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INDEX

OLLI SALOMIES	<i>Iiro Kajanto in memoriam</i>	9
NEIL ADKIN	<i>The Ninth Book of Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria and Jerome</i>	13
GÉZA ALFÖLDY	<i>Drei Bauinschriften aus Gabii</i>	27
E. BADIAN	<i>Two Numismatic Phantoms. The False Priest and the Spurious Son</i>	45
LILIANE BODSON	<i>Ancient Greek Views on the Exotic Animal</i>	61
CHRISTER BRUUN	<i>Missing Houses: Some Neglected Domus and other Abodes in Rome</i>	87
MIKA KAJAVA	<i>Visceratio</i>	109
WALTHER LUDWIG	<i>Martin Crusius und das Studium des Griechischen in Nordeuropa</i>	133
SILVIO PANCIERA	<i>Ancora nomi nuovi o rari da iscrizioni latine di Roma</i>	149
MARK POBJOY	<i>The decree of the pagus Herculaneus and the Romanisation of 'Oscan' Capua</i>	175
OLLI SALOMIES	<i>Three Notes on Roman Nomina</i>	197
W. J. SCHNEIDER	<i>Philologisch-kunstgeschichtliche Bemerkungen zu drei Stücken der Anthologia Latina</i>	225
HEIKKI SOLIN	<i>Analecta epigraphica CLXXIII–CLXXVI</i>	235
RISTO VALJUS	<i>An Oriental Baker at Ostia</i>	259
TOIVO VILJAMAA	<i>Participium coniunctum – Syntactic Definitions of the Participle in Ancient Grammars</i>	265
	<i>De novis libris iudicia</i>	277
	<i>Index librorum in hoc volumine recensorum</i>	319
	<i>Libri nobis missi</i>	321
	<i>Index scriptorum</i>	325

VISCERATIO

MIKA KAJAVA

Though, according to Livy, the year 328 B.C. was not particularly notable (*annus nulla re belli domive insignis*), the historian nevertheless reported an episode concerning the public *visceratio* given by M. Flavius on the occasion of his mother's funeral. Some people said that by honouring his mother in this way Flavius only paid a price that he owed the people, because they had acquitted him of a charge of adultery. What is more, the *visceratio* was the main reason why Flavius won the tribuneship at the next *comitia*.¹

The concept of *visceratio* is interesting in many ways, not only lexically but also in terms of contents and reality. What did *visceratio* mean to the Romans? The usual explanation is that *visceratio* means the public sharing out of animal flesh, but it is often added that *visceratio* referred in particular to the meat left after sacrifices. That the term would refer almost exclusively to the meat of sacrificial animals was the thesis of Werner Eisenhut in his RE-article from 1961, and the same idea is found in earlier as well as later research, including a number of influential lexica and manuals.² It is true that the meat of sacrificial victims was normally given to

¹ Liv. 8,22,2–4: *et populo visceratio data a M. Flavio in funere matris. Erant qui per speciem honorandae parentis meritam mercedem populo solutam interpretarentur, quod eum die dicta ab aedilibus crimine stupratae matris familiae absolvisset. Data visceratio in praeteriti iudicii gratiam honoris etiam ei causa fuit tribunusque plebei proximis comitiis absens petentibus praefertur*. For the passage and the partly corrupt text, see now S.P. Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy. Books VI–X. Vol. II: Books VII and VIII*, Oxford 1998, 625 ff. (for the possibility that this Flavius is identical with a M. Flavius who was *tr. pl.* in 323, see p. 627).

² RE IX A 1 (1961), 351 ff. According to the etymological dictionary of Walde – Hofmann (1966⁴), *visceratio* meant "öffentliche Fleischspende" during and after Cicero's time, but the authors also refer to a connection with sacrifice (cf. "bei den Opfern der

those attending the ritual and that the sharing out of it may sometimes also have been called *visceratio* (though there is no clear evidence for this), but it is wrong to take it as a special term of ritual or sacrificial language (in Eisenhut's words, "Spezialausdruck für die Verteilung der *viscera* des Opfertieres").³ As a matter of fact, the Romans used a more specific term for the act of distributing the sacrificial meat, i. e. the verb *profanare*, and also *pollucere*.⁴ As will be argued below, *visceratio* simply suggests public distribution of meat which could take place on many different social occasions.

Rest des Opfertiers außer den *exta*"). Ernout – Meillet (1959⁴) correctly speak of "distribution publique de viande", adding, however, that in classical times *visceratio* referred to the banquet where the meat of sacrificial animals was consumed. OCL (1982) associates *visceratio* exclusively with sacrificial ceremonies: "communal sacrificial feast at which the flesh of the victim was shared among the guests". J. Scheid, OCD (1996³), 1345 gives *cena* and *visceratio* as names for the sacrificial banquet. Many others also believe that there can be no *visceratio* without sacrifice.

³ It also deserves to be noted that *visceratio* does not figure in Arnob. nat. 7,24 f. which provides an accurate selection of Roman sacrificial vocabulary, including specific terms for various parts of the carcass and their treatment during and after the ritual. The list largely goes back to old sacrificial prescriptions and writers such as Varro and Verrius Flaccus, but it also draws on Roman gastronomic language. The Roman vocabulary relating to the chopping of sacrificial meat has been treated by C. Santini, L'Uomo 9 (1985) 63 ff.

⁴ In practice this means that a priest or a leader of the ceremony seized the rest of the victim with his hand and thus made it fit for human consumption, cf. Cato agr. 50,4: *ubi daps profanata comestaque est*; 132: *Iovi caste profanato sua contagione* (cf. esp. P. Thielscher, Des Marcus Cato Belehrung über die Landwirtschaft, Berlin 1963, 263, 316); Varro, ling. 6,54: *itaque ibi olim <in> fano consumebatur omne quod profanatum erat, ut etiam fit quod praetor urbanus quotannis facit, quom Herculi immolat publice iuvenecam*; Novius Atell. 14–15: *quod profanavi modo, si tris mensae sint in aede, ut pariter <eis> dispertiam*. For an epigraphic case, see the famous testament CIL XIII 5708, II 10 = Dessau, ILS 8379 (Germ. Sup.): *Et] Aquila nepos meus et [h(eres) eius] pr[a]este[t] quot anni[s n(ummos)...], ex quibus edulia [quisq(ue) sibi] paret et potui, quod profan[e]tur infra ante ce[l]lam memoriae quae est Litavicrari, et ibi consumant [---] morenturque ibi donec eam summam consumant*. Here, however, the meaning of *profanare* is rather the usual one, i. e. 'to offer'. For *profanare*, see E. Benveniste, in: Homm. G. Dumézil (Coll. Latomus 45), Bruxelles 1960, 46 ff. – *Pollucere* usually means 'to offer in sacrifice', but it could also refer to the sharing out of sacrificial meat: the evidence in K. Latte, Römische Religionsgeschichte (HbAW V,4), München 1960, 390.

