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Pompeian *Elogium*, Livineius Regulus, and the Riots of AD 59

Elogium de Pompeia, Livineius Regulus e os motins de 59 d. C.

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Abstract

The article discusses the identity of the individual honoured with the funerary monument rediscovered in 2017 near the Porta di Stabia in Pompeii, together with the text of the *elogium* found on the tomb. The analysis of the *elogium* content – presented against the background of the riots in AD 59 and the wider context of the Campanian *munera* as such – facilitates the identification of the Pompeian benefactor as Livineius Regulus, a man who sponsored the ill-fated show that year. The circumstances of Livineius Regulus' involvement in the riots and his later exile shall be examined and juxtaposed with the textual intricacies of the *elogium*, suggesting that the partial pardon granted by the Emperor Nero may have turned the disgraced senator's career around. A reading of the *elogium* confirms that, despite the tumultuous circumstances surrounding the ten-year ban imposed on the organisation of gladiatorial shows by the Pompeians following the riots, the city of Pompeii was most likely able to have their punishment revoked. The details in the text of the *elogium* take into account the significance of owning a gladiatorial *familia*, the exile of fighters from Pompeii, and finally, their successful return. The latter, presented in the *elogium* as a crucial but symbolic element in the benefactor's life, communicated both the reinstatement of his own gladiators in Pompeii and, more importantly, his re-established status within the city's local elite.

Keywords: ancient Pompeii, *elogium*, Pompeian riots, Livineius Regulus.

Resumo

O presente artigo discute a identidade da figura homenageada no monumento funerário redescoberto em 2017 perto da Porta di Stabia em Pompeia, a par com o texto do *elogium* encontrado no túmulo. A análise do conteúdo do *elogium* — apresentado na sequência dos motins de 59 d.C. e no contexto mais amplo dos *munera* da Campânia enquanto tal — facilita a identificação do benfeitor pompeiano como Livineius Regulus, um homem que patrocinou o malogrado espectáculo nesse ano. Tanto as circunstâncias do envolvimento de Livineius Regulus nos motins, como o seu exílio serão examinados e discutidos à luz da complexidade textual do *elogium*, que sugere que o perdão parcial concedido pelo imperador Nero pode ter levado a uma reviravolta na carreira do senador caído em desgraça. A leitura do *elogium* confirma que, apesar das condições tumultuosas que envolveram a proibição de dez anos imposta à organização de espectáculos de gladiadores pelos pompeianos, na sequência dos desacatos, a cidade de Pompeia conseguiu, muito provavelmente, que a sua punição fosse revogada. Os pormenores do texto do *elogium* colocam em evidência a relevância de possuir uma família de gladiadores, o exílio dos lutadores de Pompeia e, finalmente, o seu regresso bem-sucedido a casa. Este último aspeto, assume no *elogium* um valor crucial, ainda que simbólico, na vida do benfeitor, que comunicava tanto a reintegração dos seus próprios gladiadores em Pompeia como, mais importante, o restabelecimento do seu estatuto no seio da elite local da cidade.

Palavras-chave: Pompeia antiga, *elogium*, motins pompeianos, Livineius Regulus.

The lengthy *elogium* found on a funerary monument situated to the south of the Porta di Stabia in Pompeii a few years ago has prompted a re-evaluation of some assumptions that had previously been made about the benefactors supporting gladiatorial shows in Campania and the results of the brawl between the residents of Pompeii and Nuceria which took place in AD 59. The exceptionally detailed inscription, the textual dimension of which has already been examined by a number of renowned academics,[1] revealed a few fragments informing about the honorand's sponsorship of the local *munera*, his support of the city residents in times of grave famine, and other benefactions provided by him to the local community. The identity of the man is not revealed in the inscription but his acts of euergetism readily place him among some of the most exceptional individuals whose generosity to the people of Pompeii was rooted in his extraordinary wealth and his

[1] Osanna 2018; Bodel et al. 2019; Flohr & Hunink 2019; Maiuro 2019.

close connection to the imperial house in Rome. Given that some of the most pressing issues regarding this *elogium*, such as the sums of money expended by the honorand to cover the costs of food, the chronology of events in the honorand's personal life, and his role as a patron of the city, have already been meticulously discussed by scholars,[2] this article addresses only the excerpts concerning gladiatorial shows financed by the man in question and the aftermath of riots that broke out in Pompeii.[3]

1. Gladiatorial shows in Pompeii

The initial indication of the exceptional status of the honorand is revealed by the inscription excerpt describing the sumptuous banquet held on the occasion of donning the *toga virilis* and then the extraordinary gladiatorial show offered to the residents of Pompeii by the individual in question. Massimo Osanna's interpretation regarding the unusually high number of gladiators mentioned in the inscription concluded that all 416 fighters took part in the show offered by the honorand.[4] In contrast, John Bodel and his colleagues reject any possibility of having such a grand event taking place in Pompeii for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the paleographic assessment by the scholars who comprehensively discussed the *elogium* suggests that the number of gladiators (*CCCCXVI gladiatores*), situated in the inscription not far from the number of *triclinia* (*CCCCLVI*) present at the honorand's banquet, was confused by the stonecutter, thus pointing out that either one or both numbers are incorrect.[5] Secondly, Bodel and his colleagues posit that it was impossible to present as many as 416 gladiators at a single *spectaculum*; instead, they propose that the number mentioned in the *elogium* refers to the total number of gladiators owned by the benefactor and residing in his training facilities somewhere in Campania.[6] In light of the *elogium*, the content of which diverges considerably from any standard information about the number of gladiators found previously on various stone inscriptions and *edicta munerum*, it is by no means unlikely that the Pompeian world of arena entertainment was far more complex than is habitually accepted.

