in the manuscripts, might be preferable to the widely accepted emendation to *parma*. He was suspicious of the non-technical use of *parma* as envisioned here and noted that the requirement that Priscus and Verus were to fight without their shields is unusual. Seneca would certainly not have called it gladiatorial combat. For heavily armed gladiators, the shield was their single most important piece of equipment : it was an important identifier ; it was obviously fundamental for defense ; and it also had important offensive functions. Without a shield, professional (heavily armed) gladiators could not fight gladiatorial combat. But Ville did not push his suggestion and others have not taken it up because of an apparent lack of parallels. But if Perpetua's dream was indeed informed by the gladiatorial arena, then the (palm) branch that she was shown before her fight might describe the same introductory ceremony envisioned in Martial's poem. So it has been argued here that *palma*, as found in the manuscripts, should be restored to *Spect.* 31. So I would suggest this translation for line 5 : "the law was, once the palm had been set up to fight until the finger (was raised)".

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(33) SUETONIUS, in cataloguing examples of Caligula's careless disdain for human life, describes how the emperor killed his gladiatorial sparring partner, then ran around waving a palm as victors were accustomed to do (*Calig.* 32 : *more uictorum cum palma discucurrit*).

(34) A tomb-relief from Pompeii famously depicts a series of events from the amphitheatre : the opening *pompa*, the gladiatorial combats and wild beast hunts. In the *pompa* behind the lictors and musicians and men carrying a *ferculum*, is a man carrying the palm branches to be awarded the victors. It is now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples, inv. no. 6704.