The idea of a special link between *visceratio* and sacrifice is based on three passages in Servius' commentary on the Aeneid: '*viscera*' *non tantum intestina dicimus, sed quicquid sub corio est, ut "in Albano Latinis visceratio dabatur", id est caro* (Serv. Aen. 1,211); *nam 'viscera' sunt quicquid inter ossa et cutem est: unde etiam visceratio dicitur, ut diximus supra* (6,253); *populique Latini qui intererant Albani montis viscerationi* (7,716). Here the reference is clearly to the sacred banquet of the Latin peoples, which was held annually on the Alban Mountain from times immemorial.⁵ On the last day of the Latin festivities, a number of bulls were sacrificed in a ceremony that was strictly controlled and carefully carried out in every detail. Among the bulls there was a white one, the meat of which was distributed to the delegates of the Latin member-communities. Each city received its share according to its importance and power. After the final collapse of the Latin federation in 338 B.C., the rituals continued to flourish under Rome's supervision, and it is well documented that the arrangements for the sacrifice were still meticulously observed by the Romans during the later Republic. Ancient writers often referred to the Alban meat-distribution, but the term *visceratio* is not found before Servius who wrote in Late Antiquity. If there was ever a current expression for that important religious and social occasion, it was rather, at least from the later Republic, something like *carnem petere* (Varro, Cic.), *c. accipere* (Plin. nat. [cf. schol. Bob. ad Cic.]), or *c. dare* (Liv.), each of them referring to the different roles of the participating bodies (Latin communities v. organizers).⁶ The Greek expression follows the Latin one: *μοῖρον / μέρος λαμβάνειν*.⁷ So it seems that Servius, when explaining the word *viscera* as an equivalent of *caro* (this was

⁵ A. Alföldi, *Early Rome and the Latins*, Ann Arbor 1963, 19 ff.

⁶ Varro, ling. 6,25: *quibus ex Albano monte ex sacris carnem petere fuit ius*; Cic. Planc. 23: *nisi forte te Labicana aut Gabina aut Bovillana vicinitas adiuuabat, quibus e municipiis vix iam qui carnem Latinis petant reperiuntur* (schol. Bob.: *Quod vero mentionem petendae carnis fecit, ..., ut de hostia civitates adiacentes portiunculas carnis acciperent ex Albano monte secundum veterem superstitionem. Verum tam exiguum in illis civitatibus numerum hominum significat, ut desint etiam, qui carnem petitum de sollemni more mittantur*); Plin. nat. 3,69: *carnem in monte Albano soliti accipere populi Albenses*; Liv. 32,1,9: *legati ab Ardea questi in senatu erant sibi in monte Albano Latinis carnem, ut adsolet, datam non esse* (in 199 B.C.); 37,3,4: *Laurentibus pars carnis, quae dari debet, data non fuerat* (190 B.C.).

⁷ D.H. 4,49,2–3 (cf. schol. Bob. Cic. *portiunculas carnis*).

in fact his main point), quite casually took an ancient and well-known example where the meat of slaughtered bulls was ritually distributed to the Latin peoples. In a purely technical sense, he was not wrong in using the term *visceratio*, but in reference to a sacrificial context he may have been the only one to do so. Servius must have known the word from earlier sources, but in these there is no trace of the word being coupled with sacrifice.

The earliest literary attestation of *visceratio* is in a passage of Cicero's *De officiis* (2,55) which introduces two categories of generous people (*largi*); one of them, the prodigals (*prodigi*), are as follows: *qui epulis et viscerationibus et gladiatorum muneribus ludorum venationumque apparatu pecunias profundunt in eas res, quarum memoriam aut brevem aut nullam omnino sint relicturi*.⁸ Such men are, of course, well known from Roman history, not least from Cicero's own time when *largitiones* had become an everyday reality: electoral bribery often included feasts, public banquets, and gladiatorial games, but also doles of food among the people. On the other hand, the system of public doles distributed by individual *nobiles* aspiring to higher offices was at the same time an efficient means of keeping the huge urban population under control. Cicero himself said that the system of *largitiones* was basically wrong, but nonetheless it was sometimes justified and necessary.⁹

One of the manifestations of *largitio* was the distribution of food which could involve organizing either a banquet (normally called *epulum*, *epulae* or *epulatio*, sometimes *cena*, *convivium* or *prandium*) or the direct sharing out of provisions among the people (corn, oil, wine, etc.). There is good evidence for this phenomenon especially from the later Republic,¹⁰

⁸ For the historical and philosophical background, see now A.R. Dyck, *A Commentary on Cicero, De Officiis*, Ann Arbor 1996, 439 ff.

⁹ Off. 2,59: *tota igitur ratio talium largitionum genere vitiosa est, temporibus necessaria, et tum ipsum et ad facultates accommodanda et mediocritate moderanda est*. For *largitiones* as a form of electoral bribery, see A. Yakobson, *JRS* 82 (1992) 35 ff., with ample evidence from the late Republic.

¹⁰ See e.g. I. Shatzman, *Senatorial Wealth and Roman Politics* (Coll. Latomus 142), Bruxelles 1975, 88, 164; E. Deniaux, in: *L'urbs. Espace urbain et histoire* (Coll.EFR 98), Rome 1987, 300 f.; Yakobson (art.cit. n. 9), 39 n. 35 f. For sumptuous dinners as a mark of liberality during the Principate, see C. Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome*, Cambridge 1993, 186 ff.; 199 ff. – Regular corn distributions to the citizens of

and even if the word *visceratio* is rather rare in the extant sources, it is likely that public doles of meat also played a role in Roman society. The earliest recorded case of *visceratio* is the one introduced at the beginning of this article, though M. Flavius himself and his contemporaries certainly did not use the word *visceratio* as early as 338 B.C., for denominatives in *-atio* are not attested until the late Republic (the type *lignatio*, *runderatio*, etc.).¹¹ Yet the Livian passage is important as it shows that the institution existed as early as the fourth century B.C. And if it is true that the *visceratio* really caused Flavius to win the tribuneship (see above), then this was clearly an early case of *ambitus*. The episode is noteworthy also because otherwise in the literary sources a *visceratio* was regularly given by politicians of the highest rank, and this is also the only time that it was organized in honour of a woman. According to Livy, which is probably true, only a *visceratio* was added to the funeral ceremony arranged by Flavius, because the earliest gladiatorial fight in Rome is not recorded until 264 B.C. (at the funeral of D. Iunius Brutus Pera). So, too, the funeral of Q. Fabius Maximus Rullianus (some time after 291 B.C.) was accompanied by a *visceratio* and an *epulum*, nothing else. But even this must have been a heavy economic burden for Rullianus' son who finally received the funds needed for the festivities from the Roman people.¹² Later, however, the recorded *viscerationes* given after a funeral were accompanied by other entertainment as well. So in 183 B.C., on the death of P. Licinius Crassus (cos. 205), gladiatorial combats with 120 fighters and other games were also on the programme. After the three-day *ludi*, a public banquet with *triclinia* was organized in the Roman Forum (*toto foro*), but it was disrupted by a heavy storm and so the feast continued

Rome were, of course, an old institution: G. Rickman, *The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome*, Oxford 1980, 156 ff.

¹¹ Fr. Stolz, *Historische Grammatik der lat. Sprache I*, Leipzig 1894, 547; M. Leumann, *Lateinische Grammatik I: Laut- und Formenlehre* (HbAW II:2,1), München 1977², 366.

¹² *Vir. ill. 32,4: mortuo huic tantum aeris populi liberalitate congestum est, ut inde filius viscerationem et epulum publice daret.* The role of the *populus* in this affair may have been invented on the model of what happened after the death of Fabius Cunctator: F. Münzer, *RE VI* (1909), 1811 (Rullianus), 1829 (Cunctator).

under the shelter of temporary *tabernacula*.¹³ Nine years later, in 174 B.C., at the funeral of the great general T. Flamininus, his son gave a *munus* (with 74 gladiators) *cum visceratione epuloque et ludis scaenicis quadriduum*.¹⁴ Gladiatorial *munera* and *ludi* are also otherwise attested at the funerals of great Republican leaders,¹⁵ but even if there is less evidence for public banquets on those occasions, there is no reason to doubt that the Roman people were often fed on such occasions. It could even happen that a politician added a banquet to a funeral celebration during his canvass for a higher office.¹⁶

There is also one epigraphic document which testifies to the connection of *visceratio* with a funeral. A re-reading of the text inscribed on the sarcophagus of A. Salvius A.f. A.n. Crispinus, who had been four times *IIIvir* at Ferentium at the end of the Republic, shows that the *municipes* were given a *cena* and a *visceratio* after his death (*sumo supremo die*).¹⁷

¹³ Liv. 39,46,2: *P. Licinii funeris causa visceratio data, et gladiatores centum viginti pugnaverunt, et ludi funebres per triduum facti, post ludos epulum. In quo cum toto foro strata triclinia essent, tempestas cum magnis procellis coorta coegit plerosque tabernacula statuere in foro: eadem paulo post, cum undique disserenasset, sublata*; Liv. epit. Oxyrh. 3,59–60: *P. Licini Crassi po[ntificis maximi] / ludis funebribus [epulum datum]*. In his edition of the epitome (1904), E. Kornemann preferred to restore [*factis epulum datum*].