[2] Maiuro 2019; Bodel et al. 2019: 152-153.
[3] Tac. *Ann*. 14.17.
[4] Osanna 2018: 314.
[5] Bodel et al. 2019: 156.
[6] Bodel et al. 2019: 156-157, 161-163.

The stonecutter's mistake suspected by scholars has to be questioned because its potential to mislead the interpretation of the splendour of the events sponsored by the honorand appears void; for even if the letterer did substitute *X* for *L* (the only two single letters differentiating the two numbers), the final number of gladiators would still exceed four hundred men fighting at the *munus*. The possibility of any smaller number of fighters also has to be discounted as this would be at odds with the message conveyed in the *elogium* about the grandiosity (*magnum et splendidum*) of the event. The inscription strongly emphasises that the *munus* was so exceptional that it could easily be compared to any grand shows sponsored in the most splendid colonies of Rome (*lautissimae coloniae*). Finally, the fact that 416 gladiators (208 pairs) mentioned in the *elogium* represent an unparalleled number in the epigraphic evidence of gladiatorial shows in Campania does not have to imply that the logistics of holding such a challenging event were financially and organisationally out of reach for the patron.

The Pompeian *edicta munerum*, i.e. the painted inscriptions advertising *venationes*, *munera*, and athletic rivalries taking place in a few different centres of ancient Campania, suggest that there was no fixed pattern when it came to the organisation of the shows. In addition to specific times of the year that were deemed greatly preferable for holding the events due to the local weather and harvesting season, and thereby dictating specific days or places for *spectacula*,[7] the arrangements for each and every show – particularly when they were sponsored by private funds, as is the case with the honorand in question – could differ depending on the individually expressed preferences of benefactors. The highest number of gladiators ever mentioned in the *edicta* is forty-nine pairs (ninety-eight individuals) coming from one gladiatorial *familia* and fighting in Puteoli for the period of four non-consecutive days (12, 14, 16 and 18 May).[8] As the entirety of the event was not concluded until the final day of the *munus*, the 18th of May, it is probable that various celebrations and festivities around the show proper extended to odd-numbered days (13, 15, and 17 May) as well, offering seven days of entertainment in total. Over the course of four days, forty-nine pairs would engage in around twelve combats per day on average. This is close to the number of fights mentioned in the *edictum* with the second highest number of gladiators (thirty-six pairs, i.e. seventy-two

[7] Tuck 2008/2008: 127-134.

[8] CIL 4.7994.

individuals), who were to partake in combats in Nuceria Constantia.[9] This time the duels were also scheduled to take place over a period of four days, with nine fights occurring each day. However, the distances between the first, second, and last two days of the *spectaculum* were significantly longer, spanning from 31 October to 1 November and then one week later, on 8 and 9 November.[10] As evidenced by epigraphic records, the scheduling of the *spectacula* escapes any pattern or regularity, and it is safe to affirm that the specific arrangements for combat days were dependent on a multitude of factors, including the avoidance of clashes with religious celebrations, accessibility to the venue, the procurement and importation of wild animals for *venationes*, and even the weather conditions.[11]

The ratio between the number of days allocated for a show and the number of gladiators performing in the *munera* was fluid. The epigraphic evidence from Pompeii suggests that the number of twenty pairs of arena fighters per one event (regardless of the number of days allotted to the show) was the most popular average, favoured by the patrons sponsoring the events.[12] However, this number is also challenged by two other *edicta*, which state that thirty pairs (sixty individuals) were to fight on one day only.[13] If such a large number of gladiatorial fights could take place in a single day, then 208 pairs of gladiators mentioned in the *elogium* could be lined up to fight in a *spectaculum* lasting almost seven days. The number of days may seem large, but if one considers the individual approach of each sponsor to the days he wished to devote to the event he was financing, the variety of possibilities seems practically unlimited. The same Satrii Valentes who sponsored the combats of sixty gladiators within one day also offered the same number of fighters in another *munus* that stretched over five consecutive days.[14] Therefore, either the patrons sought to extend the number of days in order to prolong the festivities, thus upholding their sense of self-aggrandisement and increasing their own popularity among the city

[9] CIL 4.9972. Cf. CIL 4.9986, in which no less than eighty gladiators were to fight on one day.

[10] Cf. the discussion on the dates of the event in Sabbatini-Tumolesi 1983: 93.

[11] CIL 4.1180, CIL 4.1181, CIL 4.11036.

[12] I.e. CIL 4.9981(a), extending a *venatio* and the combats of twenty gladiators over as many as four days.

[13] CIL 4.7992 and CIL 4.11033; both events were held by the representatives of the *gens Valentes*.

