



Blood in the Arena: The Spectacle of Roman Power

Alison Futrell

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From the center of Imperial Rome to the farthest reaches of ancient Britain, Gaul, and Spain, amphitheaters marked the landscape of the Western Roman Empire. Built to bring Roman institutions and the spectacle of Roman power to conquered peoples, many still remain as witnesses to the extent and control of the empire.

In this book, Alison Futrell explores the arena as a key social and political institution for binding Rome and its provinces. She begins with the origins of the gladiatorial contest and shows how it came to play an important role in restructuring Roman authority in the later Republic. She then traces the spread of amphitheaters across the Western Empire as a means of transmitting and maintaining Roman culture and control in the provinces.

Futrell also examines the larger implications of the arena as a venue for the ritualized mass slaughter of human beings, showing how the gladiatorial contest took on both religious and political overtones. This wide-ranging study, which draws insights from archaeology and anthropology, as well as Classics, broadens our understanding of the gladiatorial contest and its place within the highly politicized cult practice of the Roman Empire.

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