¹⁴ Liv. 41,28,11.

¹⁵ The earliest known case was at the funeral of D. Iunius Brutus Pera in 264 B.C. (Liv. perioch. 16; Val. Max. 2,4,7; though very modest in appearance, this is the earliest gladiatorial fight recorded in Rome). For some instances, cf. e. g. M. Aemilius Lepidus (216 B.C.; Liv. 23,30,15); M. Valerius Laevinus (200 B.C.; Liv. 31,50,4). In 61/60 B.C., Faustus Sulla gave gladiatorial games in honour of his father who had died many years earlier; the feast was accompanied by distribution of oil and the opening of public baths (Dio 37,51,4).

¹⁶ As in the case of Q. Arrius who aspired (unsuccessfully) for the consulship in 59 B.C. (Cic. Vat. 30 f.). If the expense was too modest, the candidate would run the risk of being eliminated. This is what happened to Q. Tubero in 129 B.C. after the funeral of his uncle Scipio Aemilianus (Cic. Mur. 75).

¹⁷ CIL I² 2634 (add. p. 1072) = ILLRP 588 = Degrassi, *Imagines* 237 a–b = CIE 5650. For the date, see A. Degrassi, in: *Scritti vari di antichità III*, Venezia – Trieste 1967, 168 f. (partly modified by A. Emiliozzi, *MEFRA* 95 [1983] 715 ff.). The crucial line 8 could not be understood until some twenty years ago, thanks to an ingenious proposal advanced

Besides providing the latest recorded instance of funeral *visceratio*, this is the only indisputable epigraphic example of this particular institution (for *visceratio* in other contexts, see the epigraphic evidence adduced below). The case of Crispinus is also remarkable because it shows that the practice was not restricted to the aristocratic circles of Rome, but was also known among the municipal notables. However, though the Salvii were an ancient and honorable family in Ferentium, which was later to become senatorial,¹⁸ the inscribed memory of this funeral *visceratio* probably soon faded away, because the sarcophagus was not only put inside a family tomb, but was probably inscribed only in its final location.

It is hardly necessary to argue that the *viscerationes* mentioned above followed a sacrifice. They were rather related to electoral bribery and canvassing, or upper-class self-advertisement, in many cases obviously both. The sarcophagus from Ferentium shows that similar popular feasts could take place on a smaller scale in Italian municipalities. At most one could take the *viscerationes* as examples continuing the ancient tradition of funerary banquets in a more extensive and public form. It is true that Roman funerary rites included a meal, the so-called *silicernium* which was probably eaten on the day of the burial (but the obscure word may also mean the food consumed at the meal). This was not a festival, however, but rather an intimate farewell ceremony at which the deceased was also thought to be present. The purgatory significance of *silicernium* was duly underlined by Roman antiquarians.¹⁹ Another funerary meal, the *novendialis cena* (this is only one of its names), which concluded the nine-day period of mourning, was a more convivial occasion. At any rate, the only animal sacrifice at a Roman funeral was that of a sow and a pig to Ceres before burial, and these sacrifices had the purpose of consecrating the burial ground as well as

by L. Gasperini, *ArchClass* 29 (1977) 114 ff. (= *AE* 1978, 305): ...*cena et viscera municipibus (data sunt)*. The reading seems to me apposite, though I would prefer taking *VISCERA* as an abbreviation for *viscera(tio)*. In this way the phrase becomes more balanced, and in fact the normal expression was *viscerationem dare* (cf. below). It is probable, moreover, that *data sunt*, possibly abbreviated, stood in line 9 (cf. Gasperini 126 n. 37: *Ḑ(ata?) ṢV[NT]?*). For the meaning of *sumo summo die*, see M. Kajava, in: *Miscellanea epigrafica in onore di Lidio Gasperini*, Macerata (forthcoming).

¹⁸ Suet. *Oth.* 1: *maiores Othonis orti sunt oppido Ferentio, familia vetere et honorata, atque ex principibus Etruriae.*

¹⁹ *Fest.* p. 295 (377, 4-5 L): *silicernium...quo fletu familia purgabatur.*

purifying the family.²⁰ Something was surely consumed at the *silicernium*, but whether the menu could include also the meat of the offerings is a matter of controversy.²¹ Even though the extent of the sacrifice could probably vary from case to case, a large-scale *visceratio* where the meat was taken from sacrificial animals is not imaginable at a Roman funeral ceremony. The exiguousness of funeral food was too well known in Rome.²² If an additional *epulum* was organized, most of the food will have been purchased at the market or somewhere else. This concerns banquets held on annual commemorations as well as those given at the Parentalia festival in February.²³ Moreover, sacrifices made during the latter were normally bloodless, and offerings given to underworld deities were not allowed to be consumed at a banquet.

It is well known that in a traditional Roman sacrifice, the *exta* (inner organs) of the animal were offered to a deity, whereas the rest (*viscera*, as Servius would have called them; see above) was shared by those present at the ritual: this is precisely what the verb *profanare* implies (see above).²⁴ In collegial and public sacrifices, however, the sacrificial meat was given to the presiding priests and the members of an association or a collegium and,

²⁰ For the somewhat controversial evidence, see D.P. Harmon, ANRW II: 16.2 (1978), 1602; cf. also A. Mau, RE III (1899), 357 ff. s.v. Bestattung; Latte (op.cit. n. 4), 100 ff.; 392; G. Radke, Die Götter Altitaliens, Münster 1965, 87 ff. (Ceres' role); J.M.C. Toynbee, Death and Burial in the Roman World, London 1971, 50 f.

²¹ There is no indisputable evidence to show that this was the case. The question is thoroughly discussed by J. Scheid, AION (archeol) 6 (1984) 129 f.

²² E. Gowers, The Loaded Table. Representations of Food in Roman Literature, Oxford 1993, 214 f. Mock funerals were, of course, quite another thing: besides the famous scene in Petronius' *Cena*, one may remember the Pacuvius who used to get heavily drunk during the funeral banquets which he gave to himself (Sen. ep. 12,8; for his identity with the Tiberian legate of Syria, see now PIR² P 46).

²³ The banquet at the Lemuria festival in May probably did not differ much from that of the Parentalia and the *silicernium*, see Scheid (art.cit. n. 21), 136.

²⁴ The only exceptions were the *holocaustum* offerings where the entire victim was burned, and the sacrifices to underworld deities which people were not allowed to consume. To the latter category belong the *hostiae prodigivae Achivo* (or *Graeco*) *ritu* which are attested in the Acts of the Augustan and Severan Saecular Games (CIL VI 32323, 90 f.; G.B. Pighi, De ludis saecularibus populi Romani Quiritium libri sex, Amsterdam 1965², 162 f. [V^a 49 f.]), cf. Latte (op.cit. n. 4), 392.

probably, depending on the ritual, to various office-holders and even the whole Senate,²⁵ but it could also be sold to market vendors.²⁶ Besides the official priests, state sacrifices as well as other important sacrificial rituals were normally the privilege of senators and others of high status, and so was the meat left after the sacrifice.