[14] CIL 4.3884.

residents, or, just as likely, the logistics of organising the various shows differed according to the programme. The latter possibility suggests that on the days when fewer pairs of gladiators fought, other forms of entertainment were offered as a means of filling the whole day with performances of hunters and athletes. On the other hand, days with the highest number of gladiatorial pairs may have been restricted to gladiatorial fights only.

While many modern studies tend to follow Seneca's words about the division of the day at the shows into three major categories of entertainment, the Pompeian *edicta* do not confirm this strict arrangement of time slots into the morning *venationes*, the lunchtime punishment of the *noxii*, and the evening *munera*.[15] In fact, the vast majority of advertisements from Pompeii mention either combats between gladiators *only*, or entertainment involving gladiatorial fights, *venationes*, and contests between the *athletae* (in various combinations of these three options), with *noxii* hardly ever present in the show programmes.[16] It can therefore be assumed that if a pattern to the programmes of the arena events exited, it was probably flexible, subject primarily to the personal preferences of the sponsors, their financial solvency and the idea of presenting something unique and previously unseen. The number of gladiators was undoubtedly a decisive factor in the preparation process of the shows, and the success of any given event could be directly linked to the future political support of the audience to the local magistrates. However, since there was no limit to the number of pairs that could fight at a time or in the same *spectaculum*, it cannot be ruled out that, from the patron's logistical and strategic point of view, the execution of a show with over two hundred pairs of gladiators was feasible.

The fragment with the large number of gladiators is placed at the very beginning of the *elogium* (lines 1-2),[17] which is of great importance for the reading of the entire section of the inscription. The introduction of this information so early in the text was undoubtedly a tactic to provide passers-by with a formal indication that the honorand was a man of great authority and outstanding achievements, with an eminent social and financial status. In ancient Rome, gladiators were an investment, a method of generating revenue, an indication of one's extraordinary wealth and a reflection of one's

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[15] Sen. *Ep*. 7, Ville 1981: 134, 147-148, Wistrand 1992: 17-18, Potter 1999: 317, Junkelmann 2000: 64, Jacobelli 2003: 23, Janković 2014: 54.

[16] *Noxii* in the *edicta* from Pompeii: *CIL* 4.9983(a); cf. *CIL* 9.3437.

[17] Latin version of the *elogium* is provided in full by Osanna 2018: 311-313.

potential plans to establish oneself in the political world of Rome and the provinces. Purchasing gladiators and staging the games served as a means of asserting dominance over the populace and political connections, thereby bringing a sense of prestige. From the time when private sponsors were allowed to hold the games, the ownership of gladiators was oftentimes used for exerting control over one's own political opponents and for winning the elections.[18] Eventually, the excessive number of gladiators purchased by the elite in the late Roman Republic led to restrictions on the number of fighters a person could own.[19] It is impossible to prove, however, whether this restriction in any way affected the final number of paired gladiators a patron could present to the public during his *spectacula*. An *editor* could easily circumvent the rule by keeping his own *familia gladitoria* (within the limits set on numbers by the official decree) and at the same time hire his colleagues' fighters for the duration of the show only. The *elogium* elucidates that the honorand spared neither wealth nor effort to please the local audience by engaging so many gladiators. Their very large number, staying '*in ludo*', further confirms that the honorand was their owner, keeping them all in one place.[20] Having such a large *familia gladiatoria* to support financially was only profitable if the fighters remained popular among the audience, could be hired out to perform in other Roman centres, and could provide viable income over the years.

2. The riots of AD 59 and local *editores*

The *elogium* suggests that the violent riots of AD 59 marked a turning point for the honorand's endeavours as the owner of the gladiatorial *familia* because they prevented him from sponsoring any further shows. M. Osanna proposes that since two *acclamationes* (CIL 4.1179 and *CIL* 4.7990) found in Pompeii mention Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius as a great *munerarius*, he is the most suitable candidate for the role of the

[18] Using gladiators against political opponents, e.g.: Cic. *Q. fr.* 2.3, *Sest*. 78, 85, *Mil*. 28-29, App. *BC* 2.7.47, 2.17.120, 2.26.105, Plin. *Ep*. 9.6, Plut. *Ant*. 9.4, *Pomp*. 51.3, Dio 44.4; using gladiatorial games to win the elections, e.g.: Cic. *Att*. 2.19, 4.8, 4.17, 4.18, *Fam.* 7.1, *Sest.* 45, Dio 43.22-23, 48.32; see also Ville 1981:291-293, Hopkins 1983: 1-30, Dunkle 2008: 101-103, 150-153.

[19] Suet. *Iul*. 10.2, Dio 37.8.1-2; cf. Dio 54.2.3-4.

