Jack J. Lennon

Dirt and Denigration

Stigma and Marginalisation in Ancient Rome

Approaches to Ancient History 1

Mohr Siebeck

Approaches to Ancient History
(AAH)

Edited by

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ISBN 978-3-16-161707-2 / eISBN 978-3-16-161752-2
DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-161752-2

ISSN 2751-7896 / eISSN 2751-790X (Approaches to Ancient History)

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliographie; detaillierte bibliographische Daten sind über *http://dnb.dnb.de* abrufbar.

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The book was typeset by epline in Böblingen using Times typeface, printed on non-aging paper, and bound by Hubert und Co. in Göttingen.

The cover was designed by Uli Gleis in Tübingen. Image: Detail taken from a relief depicting a theatre scene from the Museo Archaeologico Nazionale, Naples; © Photo: Ilya Shurygin.

Printed in Germany.

For my grandfather

Acknowledgments

Over the years it has taken to bring this book to completion I have been aided by many friends and colleagues at a number of institutions. Both their input and their support has been invaluable. I must begin by thanking John Drinkwater, who has been involved with the book at every stage of its development and who generously gave so much time to provide detailed feedback and advice. Thanks must also go to Naoíse Mac Sweeney, who not only read large portions of the manuscript but also showed unshakeable faith in the project and invited me to consider publishing the book with the *Approaches to Ancient History* series. Victoria Pagán and the anonymous reviewer also gave constructive and highly encouraging feedback for which I am extremely grateful.

Much of the initial research for this book was conducted at the British School at Rome as part of a Mougins Museum Rome Award, and some of the core components were later presented at a conference that I co-organised at the School. On both occasions, the discussions I had with those present had a significant impact on the direction and focus of the book. Of these, special thanks must go to Christopher Smith, along with Simon Corcoran, Anthony Kaldellis, Fabio Nolfo, Costas Panayotakis, Maroula Perisanidi, Peter Sarris, and Brian Swain.

Several years into the writing process I managed to secure a permanent position at the University of Leicester in the School of Archaeology and Ancient History, which not only gave me the time to complete the book but also made it a considerably more enjoyable process. Arriving at Leicester has been a revelation, and I owe an incredible debt to all my colleagues who make this such a vibrant, supportive, and above all pleasant place to work. My fellow ancient historians, in particular, do an excellent job of supporting one another and putting up with my various neuroses along the way, so I must give special mention to Jan Haywood, Jane Masseglia, Graham Shipley, Dan Stewart, Selena Wisnom and, above all, Andy Merrills.

As is always the case, many others have made writing this book easier. Bernadette Descharmes, Mary Harlow, Ray Laurence, Doug Lee, Ellie Mackin Roberts, David Mattingly, John North, John Rich, Rebecca Usherwood, and Nick Wilshere have all helped in different ways, discussing specific points, offering advice, reading drafts and sharing pieces of their own work. As ever, thanks must also go to Mark Bradley for introducing me to the wonderful world

of Roman dirt, and for the help and encouragement he has offered over all these years.

Lastly, I must thank my family for their unwavering support, especially my grandfather Peter, to whom this book is dedicated, along with my wonderful wife Clare who has inadvertently learned far more about Roman history than any scientist should have to, and my son James, without whose arrival this book would have been finished years ago. It was time well spent.

Leicester, 2022 *Jack J. Lennon*

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments . . . VII

Introduction . . . 1

Chapter 1: Pimps . . . 31

1.1 Presenting the Pimp . . . 35
1.2 The Brothel: Dirty and Dangerous . . . 44
1.3 Hotbeds of Sedition . . . 51
1.4 Pimps in Declamation . . . 56
1.5 The Threat of *Lenocinium* . . . 60
1.6 Conclusion . . . 64

Chapter 2: Prostitutes . . . 67

2.1 Comparative Dirtiness . . . 70
2.2 The Embodiment of Dirt . . . 75
2.3 Physical and Social Contagion . . . 84
2.4 The Visibility of Prostitutes . . . 91
2.5 Conclusion . . . 95

Chapter 3: Performers and Entertainers . . . 99

3.1 Apollo's Parasites . . . 104
3.2 Gladiators . . . 113
3.3 The *Lanista* . . . 126
3.4 Conclusion . . . 132

Chapter 4: Dealing with the Dead 135
4.1 Living with Death Pollution 140
4.2 Grave Undertakings 142
4.3 Undertakers in Italy 147
4.4 The *Carnifex* 155
4.5 Social Avoidance 160
4.6 Conclusion 163