In an important article from 1985, J. Scheid is in fact right in saying that in ancient Rome animal sacrifice was normally followed by a banquet or in any case the distribution of meat, and this seems to be the case in Republican times and late Antiquity alike.²⁷ But how about the other way around? Does any banquet mean that something had been sacrificed? Scheid is inclined to think that this is often, probably always, the case, and he adds that sacrifice was so obvious a part of a Roman banquet that in documents concerning them it was not necessary to refer to sacrifices at all.²⁸ It is hardly possible to prove this, and indeed it would be difficult to imagine that almost every piece of meat consumed at Roman banquets derived from animal sacrifice. Things would become even more complicated if the meat was preserved (*perna* 'ham'), for in that case there would be no obvious link with a preceding sacrifice, and there is evidence also that whole carcasses together with all the innards were roasted for dinners which means that the

²⁵ The *epulandi publice ius* accorded to the Senate: Suet. Aug. 35. For the age-old ceremony of *epulum Iovis* on the Capitol where the Senate could partake, see Liv. 38,57,5; Gell. 12,8,2.

²⁶ For the evidence, see J. Scheid, MEFRA 97 (1985) 204 f.; cf. also M. Isenberg, CPh 70 (1975) 271 ff.; J. Frayn, in: Food in Antiquity (eds. J. Wilkins – D. Harvey – M. Dobson), Exeter 1995, 113.

²⁷ 'Sacrifice et banquet à Rome. Quelques problèmes', MEFRA 97 (1985) 193 ff., accepting the view already advanced by G. Wissowa, Religion und Kultus der Römer (HbAW V 4), München 1902², 419 f. Strictly speaking, however, the epigraphic evidence adduced by Scheid does not always show unmistakably that the sacrificial meat was consumed by the participants, even if a logical consequence from sacrifice to banquet is often likely, cf. e. g. Dessau, ILS 7313 (Rome): *sa[c]rificia facere, vesci, epulari ita lic[e]at*; ILS 3546 (Caposele, Lucania): *sacrum in re praesenti fieret convenientque ii qui in collegio essent ad epulandum*. But in favour of Scheid's view one could adduce other, more positive evidence from inscriptions and literature.

²⁸ Scheid (art.cit. n. 27), 195 f., 201. Cf. also Id., Studi storici 25:4 (1984) 948 f.

inspection of *exta* with the subsequent gift to a god was omitted.²⁹ And to be logical, those who claim that a *visceratio* always followed a sacrifice should also be ready to accept that the grain and oil distributed to people could be the remains of what had been offered to gods.

While it was normal in Greece that sacrificial rites were followed by public distributions of meat to citizens,³⁰ the Roman practice was different because here large-scale banquets and distributions of food more typically accompanied *munera* and other spectacles. Significantly, the public banquet at the *ludi Apollinares*, which were organized from 212 B.C., was not only preceded by sacrifices performed *Graeco ritu* but the consumption took place outdoors which recalls the Delphic model.³¹ Besides some descriptions of soldiers consuming sacrificial meat, there is little to show that the meat of sacrificial victims went to masses of people.³² Not even the evi-

²⁹ Plaut. Pseud. 343: *cum intestinis omnibus* for which see Frayn (art.cit. n. 26), 110 f.

³⁰ One of the most famous examples is T. Claudius Atticus in mid-second century Athens: he often sacrificed one hundred oxen on a single day and thus provided meat for the whole population of Athens (Philostr. VS 2,548). For more and, perhaps, less exaggerated examples, see A.R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome*, London 1968, 89 ff. Further reading in M. Detienne – J.-P. Vernant, *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*, Paris 1979, passim (the authors' thesis is that nearly all meat was sacrificial); C. Calame, *AION* (filol.) 4–5 (1982–83 [1987]) 9 ff.; S.R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power. The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*, Cambridge 1984, 229 f.; V.J. Rosivach, *The System of Public Sacrifice in Fourth-Century Athens* (Amer. Class. Stud. 34), Atlanta 1994, passim.

³¹ Liv. 25,12,13 (*decemviri sacrum Graeco ritu facerent*). 15 (*vulgo apertis ianuis in propatulis epulati sunt*); cf. F. Bernstein, *Ludi publici. Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Entwicklung der öffentlichen Spiele im republikanischen Rom* (Historia Einzelschr. 119), Stuttgart 1998, 177 (for banquets and other elements of Greek derivation in the *ludi publici*, see also p. 253 f.). For a lucid discussion of the meaning of *ritus Graecus*, see now J. Scheid, in: *Ansichten griechischer Rituale. Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert* (1996), Stuttgart – Leipzig 1998, 168 ff.

³² We know from military records that animals were regularly sacrificed during festivals (cf. the Severan *feriale Duranum*: R.O. Fink, *Roman Military Records on Papyrus*, Cleveland 1971, 422 ff. no. 117), but the consumption of sacrificial meat in military camps is not quite the same thing as distributing it to civilians in Rome and elsewhere. Two of the literary examples concerning public distributions of sacrificial meat cited by Scheid (art.cit. n. 27), 198 f., tell about meat consumed massively by soldiers far from Rome (sacrifice by Titus after his victory in Judea: J. BJ 7,16 f.; Julian sacrificing with

dence on the public banquets following the *decumae* offerings to Hercules at the Ara Maxima in Rome (*Graeco ritu* again) is so clear-cut as it may seem at first sight. For since it was strictly forbidden to take away any parts of the sacrifice, everything had to be consumed at the Ara. Only men were allowed to participate in this banquet, and they had to be seated while eating. Even if the size of the Ara was considerable,³³ the sacred area with the sanctuary cannot have held massive gatherings. Moreover, the menu at this banquet did not consist of meat exclusively, but *omnia esculenta poculenta*,³⁴ and if something was left, it had to be completely burnt, probably before sunset.³⁵ Finally, a writer as early as Varro relegates such banquets to earlier times.³⁶ It is true that devoted (and hungry) people came to eat at the Ara, but it is equally true that the exuberant feasts following the offerings of *decumae* by rich aristocrats and victorious generals such as Sulla and others, were no longer so strictly connected with the old ritual. For if they were, how was it

great enthusiasm in Antioch: Amm. 22,12,6). Both stories are somewhat atypical and the latter actually does not refer to a banquet, but to drunken soldiers plundering meat from public shrines. The third example, Hist. Aug. Aurelian. 12,2, is not a popular banquet, but one given to Roman senators and knights. Regarding CIL XI 3303 = Dessau, ILS 154 (Forum Clodii), the exact relation between the sacrifice and the public *cena* remains unspecified (*item natali Ti. Caesaris perpetue acturi decuriones et populus cenarent – ... – eoque natali ut quotannis vitulus inmolaretur*). As for the rich banquet given by Domitian to senators, knights and the people of Rome at the Septimontium festival (Suet. Domit. 4,12), those of higher rank were given larger food baskets, whereas the *plebs* received their share in *sportellae* (*senatui equitique panariis, plebei sportellis cum obsonio distributis*). Though a sacrifice was traditionally performed at this festival, one cannot be sure that *obsonium* here refers to sacrificial meat, for it could mean anything consumed with bread (meat, fish, cheese, olives, vegetables). Such lunch baskets may have contained mixed food; cf. also Suet. Cal. 18,2: *panaria cum obsonio viritim divisit*.

³³ Serv. Aen. 8,271: *ingens*; cf. F. Coarelli, in: LTUR III 16.

³⁴ Fest. p. 253 (298, 29–30 L).

³⁵ Varro ling. 6,54; Macr. Sat. 2,2,4; Serv. Aen. 8,183; J. Bayet, Les origines de l'Hercule romain, Paris 1926, 435 ff.