[20] Bodel et al. 2019: 150.

honorand.[21] However, the extant *edicta* offer no evidence that Gn. Alleius Nigidius Maius' involvement in sponsoring *munera* was more extensive than that of other members of the local elites. Only three *edicta* confirm Gn. Alleius Nigidiu Maius's sponsorship of gladiatorial shows. The first inscription advertises a show (no dates provided in the *edictum*) of twenty pairs of gladiators with substitutes, the second – a show of thirty pairs with substitutes (fighting over three consecutive days), and the third informs that gladiators (number unknown) will combat throughout one day.[22] The numbers of gladiators performing in Nigidius Maius' *munera* appear to be relatively standard in comparison to some of the aforementioned events sponsored on a much larger scale in Pompeii. It is unclear whether Nigidius Maius was the owner of any 'reserve' gladiators (*suppositicii*), as promised in the *edicta*. However, as 'stand-in' fighters, their number could not have exceeded that of the performing gladiators, who were to provide the main entertainment. Furthermore, none of the inscriptions can verify that Nigidius Maius owned or rented more gladiators for his *spectacula* than other Pompeian patrons known from the *edicta*. His role as the local *editor* can be compared to that of D. Lucretius Satrius Valens and his son, Decimus Lucretius Valens, as well as to Aulus Suettius or a certain Marcus Tullius, whose commitment to holding the shows is well attested by the *edicta*.[23] It is beyond dispute that Nigidius Maius did re-establish himself as a true promoter of other types of entertainment (with parades, hunts, and athletic contests) once the gladiatorial shows were officially banned, probably as soon as AD 59 after the brawl.[24] It is likely that this newly assumed role of an active organiser of events without gladiators contributed to his enduring popularity throughout the years of the imperial punishment. Conversely, if W. Moeller's proposition regarding the exile of Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius and other representatives of the Nigidii and Grosphi families following the riots is accepted,[25] it may be surmised that Nigidius Maius was only able to sponsor the events once he had returned from exile. If this is indeed the case, then the dating of all the *edicta* advertising hunts, parades, and sportsmen contests financed by

[21] Osanna 2018: 320-322.

[22] CIL 4.7991, CIL 4.1179, and CIL 4.1180 respectively.

[23] Aulus Suettius: CIL 4.1189-1191, CIL 4.7987, CIL 4.9970; Marcus Tullius: CIL 4.9981(a), CIL 4.9979, CIL 4.9980.

[24] CIL 4.7993, CIL 4.1177, CIL 4.1178, CIL 4.3883.

[25] Moeller 1970: 94.

him becomes problematic, as there is no possibility of determining when Nigidius Maius returned from his alleged exile.[26] Had he returned from the exile at an earlier point and had the ban on the *munera* been lifted before the end of the ten-year period, as suggested by Mouritsen and Gradel, his *edicta* would have most certainly advertised highly anticipated gladiatorial shows, once more held in the city of Pompeii after a long break.[27] Instead, only one *edictum*, *CIL* 4.1180, dated to the period between Nero's death and the eruption of Vesuvius, probably mentions gladiatorial fights held by Nigidius Maius.

In their assessment of the honorand's identity, M. Flohr and V. Hunink rejected Osanna's assumption that Gn. Alleius Nigidius Maius was the benefactor due to the sums of money mentioned in the *elogium*, indicating a person of a much higher status than the Campanian *duumvir*.[28] While Nigidius Maius was undoubtedly an important figure in the social and political hierarchy of Pompeii, there is virtually no evidence to suggest that he ever held a position of authority beyond the local political levels of the Campanian region. Moeller additionally argues that Nigidius Maius neither arranged any games for Nero's welfare before AD 59 nor had his career ever reached the pinnacle during this emperor's reign.[29] In contrast, the *elogium* attests to a very close relationship between Nero and the honorand, with the latter enjoying an exceptional status in the ruler's eye. While the details of the *senatus consultum* banning all the gladiatorial combats in Pompeii is mentioned in Tacitus' account, the *elogium* additionally verifies the adoption of another resolution, possibly the emperor's personal order, which affected all owners of gladiatorial *familiae* (*cum Caesar omnes familias ultra ducentesimum ab urbe ut abducerent iussisset*). It can be surmised from the *elogium* that after the riots of AD 59 all gladiators, regardless of who their owners were, were compelled to leave the city. Bearing in mind that the possession of a gladiatorial troupe was a method of generating income, the emperor's decision to have all the gladiatorial *ludi* removed from Pompeii was likely received by the local elites as

[26] Sabbatini Tumolesi 1980 argues that the *edicta* CIL 4.7993, CIL 4.1177, CIL 4.1178, CIL 4.3883 should be dated to the ten year period of Nero's ban as they do not mention any gladiatorial combats. Emperor Nero's death in AD 68 would also have shortened the period of the punishment.

[27] Mouritsen and Gradel 1991: 152, n. 25.

[28] Flohr and Hunink 2019: 19.

[29] Moeller 1973: 517.

an imperial attack targeting their own representatives.[30] This additional punishment, which was preceded by the banning of the *munera* altogether, must have affected financially at least a handful of wealthy individuals in Pompeii. At the same time it must have shaken to the core their privileged position in the local society.