³⁶ Varro Men. frg. 413: (*testatur etiam Terentius Varro ...*) *maiores* *solitos decimam Herculi vovere nec decem dies intermittere quin polluerent et populum ἀσύμβολον cum corona laureata dimitterent cubitum*; ling. 6,54: *olim ibi* [i. e. at the Ara] *fano consumebatur omne quod profanatum erat*. Varro's statement seems to be confirmed by the fact that after Augustus, offerings of *decumae* begin to disappear from inscriptions.

acceptable in Sulla's case that a lot of meat that was left over was daily thrown away into the Tiber?³⁷ In these cases at least the old sacrificial context with public distributions was utilized unhesitatingly for *ambitus* and bribery.

How, then, were meat-distributions organized and where did the meat come from? In most cases probably from butchers' shops and the market where, of course, animals for sacrifice could also be purchased.³⁸ But there were other channels, too. In his recent and thought-provoking book, Donald G. Kyle is likely to be right when he argues that at least some of the animal meat from the beast spectacles was eaten by the people of Rome (as happens today with the meat left after bullfights in Spain).³⁹ The distribution of arena meat will have been more common under the Emperors, but considering the ample evidence on *venationes*, which were often coupled with *munera* and funeral games, from their first recorded appearance in 186 B.C.,⁴⁰ the possibility exists that the meat for public doles was sometimes purchased from the arena in earlier times, too.

That *visceratio* should be separated from a sacrificial context is also suggested by epigraphic evidence. At Rudiae, the hometown of Ennius in ancient Calabria, a donor at the time of Hadrian promised a capital sum of HS 80,000 to pay for a public dinner: the interest was to be given *viscerationis nomine* to various groups in the town, including the *populus (viritim)*, on the birthday of his son.⁴¹ Here the meaning of *visceratio* comes close to

³⁷ Plut. Sull. 35,1. Cf. also D.S. 4,21,4 (Lucullus feeding sumptuously the Roman people); Plut. Crass. 2,2 (the immensely rich Crassus bringing a tithe of his whole property to the Ara); *ibid.* 12,3 (10,000 tables).

³⁸ *Macellum*, *taberna* and *officina* disposed of any food and equipment needed for an *epulum* or distribution, as is duly underlined by N. Purcell, in: CAH² IX, Cambridge 1994, 659 ff.

³⁹ D.G. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*, London – New York 1998, 189 ff.

⁴⁰ Organized by M. Fulvius Nobilior after the war against the Greeks (Liv. 39,22,1–2: *venatio data leonum et pantherarum*), but the possibility that there were preceding cases should not be excluded.

⁴¹ CIL IX 23 = Dessau, ILS 6472: ... *promisit municipib. Rudin. HS LXXX n., ut ex reditu eorum die natalis fili sui omnibus annis viscerationis nomine dividatur decur. sing. HS XX n., Augustalibus HS XII n., Mercurialib. HS X n., item populo viritim HS VIII n.* The share of each participant would have been rather small, considering the high prices

'meal (based on meat)', on the analogy of numerous cases from Italy and elsewhere, which record banquets and dinners given by private persons (who were often in charge of municipal duties) for their relatives, friends and various sections of the local population.⁴² The motives behind such public entertainment could be manifold; so an *epulum / epulae* could be a birthday party or a commemorative occasion (often at the Parentalia), but it could also be a feast of a professional collegium or a religious association. Banquets were also frequently arranged to celebrate the dedication of a public statue (*ob dedicationem*). Sometimes a dinner was accompanied by a separate cash distribution (*sportulae*) which, occasionally, was also used for the feast itself. This is precisely the case with the Rudiae inscription (*viscerationis nomine dividatur*, etc.), even if it did not explicitly speak of *sportulae*. Obviously, in most cases the final purpose of the donor was to preserve his or her own memory in the eyes of the recipients, though the possibility that private distribution was sometimes based on purely philanthropic charity should not be dismissed. On the whole, of all the distributions recorded in Italian inscriptions from the Imperial period, about 30% concern both money and provisions, whereas some 10% refer to foods and eating (as well as drinking) exclusively.⁴³

That *visceratio* could refer to a meal is also suggested by a passage in Seneca's Letters which underlines the importance of friendship and conviviality: "to have (meat) dinner without a friend (*sine amico visceratio*) is the life of a lion or a wolf".⁴⁴ A public meal might also be meant in an example given by the jurist Pomponius (Hadrian / Pius), which refers to the common

of meat in ancient Rome. For the expression *v. nomine*, cf. Dessau, ILS 5494 from Africa (Abthugni, Proconsularis [Zeugitana]): *epulationis nomine*.

⁴² R. Duncan-Jones, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies*, Cambridge 1982², 271 n. 1 is right in separating the Rudiae *visceratio* from any sacrificial context. Further evidence on banquets, etc. at p. 201 ff.

⁴³ St. Mrozek, *Historia* 27 (1978) 357 f. For the beneficiaries of private distributions, see Id., *Epigraphica* 34 (1972) 30 ff.

⁴⁴ Sen. epist. 19,10: *ante, inquit, circumspiciendum est, cum quibus edas et bibas, quam quid edas et bibas; nam sine amico visceratio leonis ac lupi vita est*. Seneca attributed the sentence to Epicurus whose original is unfortunately lost.

institution of *sportulae* and feasts.⁴⁵ However, *visceratio* more normally occurs in the company of a banquet (mostly called *epulum* or *epulae*). Besides the above-mentioned Livian passages concerning Republican funerals and Cicero's comment on *largitiones* (off. 2,55; see above), *visceratio* is also coupled with *epulum* in Sen. epist. 73,8 where the writer compares some *individua bona* (like peace and freedom) with material things such as *epulum et visceratio et quicquid aliud manu capitur*: the latter can be shared out in pieces, whereas the former are indivisible. In one of his letters to Ausonius, Symmachus complains of the laconic style of his friend's answers and writes: "If I had asked you to give a festal dinner and a sumptuous feast, and also *viscerationes atque epulum*, would you deliver only desserts and some morsels on a small tray?"⁴⁶

Regarding the epigraphic evidence other than the Rudiae text, an inscription from Lanuvium shows that a M. Valerius M.f., local aedile and dictator, was honoured by the *municipes compitenses veicorum quinque* somewhere in the early Principate, because he had benefited the town in various ways, including the organization of a public *visceratio* and gladiatorial games.⁴⁷ According to a second-century text from Eburum in Lucania, a city patron who had been honoured with a statue by the *dendrophori*, set up a foundation which not only provided different sums of money to various groups of the local population, but also an *epulum* for the colleges of *dendrophori* and *fabri* as well as a *visceratio* for the *plebei*.⁴⁸ Another Italian inscription records a *sevir Augustalis* who had been publicly honoured with *ornamenta decurionalia* and a statue. In return he gave the decurions and the people a banquet together with a *visceratio*.⁴⁹ Outside of Italy, this term occurs in some African documents. At Sutunurca (Procons.), a *visceratio*

⁴⁵ Pompon. Dig. 32,54: '*Lucius Titius plebi quina milia dedit, hoc amplius Seius viscerationem*'.

⁴⁶ Symm. epist. 1,23,2: *Si ego cenas dapales et saliare convivium* [i. e. like those of the *Salii*], *tum viscerationes atque epulum postulassem, tu mihi mensas secundas et scitamenta exiguae lancis adponeres?*

⁴⁷ CIL XIV 2121 = Dessau, ILS 5683: ... *populo viscerati(onem), gladiatores dedit, ...* As we have already seen, distributions and banquets were often accompanied by *munera* and games.

⁴⁸ CIL X 451 = Inscr. It. III,1, 5.