Notwithstanding that the punishment was administered to a larger group of men, both the wealthy individuals of Pompeii and their slaves--gladiators, emperor Nero eventually gave his authorisation to send back to Campania, most likely to Pompeii itself, a gladiatorial troupe of just one man (*uni* / *huic ut Pompeios in patriam suam reduceret permisit*). A. Bedlin's analysis of this part of the *elogium* proves that the imperial permission was granted solely due to the fact that the honorand had called upon the favour from the emperor himself.[31] The implication that only one man from among those sentenced to punishment could implore Nero to further his private interests and ultimately have his gladiators sent back to his hometown indicates that he must have been of a much higher status than the equestrian rank, and that he must have had personal and political ties with the representatives of the privileged class in Rome itself. This section of the *elogium* also sheds more light on the exclusivity of the honorand's situation in comparison to all other owners of gladiators who were forced to send their fighters away. Such a favourable treatment received from the emperor suggests that the honorand managed to convince the emperor that there had been no premeditated foul play during the riots on his part and that his gladiators had not been involved in the unrest. The only individual among the local Campanian officials who could match the political magnitude typical of the Roman magistrates seeking the emperor's sympathy at the time of personal distress is Livineius Regulus. Apart from financing the gladiatorial show in AD 59, the precise role of Regulus in the events of that year remains unclear. However, his background, high social status, and political career he had enjoyed in Rome before eventually staying in Pompeii permanently, make Livineius Regulus one of the candidates for the role of the honorand.

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[30] Mass banishments were not altogether uncommon in the ancient Rome, and the lower strata of the society was at times exposed to such treatment, Suet. *Aug*. 42.3; *Nero* 16 (cf. Suet. *Nero* 26; Tac. *Ann*. 13.25; Dio 55.5.2); see also Braginton 1944: 393.

[31] Bodel et al. 2019: 175-176.

3. Livineius Regulus and his career

Information about the life and career of Livineius Regulus is limited but the traces of his family ties and political career are substantiated by the sources. The studies on the Roman Senate conducted by Robert Broughton corroborate the assertion that Livineius Regulus' ancestor, Lucius Livineius Regulus, held the office of a praetor in Rome, and together with his brother Marcus, were friends with Marcus Tullius Cicero.[32] The ties between Regulus and Cicero were particularly strong. When the latter was exiled in 58 BC, news of the situation in Rome would reach him in Greece through the letters brought, among others, by L. Regulus' freedman.[33] In his letter to Atticus, Cicero acknowledges that the information he had received from Regulus was much more reassuring than the news he read in Atticus' letter.[34] It appears that L. Regulus spared no effort to console his distressed friend and may have played a role in Cicero's return from exile.[35] Not long after Cicero's restoration to the Roman politics in 57 BC, L. Regulus himself fell victim to his political opponents and was exiled.[36] The second letter in which Cicero mentions L. Regulus is entirely devoted to Regulus' misfortune, Cicero's need to help his close friend (*familiarissimi mei*), and recommendations Cicero makes about Regulus' freedman, Trypho, to his other friend, Caius Munatius.[37] Through his active involvement in helping Regulus and his freedman, Cicero establishes himself as a loyal and reliable associate to the entire Livinei household. There are no more letters by Cicero mentioning the exiled man, nor is there any information on how the family fared in the following years. However, the Livinei do eventually reappear in support of Julius Caesar in the war campaign of 46 BC.[38] It is clear that despite the previous misfortunes that befell them, the family was not eliminated from the state affairs in a long-run.

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[32] Broughton 1952: 464, 581.

[33] Cic. *Att*. 3.17.1.

[34] Cic. *Att*. 3.17.1.

[35] Cicero hints at L. Livincius Trypho – L. Livineius' freedman – exposing himself to many dangers in the process of Cicero's restoration (Cic. *Fam*. 13.60.1); see also Rowland 1972: 453.

[36] Cic. *Fam*.13.60.1.

[37] Cic. *Fam*.13.60.1.

[38] Caes. *B. Afr*. 89; Shackleton Bailey 1960: 263 claims the Livinei were of a praetorian ancestry.

After the dictator's assassination, and in line with their previous political affinities, the Livinei aligned themselves with the Caesarian *factio*. The numismatic evidence dated to 42 BC attests to another Livineius Regulus, most probably the son of the praetor, who worked as one of four moneyers minting coins for the three triumvirs: M. Antonius, M. Lepidus, and Octavian, later emperor Augustus. The career of Regulus as the *praefectus urbi*, who controlled the coinage production and maintained a unique position amongst other *monetales*, was successfully proven by a careful examination of the denarii by Theodore Buttrey.[39] His assessment confirms that Livineius Regulus was the first moneyer to strike golden coins bearing the images of the triumvirs in their honour.[40] Further information about this Regulus and his family is lost, and their fate during the tumultuous years of armed conflicts between M. Antonius and Octavian is unaccounted for. It seems, however, that the Livinei, along with a select few other influential families, survived the changes introduced by the *princeps* in Rome and managed to successfully ascend the political hierarchy under the new regime. It is in AD 18 when another representative of the family is mentioned in the sources, this time as a suffect consul. Livineius Regulus served as the consul from February to July, succeeding Germanicus Julius Caesar after his death. It is the same Regulus who, two years later, defended Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso when the latter was accused of poisoning Germanicus Julius Caesar.[41] If Syme's hypothesis is correct and Livineius Regulus, the consul of AD 18, is the same man as a *praetor peregrinus* of 2 BC,[42] then this man is likely to be the grandfather of Regulus, who organised gladiatorial shows in Pompeii in AD 59. It is also plausible that the consul could be the father, rather than the grandfather, of the young Regulus, given that he was around 54 years old at the time of his son's birth in AD 22.[43] However, there is no direct evidence to substantiate the assertion that Regulus, the patron of the Pompeian *munus*, was born that year.[44] Instead, Tacitus attests only to his presence on the political scene in Rome, thereby lending weight to the continuity of the *gens* and the presence of this family in the upper echelons of the Roman society.

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[39] Buttrey 1956.

[40] Buttrey 1956: 28-32, 38-44. Cf. Duncan 1948: 15, 22; DeRose Evans 1987: 116.

[41] Tac. *Ann*. 3.11.

[42] Syme 1981: 191; Syme 1982: 70.

[43] Rogers 1931: 35 opted that he was the father of the Pompeian Livineius.

[44] *Toga virilis* was probably assumed by Livineius Regulus sometime between AD 30-40.

The fact that the individual in question had a grandfather or possibly a father who was the consul and who was later involved in one of the most scandalous episodes in the reign of emperor Tiberius would directly link the young Livineius Regulus with people holding the highest social and political positions in the state. His education, access to the representatives of the royal household, as well as the family's sufficient financial resources likely helped him establish himself as one of the Roman senators. His good fortune seemed to be short-lived though. In the *Annales*, Tacitus states that before Livineius Regulus gave the *munus* in Pompeii in AD 59, he had been removed from the Senate in disgrace.[45] The circumstances surrounding Regulus' expulsion from the Senate remain unknown. However, it can be reasonably assumed that his misconduct was the primary reason for his return to Campania, his family's place of origin. Oliver Schipp postulates that Regulus' removal from the Senate took place in or around AD 47, thus making him at least 37 years of age when he sponsored the show in Pompeii.[46] If Schipp's conjecture regarding Regulus' age is accepted, the almost 40-year-old politician could still aspire to establish himself as a benefactor to his hometown,[47] possibly planning to make a reappearance in politics on a local scale in Campania. The success of re-entry into the political arena – which Regulus knew so well – was to be secured by sponsoring the *munus* and winning over the city residents and guests from outside of Pompeii. The event proved to be considerably more dramatic than Livineius Regulus had anticipated.

The Tacitean description of the riots that broke out in the amphitheatre in Pompeii does not indicate individuals directly responsible for the brawl and the nature of their fight. It does, however, inform that the *munus* commenced with spectators from Pompeii and Nuceria hurling a torrent of hostile verbal abuse, which further escalated to stone throwing and ultimately to bloodshed. The narrative in the *Annales* reflects the stages of mounting tension between the two groups and the intensification of the unrest that was unfolding in front of all those gathered. In his account, Tacitus mentions the Nucerians first and only then the Pompeians. However, the

[45] Tac. *Ann*. 14.17 ([…] *quod Livineius Regulus, quem motum senatu rettuli, edebat*).

[46] Schipp 2021: 229.

[47] Wiseman 1963: 281 and Wiseman 1964: 127 suggest that Livineius Regulus came from Abellinum but it is uncertain whether it was Livineius himself or just his freedman. Even though Pompeii was perhaps not Regulus' place of origin, his investment in the games held in Campania demonstrates his strong ties with the region.

order in which he presents the two groups does not necessarily point to the culprits who instigated the fight. Residents from both cities are presented as equally culpable for initiating the conflict. The advantage gained by the Pompeians in the fight could have been only the result of their easier access to weapons, given that they were in their own hometown. In the context of the tragic event, Livineius Regulus is first referred to as the sponsor of the gladiatorial show and then as one of the parties responsible for inciting (*seditionem*) the residents to fight. Both Moeller and Galsterer contended that the unrest was purposefully initiated by the representatives of the Pompeian elite: the said Livineius Regulus and Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius.[48] In addition, Schipp aligns with Moeller's perspective that perhaps a greater number of people were punished with exile after the riots, as the event had been pre-planned.[49] Thereby the notion that the unrest was an actual rebellion (*seditio*) is further perpetuated in scholarship, despite the absence of evidence in the ancient narrative indicating that those involved in the brawl fought for a specific cause or rallied against a specific person. The Roman Senate's response was to impose penalties on the Pompeian authorities. The fact that the duumvirs of AD 59, Gnaeus Pompeius Grosphus and Gnaeus Pompeius Grosphus Gavianus, and the sponsor of the *munus*, Livineius Regulus, were exiled confirms, however, that the punishment was rather conventionally administered to men who – like any other officials in charge of their cities and sponsors of mass events held in numerous places in the empire each year – stood behind the logistics and financial support of disastrous shows. From a legal perspective, there is nothing exceptionally peculiar about the fact that the duumvirs and Livineius Regulus were exiled as a result of the tragic bloodshed between the Pompeians and Nucerians.[50]

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[48] Following Baldi 1967: 480-485 and his hypothesis on Nigidius Maius and Livineius Regulus as *quinquennial* colleagues, Moeller 1970: 94-95 and Moeller 1973: 516 sees the two man as allies, whose joint involvement in gladiatorial shows was allegedly supported by sponsoring the local *collegium iuvenum*; cf. Galsterer 1980: 334ff; Franklin 1997: 439-440. Schipp 2021: 226 supports the hypothesis about the exile of Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius, stating that a *graffito* attached to his house and associated with the unlawful *collegium* can serve as evidence of Nigidius Maius' involvement in the riots. The problem with the *graffito* is that its placement on the House of the Dioscuri could have been dictated by the visibility and easy access to the house façade and not necessarily by the connection Nigidius Maius had with the violent event.