⁴⁹ CIL XI 5965 (Pitinum Merg.): *epulas dedit et [vis]cerationem*.

was given at least twice in the year 146 A.D., once by a local office-holder on the occasion of the dedication of an honorific statue to M. Aurelius Caesar,⁵⁰ and again by a local man whose daughter had become *flaminica perpetua*. In gratitude for this honour, he set up a statue to divus Hadrianus, the dedication of which was celebrated with a public *visceratio* and the distribution of oil.⁵¹ A third African text, probably concerning the Imperial cult (M. Aurelius and Commodus), refers to the dedication of an altar by a man who celebrated the event with a banquet and *visceratio* given to his *congenticiles* and the *sacerdotes*.⁵²

Most of the evidence, literary and epigraphic, couples *visceratio* with a banquet (*epulum*). Now, even if the menu at a normal *epulum* mostly consisted of bread and wine or at least was based on them,⁵³ meat could, of course, also be served at a banquet,⁵⁴ and so the difference between *epulum* and *visceratio* was not based on the type of food, but rather the way in which it was served (organized banquet [with or without meat] v. public distribution of meat).⁵⁵ On the other hand, sometimes perhaps the word *visceratio* announced that there was also some meat to be eaten at, or in

⁵⁰ CIL VIII 24003, l. 12/13: *ob dedicationem visce[rationem ---] dedit* (one wonders whether *epulum* followed by a dative could be restored in the lacuna). For a new reading of the preceding lines, see A. Beschtaouch, BCTH 22 (1987–88 [1992]) 290.

⁵¹ ILAfr. 300 (= Z.B. Ben Abdallah, Catal. inscr. lat. Mus. Bardo [1986], no. 160): *ob dedicationem viscerationem et gymnasium populo dedit*. For the locality, Sutunurca, see L. Maurin, MEFRA 107 (1995) 124 f.

⁵² CIL VIII 14853 (Tuccabor, Procons.): *ob dedicatione(m) congenticilibus et sacerdotib[us] viscerationem et epu[lum dedit]*.

⁵³ Duncan-Jones (op.cit. n. 42), 263 f.; Id., Structure and Scale in the Roman Economy, Cambridge 1990, 143.

⁵⁴ This is self-evident, but is also shown by an inscription from Amiternum, which records an *epulum* given to the *plebs urbana* on the occasion of the dedication of a statue in A.D. 338 (CIL IX 4215): *ob cuius dedicatione(m) dedit plebi urbanae ad aepulum convivii panem et vinum, tauros II[---], verbeces XV*, etc. Moreover, a capital sum was given, the income of which was to be spent for annual banquets, cf. Mrozek (art.cit. n. 43 [Historia]), 362.

⁵⁵ In fact, the Romans did make a distinction between *cena recta* (e. g. Suet. Aug. 74, Domit. 7; Mart. 2,69,7; 7,20,2; 8,50,10) and the distribution of small quantities of food in baskets (*sportulae*).

connection with, an *epulum*, usually pork which was the most common type of meat available in ancient Rome. But meat was expensive and even if its importance and market varied regionally, it was not largely accessible to the majority of Romans until the 270s, when Aurelian introduced free pork distribution on the model of older alimentary systems.⁵⁶ One wonders whether high prices and the general unavailability of meat might partly explain the relative rareness of the word *visceratio* in the extant sources. On the other hand, the people of Roman municipalities must have been familiar with the institution of *visceratio*, considering that the Flavian municipal law records it in the list of festivals and feast-days on which matters were not to be judged: *quibusque diebus ex decurionum conscriptorumve decreto spectacula in eo municipio edentur, epulum aut vesceratio municipibus aut cena decurionibus conscriptisve municipum impensa dabitur*.⁵⁷

Visceratio thus means either 'public distribution of meat' or a 'meal (based on meat)', though in some cases it is difficult to decide between the two meanings which surely may also overlap sometimes. So it is easy to imagine that the meat was first distributed to the guests who then consumed it (if cooked) as at a modern buffet or cocktail party. Rather than suggesting a connection with sacrificial meat, *visceratio* mostly belongs to the categories of *largitio* and *munificentia*. It is hardly a coincidence that the usual

⁵⁶ Aur. Vict. Caes. 35,7; cf. H.W. Bird, Aurelius Victor: De Caesaribus, Liverpool 1994, 151 (but cf. also Hist. Aug. Alex. 26,1: *carnem populo addidit*). The people involved in pork business: C. Lega, in: Le iscrizioni dei Cristiani in Vaticano (Inscriptiones Sanctae Sedis 2), Città del Vaticano 1997, 330 f. For the situation in late antique Rome, which was nutritionally better than during the early Principate, see P. Garnsey, in: Nourrir la plèbe. Actes du Coll. Genève 1989 en hommage a D. van Berchem (Schweiz. Beitr. Altertumswiss. 22), Basel 1991, 86, with references. For the consumption of meat in Rome, cf. also P.A. Brunt, Italian Manpower 225 B.C. – A.D. 14, Oxford 1971, 372 f.; E. Salza Prina Ricotti, in: L'alimentazione nel mondo antico. I romani – età imperiale, Roma 1987, 88 ff. The best and most exhaustive account of the role and significance of meat in ancient Rome is given by M. Corbier, Food and Foodways 3 (1989) 223–264 (= DHA 15 [1989] 107–158). Let it be added that Laura Chioffi (Rome) is preparing a study entitled "Caro. Produzione, commercio e consumo di carne nell'Occidente romano. Riflessi epigrafici ed iconografici", see now a preliminary report in: Epigrafia romana in area adriatica (Ichnia 2), Macerata 1998, 263 ff.

⁵⁷ Lex Irnitana (Ch. 92, l. 30 ff.): J. Gonzáles, JRS 76 (1986) 180 = AE 1986, 333 (p. 110). Cf. also Ch. 79, Tablet IX A, l. 2, discussing the spending of common funds on *sacra, ludi* and *cenae* to which *decuriones* and *conscripti* or *municipes* are invited.

expression from the Livian passages throughout the Principate was *viscerationem dare* which means that someone provided the distribution, in other words, there was someone to pay for it: the amusement could be financed by a private person, an office-holder or a community.⁵⁸ Like the very common *epulum dare*,⁵⁹ this phrase often implies self-advertisement and the wish to strengthen one's popularity, both typical tendencies among the more elevated and propertied sections of Roman society. Significantly, Servius wrote *visceratio dabatur* in his reference to the ancient Latin sacrifice, but he may not have bothered about the social context from which the phrase originally came.

There is still, however, one important ceremony where a *visceratio* is recorded in Roman society, namely the triumph. It was normal during great triumphal festivities in Rome that the victorious general showed his generosity to the inhabitants of the city by giving them various sorts of entertainment and spectacles. On such occasions common people were likely to have free access to gladiatorial fights, horse races and theatrical performances, but it is also recorded for some triumphs that the people of Rome were given public banquets.⁶⁰ This is what happened during the triumphs of Caesar the Dictator: both in August 46 B.C., when Caesar was celebrating his victories over Gaul, Egypt, Pontus and Africa, and in the next autumn after the great triumph *ex Hispania*, the Romans were offered food and drink: *adiexit epulum ac viscerationem et post Hispaniensem victoriam duo prandia; nam cum prius parce neque pro liberalitate sua praebitum iudicaret, quinto post die aliud largissimum praebuit.*⁶¹ Such banquets normally followed the official part of the festivities.

⁵⁸ Sometimes one and the same person gave spectacles not only in his official capacity but also privately, cf. the Trajanic CIL II²/5 789, 6–7 from Singili(a?) Barba (conv. Astigitanus): *Hic in Iiviratu publicos ludos et totidem dierum privatos dedit.*

⁵⁹ ThLL V:2, 707; Diz. epigr. II:3, 2142 f.