[49] Schipp 2021: 227; cf. Kelly 2007: 157-158.

[50] Cf. Tac. *Ann*. 4.62. See also Braginton 1944: 391. On punishments as means of securing public order, see Kelly 2007: 157-158.

While Tacitus' account confirms that the exile of the leading magistrates was by no means an extraordinary sentence, the *elogium* in turn proves that the process of punishing the guilty was considerably more complex. The inscription provides information about a mass banishment of all gladiators from the area. This can be interpreted as an element of imposing an indirect penalty on the entire guilty party, namely the residents of Pompeii. It appears that the Pompeians were collectively penalised as no public gatherings were permitted, the *collegia* were forbidden to meet, and the city was to carry the burden of responsibility for the actions of its residents as a whole. At the same time, however, those deemed guilty were not punished as rebels.[51] The claim that Livienius Regulus used the riots as a means of inciting rebellion is also unsupported. Epigraphic evidence from Pompeii demonstrates a pattern of holding the *munera* by those in the society whose ambition was to rise in the local politics and establish their own position as the future magistrates.[52] Since Livineius Regulus had previously been expelled from the Roman Senate, his involvement in politics was redirected towards activities taking place at a local level in Campania. As a disgraced senator whose career had the potential to regain momentum in the region, L. Regulus financed the show, likely as an attempt to win back the support of the people he hoped would vote for him in the future elections. Any plan to stage a coup or riots would only serve to jeopardise his ambitions to salvage the grounds of his already faltering career, not to mention the loss of costs incurred for organising the shows. Bearing in mind that the exemptions were granted to the ban by the emperor himself, and that the ban was probably partially lifted in the end, the notion of any deliberately organised attack by the politically-driven and prearranged opposition to the emperor or the Roman Senate seems highly implausible. It is more likely that in his description of the brawl, Tacitus gradually built up the tension by applying a set of expressions to the narrative that reflected specifically the violence escalating in the amphitheatre. The transition from *levis contentio* at the beginning of the passage to *seditionem conciere* in the very last sentence is arguably

[51] Had the city residents been acting in direct opposition to the emperor, Pompeii's official status would have been lowered, and its citizens would have been dealt with more severely (Moeller 1970: 92-93).

[52] Cooley and Cooley 2014: 65-66.

the ancient author's literary device to emphasise the extent to which the situation in the amphitheatre turned chaotic and unmanageable.[53]

Prior to the discovery of the *elogium*, no assumptions had been made about the fate of gladiators who performed in the amphitheatre when the riots broke out. At present, the inscription proves that gladiatorial *familiae* from Pompeii were removed from the city as a consequence of the emperor's decision. Although it is impossible to determine how much time passed between the senatorial verdict to impose the ten-year ban and the imperial edict to remove all the gladiatorial *ludi* from the area, the content of the *elogium* reveals that these two legally binding solutions were connected to the riots. But while the former decree was in motion and, judging by the extant *edicta* from Pompeii, gladiatorial shows ceased to be held for an extended period of time in the city, the latter was to be temporary for one owner of gladiators. Since L. Regulus is the only Pompeian whose strong ties with the world of politics are confirmed by the written sources, he appears to fit a profile of the honorand who dared to ask the emperor a favour and was indeed granted the immunity for his gladiators. Although the identity of Regulus as the honorand is open to speculation, it is clear that in comparison with other *editores* holding mass events in Pompeii, his background and senatorial career in Rome differentiated him from the remaining Campanian magistrates, also in the emperor's eye. Perhaps then the emperor's initial punishment was to simply pacify the Nucerian victims of the brawl in Pompeii, only to send the largest number of gladiators back to the area in order to slowly ease into mass entertainment once again.[54] Concurrently, the imperial permission to have the fighters returned to Pompeii was undoubtedly a precedent in the aftermath of the riots, probably widely commented on by the local *editores* and worthy of mention on a funerary inscription in the end. Whoever the honorand was, his self-assuredness in approaching the emperor to plead his case demonstrates his conviction of being undeservedly punished, or at least punished with too much severity.

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[53] In comparison with the rest of book 14 of Tacitus' *Annales*, devoted primarily to the murder of Agrippina, the remaining information appears to be rather uneventful (Classen 1988: 107). As a result, the narrative becomes more intense as it approaches the conclusion with the Livineius' games. Cf. Murgatroyd 2006: 116-117.

[54] The literary sources on Nero are clear that he was fond of watching and participating in riots in secret, and his policies regarding the removal of soldiers stationed at the theatres for the protection resulted in the escalation of violence among spectators. Sources and a discussion on soldiers protecting the large venues in Kelly 2007: 169.

The permission to return the expelled gladiators to Pompeii was a symbolic gesture on the emperor's part, but from the honorand's perspective the imperial favour must have served to elevate the honorand's status among other *editores* and members of the elite in the post-riot period. It is important to note that the granted favour applied to one man only because of the honorand's status and the number of his gladiators. Had the emperor's decision concerned any average owner of a much smaller *ludus*, this most likely would have induced others to also present their cases to the Roman authorities in the hope that their gladiators would be returned to them as well. And since there were at least a few politicians and benefactors in Pompeii who could pride themselves on sponsoring shows with at least ten or twenty pairs of gladiators, and who simultaneously shared a similar level of status, wealth, and popularity among the city residents, the honorand's position within the local community and in Rome must have been unparalleled and unquestionable if he had managed to secure the presence of his *ludus* in Pompeii after the riots.

If Livineius Regulus was on the receiving end of the imperial favour, his financial position would have been secured by having his gladiators returned to him, and his shattered reputation would have been at least partially restored by Nero's gesture. Even if his gladiators were unable to fight in the area and he himself was forced to spend time in exile, the possibility of hiring out his fighters to participate in *munera* outside of Campania would have provided him with a means of financially surviving the personal difficulties he found himself in.[55] Tacitus never specifies who else was exiled alongside L. Regulus.[56] However, if the Senate's resolution was revoked by the emperor and the ten-year punishment was not enforced for its entirety, there is also a possibility that men held responsible for the brawl were forgiven.[57] If this presumption is correct, Livineius Regulus could still have acted as a benefactor to the city towards the end of his life, and his family would have celebrated his generosity in the *elogium*

[55] On allowances granted to exiled people, see Cic. *Fam*. 14.2.3, App. *BC* 1.95-96, 4.5, Suet. *Aug*. 65, Plin. *Ep*. 1.10, Tac. *Ann*. 3.24; Braginton 1944: 397. Cf. Sheppard 2024: 372 who claims that with the immunity granted to the honorand's gladiators, they most assuredly participated in productions in Pompeii. There is, however, no direct evidence that any *munera* were organised in the city in the first years after the official ban.

[56] Tac. *Ann*. 14.17 ([...] *Livineius et qui alii seditionem conciverant exilio multati sunt*).

[57] Braginton 1944: 394-396.

placed on the funerary monument after his death.[58] Had Livineius Regulus been exonerated by the emperor and returned to Pompeii, either during Nero's reign or immediately following his death, he would have been around 47-50 years of age in AD 68, at the time of Nero's assassination. Livineius Regulus would have been almost 60 years old (had he lived that long) when the Vesuvius erupted.

The hypotheses of Livineius Regulus as the honorand of the *elogium* is based on the premise that his senatorial status set him apart from other members of the Pompeian elites, while his background and family history guaranteed the emperor's favour in times of Regulus' distress. Even though he is never mentioned in the epigraphic material from Pompeii, his involvement in the act of local euergetism is undeniable. As a prominent figure of impressive wealth, he sponsored the shows in AD 59, likely either continuing his political career in Pompeii or rebuilding his position in the political arena following an unsuccessful senatorial stint in Rome. The *munus* served a means to an end in gaining recognition and popularity in Campania or strengthening them further on a regional scale. Despite various suggestions about Regulus' role in stirring up the alleged *seditio*, there is no indication that the city of Pompeii and its residents, Livineius included, were in any way pushing for a deliberate and pre-planned outbreak of riots directed against the authorities in Rome. The inclusion of Livineius Regulus in a group of potential owners of the funerary monument and the *elogium* stems from the fact that he is the only representative of the Roman elites known to us whose personal connections and wealth could potentially lead to changes to the imperial ban, facilitating the process of 'forgiveness' and eventually lifting the punishment. The emperor's decision to grant only one exemption proves that all the remaining representatives of the upper class of Pompeians – despite their wealth and established status in their city – had no influence on the senatorial class in Rome, nor on imperial policy on the matter of punishments. It is likely that they were uninvolved in the riots that broke out during shows organised by somebody else.[59] We know of at least a few meritorious local magistrates at the time whose position should have enabled them to secure the imperial favours. However, there

[58] Given the dramatic nature of the riots, they were not mentioned in the inscription in detail. Instead, they were alluded to as a circumstance that changed the situation for both the honorand and his gladiatorial *familia*.

[59] Cf. Flohr and Hunink 2019: 32.

is no evidence to suggest that this occurred. In turn, the *elogium* offers a glimpse of the high-quality material and textual content that we often still miss in defining the exact role of the local elites in the history of ancient Campania during specific periods of time or specific events. The inscription varies greatly from other known funerary texts and decorations in Pompeii, which refer to the patrons of shows[60] and clearly distinguishes the owner of the funerary monument from the rest of the elite. In light of the fact that Gnaeus Alleius Nigidius Maius – the local politician and *munerarius* – is considered as a potential honorand of the *elogium* despite his purported exile after the riots, it is only expedient to acknowledge also the figure of Livineius Regulus – with his high profile of a Roman senator and Pompeian benefactor – as another 'candidate' for the rich and eventful biography of a man commemorated on the funerary monument.

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[60] The stucco relief on the tomb of Festius Ampliatus is the best-known example of funerary decorations that confirmed the role the owner of the monument as a famous *munerarius* in Pompeii (Castrén 1975: 207-208, Franklin 2001: 98-102, Cooley and Cooley 2014: 77-78).

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