⁶⁰ Lucullus gave a superb feast for the people of Rome and the surrounding *vici* in 63 B.C. (*ex Asia*, Plut. Luc. 37,4); Tiberius fed the Roman people at 1,000 tables in October A.D. 12 (*de Pannonis et Delmatis*, Suet. Tib. 20); Titus and Vespasian were not so wasteful, for they selected their guests in A.D. 71 (J. BJ 7,6). Otherwise, of course, on diverse occasions emperors provided banquets and distributions of food to the people of Rome.

⁶¹ Suet. Iul. 38.

A particularly luxurious dinner is attested during one of those triumphs. We know from Varro that once Caesar was granted two thousand murenae as a kind of loan, although the supplier did not require compensation.⁶² Other writers affirm that those murenae were even more, six thousand, and that they were served at the *cenae triumphales* organized by the Dictator.⁶³ As for the date of the murena meal, it does not seem likely that they were offered during the Hispania triumph, for it would be incomprehensible that Caesar used the words *parce neque pro liberalitate* to refer to a meal including as many as thousands of murenae. But if the first *prandium* was really too modest, one can hardly think that Caesar or anybody else was able to purchase in only a couple of days such a huge amount of murenae to be offered during the second *prandium*. What is more, the Elder Pliny says that the murenae were served at *cenae triumphales* (not *prandium*) which fits better the fourfold triumph celebrated on four days in August 46 B.C. There was an interval between each triumph and each festival day had a different *apparatus* and *instrumentum*.⁶⁴ Plutarch refers to the festivities immediately after the triumphs of 46, when he says that Caesar entertained the people with food and spectacles.⁶⁵ His account of the guests having been fed simultaneously at 22,000 *triclinia* suggests that an enormous amount of food was provided in the streets and squares of the city. Considering that there were nine places in a Roman *triclinium*, those dining-couches would have been enough for almost 200,000 people,⁶⁶ a number

⁶² Varro rust. 3,17,3.

⁶³ Plin. nat. 9,171; Macr. Sat. 3,15,10.

⁶⁴ Suet. Iul. 37,1: *quater eodem mense, sed interiectis diebus...diverso quemque apparatu et instrumento*.

⁶⁵ Plut. Caes. 55,4: καὶ τὸν δῆμον ἀνελάμβανεν ἐστίασει καὶ θέαις, ἐστίασας μὲν ἐν διαμυρίοις καὶ δισχιλίοις τρικλίνοις ὁμοῦ σύμπαντας. On the municipal level, it has been argued recently that the *Iivir* P. Lucilius Gamala may have imitated Caesar when he gave the Ostian people a banquet with 217 *triclinia* (CIL I² 3031 *a* = XIV 375: *...[id]em epulum trichilinis CCXVII / colonis dedit / [id]em prandium sua pecunia coloni[s] Ostiesibus bis dedit*, etc.), cf. M. Cébeillac Gervasoni, *Les magistrats des cités italiennes de la seconde guerre punique à Auguste: le Latium et la Campanie* (BEFAR 299), Rome 1998, 108 n. 44, referring to a forthcoming study by J. D'Arms.

⁶⁶ But if the guests were lying closer to each other (as was normal in Rome), there was space for even more people; Hor. serm. 1,4,86: *saepe tribus lectis videas cenare quater-*

well in keeping with the estimated urban citizen population of the time.⁶⁷ We do not know where and how this banquet was organized, but if the people were not scattered to different eating points, the only venue sufficient for some 200,000 people was the Villa Publica with the surrounding porticos and the Saepta.⁶⁸ Despite immense arrangements, however, some people always remained without food, for Caesar's triumphs as any later Roman triumphs with good entertainment must have allured a public of some hundreds of thousands to the streets of Rome, and indeed Suetonius affirms that the spectacles offered by Caesar were so popular that the streets of Rome were extremely crowded on those days.⁶⁹ The meals probably included various types of food that were served together. Suetonius refers to *visceratio* and *epulum* which, again, shows the two words joined with each other. Other writers mentioned specifically only the *murenae*, obviously because they were an extraordinary dish.⁷⁰ However, the *murenae* were probably served for special guests at the *cena triumphalis* (or *cenae*?) which the Dictator joined himself. This banquet traditionally concluded the

nos; Petr. cena 31: at least fourteen persons (see Friedlaender's commentary).

⁶⁷ In the year 46 B.C., the 22,000 *triclinia* would have been enough for all those who were entitled to free grain distribution in Rome, since Caesar had reduced the number of recipients from 320,000 to 150,000 (Suet. Iul. 41,3). The drastic cut was carried out because the number of the *plebs frumentaria* had become uncontrollable in the aftermath of the more liberal Clodian law. But since a triumphal *epulum* and a *visceratio* were optional events, it is unlikely that similar restrictions were observed for them. Non-citizens must have been excluded (as far as possible), but many freedmen and poorer citizens probably found something to eat. One should note further that if the distribution of meat was similar to that of public corn (Brunt [op.cit. n. 56], 382), most of the recipients were probably males.

⁶⁸ F. Coarelli, *Il Campo Marzio. Dalle origini alla fine della Repubblica*, Roma 1997, 175.

⁶⁹ Suet. Iul. 39,4: *Ad quae omnia spectacula tantum undique confluit hominum, ut plerique advenae aut inter vicus aut inter vias tabernaculis positae manerent, ac saepe prae turba elisi exanimatique sint plurimi et in his duo senatores.*

⁷⁰ For *murenae* and other fish in ancient Rome, see my 'Murenae, Oysters and Gilt-Heads. Fish for Name, Table, and Show in Ancient Rome' (forthcoming in *Acta Class. Univ. Debrec.*). Note, incidentally, that the people of Rome may have offered living fish and other animals to Volcanus about the same time, i. e. at the feast of Volcanalia on the 23rd of August, see now J. Linderski, *AJPh.* 118 (1997) 645.

triumph, and it is recorded that after the feast given on the fourth triumphal day, Caesar first entered his own, new Forum and was then escorted home by a torchlight procession with the Roman people, musicians and a number of elephants.⁷¹ Regarding the *epulum* and *visceratio* mentioned by Suetonius, basically they should be taken as any banquet and distribution given in an Italian municipality, with the only difference being that the volume and dimensions of the Caesarian feast were extraordinarily large. The arrangements described by Plutarch clearly refer to this popular banquet (unless more banquets were organized) which seems to have taken place after the fourth and last triumph and which perhaps continued for several days.⁷² But the *visceratio* was not the only distribution, for Caesar also gave other provisions to the people: each man received ten pecks of grain and ten pounds of oil, and in addition four hundred sesterces in cash.⁷³ Among many other things, he also sponsored various kinds of spectacles which included combats of gladiators, athletic competitions, stage-plays, races at the circus, and even an artificial sea-battle. One wonders, finally, whether some of the meat for the *visceratio* came from the carcasses remaining after the *venationes* which, according to Suetonius, lasted for five days.⁷⁴ Any

⁷¹ Dio 43,22, for which see S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius*, Oxford 1971, 77 f. The fourth triumph *ex Africa*: J.-L. Voisin, *AntAfr* 19 (1983) 7 ff. (the elephant episode: 32 f.).

⁷² Cf. Vell. 2,56,1: *epulique per multos dies dati celebratione replevit eam* [i. e. *urbem*]. This was not unprecedented (cf. the evidence on early funeral games), and from the earlier Empire we already know some protracted banquets given by private persons (CIL IX 981 [Compsa]: *biduo*; Dessau, ILS 5713 [Afr. Procons.]: *per tridum*); lengthy dinners with other entertainment also in CIL XI 5170 (Vettona; fourth century A.D.).

⁷³ Suet. Iul. 38,1: *Populo praeter frumenti denos modios ac totidem olei libras trecenos quoque nummos, quos pollicitus olim erat, viritim divisit et hoc amplius centenos pro mora.*

⁷⁴ This means that beast hunts (as well as many other spectacles) perhaps went on during two consecutive triumphs, unless they finished with a pause (Suet. *interiectis diebus*); but it may be more probable that they started only with the final triumph and thus extended the extra programme for many days. *Spectacula varii generis*: Suet. Iul. 39,1–3; cf. also Vell. 2,56,1–2; App. BC 2,102; Z. Yavetz, *Caesar in der öffentlichen Meinung*, Düsseldorf 1979, 167 ff. Caesar's expenditure was, of course, enormous; for some estimates, see Shatzman (op.cit. n. 10), 355 f.

food was good in those times, for in the early 40s B.C. the civil war had created considerable food shortages in Rome.⁷⁵

The conclusion of the triumph did not mean stopping the festivities, however. A few weeks later, following the long-awaited dedication of the temple of Venus Genetrix on the 26th of September, Caesar organized funeral games in memory of his daughter who had died in 54 B.C. He had announced these festivities many years earlier,⁷⁶ but it was not until then that a suitable occasion offered itself: like Caesar's own funeral organized by Octavian two years later, the feast coincided with the *ludi Veneris Genetricis* (later called, officially, *ludi Victoriae Caesaris*). The commemoration was particularly apt in this context, since one of the main purposes of the *ludi* was to underline the divine origin of the *gens Iulia*.⁷⁷ Judging from a fragment of the Ostian fasti, Caesar seems to have redeemed his promise of a public banquet as reported by Suetonius.⁷⁸ Other writers are silent about this, except that Plutarch associated the triumphal banquet of August with Julia's commemoration.⁷⁹ If Plutarch was right, the triumphal banquet and probably also the *visceratio* commemorated Julia's death as well. But he

⁷⁵ P. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World. Responses to Risk and Crisis*, Cambridge 1988, 201 ff.

⁷⁶ Suet. Iul. 26,2: *munus populo epulumque pronuntiavit in filiae memoriam, quod antea nemo*. Posthumous commemoration was not so rare among the aristocrats (for Sulla, see n. 15). Caesar himself had organized gladiatorial combats on a lavish scale as aedile in 65 B.C. in memory of his father who had died twenty years earlier. What counted in most cases was the right timing, for such occasions could be very useful for one's political career.

⁷⁷ Weinstock (op.cit. n. 71), 89; Bernstein (op.cit. n. 31), 333.

⁷⁸ F. Ost. A 11 ff.: *Aed[es Veneris Genetricis] / dedicata. Ep[ulum ---]. / Naumachia [---]*. The lacunae have been variously restored by modern editors: Degraffi's proposal was based on Suet. Iul. 39, but it was too adventurous (Inscr. It. XIII:1,5 I 11 ff.); Vidman (1982) suggested *Ep[ulum et congiarium dat(um).]* where *congiarium* would refer to the delayed (*pro mora*) distribution of money reported by Suet. Iul. 38,1. Other restorations could also be considered, even [*visceratio*] which was often coupled with *epulum*, but if the order of the items is significant, the banquet did not precede the dedication. Perhaps the sea-battle took place only after late September, even if the construction and installation of the enormous equipment must have started much earlier. For the *naumachia* and its collocation in the Campus Martius, see now Coarelli (op.cit. n. 68), 584 f.

⁷⁹ Plut. Caes. 55,4.

may have confused the evidence, which would be understandable, since in those days various games and feasts followed each other in quick succession. The spectacles were in fact so numerous that one cannot take it for granted that ancient authors reported them in a correct chronological order. What seems probable is that most of the festivities reported by Suetonius and others continued for several days, even weeks, after the official conclusion of the triumph. It may be that there was no visible break between the triumphal entertainments and the *ludi*.⁸⁰

Hundreds of triumphs were held in Rome until the last official one in Honorius' honour in A.D. 403, though the old tradition with triumphal procession and sacrifice to Jupiter had already come to an end one hundred years earlier with the joint triumph of Diocletian and Maximian. But even if only one *visceratio* is explicitly recorded during the festivities, it is likely that doles of meat were now and then added to the more normal *epula*. It may even be that Caesar was not the first triumphator to do so. However, the meat needed for the *visceratio* did not necessarily come from sacrificed animals, even if sacrifice did play an important role in the Roman triumph.

⁸⁰ However, though less relevant to our argument, the possibility exists that the fourfold triumph took place only in September. What we know for sure is that the triumph was organized after Caesar had returned to Italy on the 25th of July and before the dedication of the temple of Venus on the 26th of September (confirmed by the Acta Arv.: Inscr. It. XIII:2 p. 35). And since Suet. Iul. 37,1 says *quater eodem mense*, the triumph took place in either August or September (there would be no time in July). The earlier date seems to me preferable, for otherwise Caesar would have waited for his triumph for several weeks. The triumph with the 40-day *supplicationes* had been voted for him much earlier and so there would have been good time for making everything ready for August. If the fourfold triumph took place, say, in late August, the extra festivities continued through September and culminated with the *ludi Veneris Genetricis*. – I cannot conclude from Dio 43,22,1–3 that the *ludi* coincided with the final day of the triumph (thus Bernstein [op.cit. n. 31], 334). Dio states that in the evening of the fourth triumphal day (whenever it was), Caesar visited his own forum which he had himself constructed. After having completed the forum and the temple of Venus, Dio continues, he dedicated both at that very time (εὐθὺς τότε) and in their honour he gave various entertainments to the people, which also included gladiatorial combats in Julia's memory. Caesar's visit to the Forum Iulium after the *cena triumphalis* should not be connected with the dedication and the following games. Dio, of course, also failed to observe that the whole area was still under construction at the moment of the dedication, and it was not finished until the time of Augustus (cf. C. Morselli, in: LTUR II 300).

Besides some minor and preparatory sacrifices, the main ritual took place on the Capitol where the triumphator ascended together with the procession or, if too crowded, a part of it. Among the normal stuff displayed (booty, all kinds of exotic things and animals, foreign captives, representatives of the general's own legions, etc.), there were also a number of richly decorated white bulls to be sacrificed on the altar of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. This is the only sacrifice during a triumph which one could think of as providing meat for a major banquet.⁸¹ Now, the number of bulls slaughtered on the Capitol is very rarely given by ancient writers, but one is hardly wrong to guess that their number normally varied from a few to some dozens at the most. There is no doubt that the 120 bulls at the triumph of L. Aemilius Paullus in late November 167 B.C. (*ex Macedonia et rege Perse*) were a startling exception which deserved specific mention.⁸² If Caesar had sacrificed as many as 120 bulls on the Capitol, not only would the official timetable have become extremely tight, but also the huge amount of blood (c. ten hectolitres) might have created problems in the August heat of Rome, for it could not possibly be left on the ground.⁸³ If Caesar offered some ten to fifty bulls to Jupiter, this would already be a remarkable sacrifice, but whatever their exact number was, the rest of the meat was reserved for the priests attending the ritual, some participants of the procession as well as all those gathered around Jupiter's temple, who by virtue of their office had been patiently awaiting Caesar's coming to the Capitol. The hungry Roman mob had to wait for the *visceratio*, but this was another affair.

University of Helsinki

⁸¹ One may also note that *suovetaurilia* had no place in a Roman triumph (pace Serv. Aen. 9,624), see H.S. Versnel, *Triumphus. An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph*, Leiden 1970, 151 n. 1.

⁸² D.S. 31,7,9 ff.; Plut. Aem. 33. For the obvious technical problems involved with such a massive sacrifice and the considerable time which the ritual must have taken, see E. Künzl, *Der römische Triumph. Siegesfeiern im antiken Rom*, München 1988, 82 f.

⁸³ But if the blood was collected and stored, it could be used for black puddings and sausages and for binding in general. The (meagre) evidence for Roman priests consuming sacrificial blood is discussed by Latte (*op.cit.* n. 4), 391 n. 3.