Chapter 5: Dirt and the Outsider 165
5.1 Carthage: A Foreign Plague 170
5.2 Greece: Cultural Contamination 176
5.3 Egypt: Infectious Excesses 183
5.4 Jews: Outsiders Within 189
5.5 Conclusion 197

Conclusion 201

Bibliography 209
Index 245

That is what we were taught – *the lower classes smell*. And here, obviously, you are at an impassable barrier. For no feeling of like or dislike is quite so fundamental as a *physical* feeling. Race hatred, religious hatred, differences of education, of temperament, of intellect, even differences of moral code, can be got over; but physical repulsion cannot.

George Orwell (1986) *The Road to Wigan Pier*, 119.

Introduction

In the first century BC Horatius Balbus, a native of Sarsina, donated a portion of land to his town to be used as a public cemetery. An inscription has survived commemorating his gift and setting out the specific measurements for each gravesite. It also specified that those who had worked as hired gladiators were not to be permitted burial within the allotted space, nor were suicides by hanging, or anyone who had practised an unclean (*spurcus*) profession.[1] The inscription gives us no more information about the restrictions. Its author not only assumed that contemporaries reading the notice would have known instinctively which professions were covered by the sweeping label of 'unclean', but also that this act of exclusion would have been both respected and appreciated by the people of the town.

In attempting to make sense of this potentially wide-ranging term a number of suggestions have been put forward to try to explain precisely which groups were considered so unclean that the locals of Sarsina would literally refuse to be seen dead with them. Some have suggested prostitutes to be the most likely candidates, others have said pimps, actors or corpse handlers, or the *lanistae* responsible for training and contracting the gladiators who were similarly denied burial in the cemetery.[2] Each of these groups were subjected to criticism, ridicule, disapproval and sometimes even physical abuse from other members of Roman society. Their status was perpetuated often over a period of centuries and every day the inferiority of various Romans was reinforced and justified in the minds of their fellow citizens by the fact that members of these groups were perceived to be dirty in some way that went beyond mere physical condition. The message being asserted by Horatius Balbus' inscription was that those who had been sullied by their birth, profession, or lifestyle were to be considered un-

[1] *CIL* 11.6528 (*ILS* 7846); Voisin (1991) 23–34; Id. (2002) 324; Grisé (1982) 143–4; Susini (1994) 863–9; Hope (2007) 138–9. All abbreviations follow those listed in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4th ed.). Unless otherwise stated, translations are my own.

[2] Ville (1979) 655; Id. (1981) 340–1; McGinn (1992) 278; Id. (1998) 65; Kyle (1998) 161; Hope (1998) 184; Id. (2000) 116–17. The interpretation of Aigner (1988) 207–9 puts special emphasis on the pimp (Kuppler), but the language was most likely to have been left deliberately vague so as to allow for freer interpretation. On the origins and pollutive implications of the label *spurcus*, see Blonski (2014) 49–59; Lennon (2014) 34. Bond (2016) 3 emphasises the use of the term in reference to sexual deviance, although its use was not restricted to a single form of dirt or impurity.

worthy of admittance into the same social space that everyone else could share, and were even placed on the same level as a religiously polluting corpse. The result was that even after death some groups continued to be marginalised by the rest of society. The aura of impurity which had followed them throughout their lives lingered on, seemingly threatening to contaminate their fellow (deceased) citizens, should they be placed in close proximity to them.

But from whose viewpoint was a prostitute or gladiator unclean or polluted in ancient Rome, and were they all equally unclean? What purpose did it serve to know that certain groups were to be singled out and presented as inherently dirty or – far more importantly – dirtier than others? Were such ideas confined to concerns about physical cleanliness and hygiene, or were there wider social factors at work? The citizens most likely to have made use of Balbus' graveyard would have been those who were respectable enough to be admitted but, at the same time, poor enough to require assistance. As such, they were likely to have been viewed with disdain by the wealthiest in Roman society who did not need to rely on such charity. Regardless of their financial circumstances, however, those who made use of Balbus' beneficence could still rest easy knowing that they qualified for admittance, putting them on the inside of a clearly signposted social divide and, thus, that they were demonstrably better than those dirty individuals who were excluded.[3]

Deciding who or what is unclean and to what degree is all a matter of perspective. A gift of land for burials similar to that made by Horatius Balbus was made at Tolentinum by a former slave in the early Imperial period.[4] Yet Latin literature from that period provides plenty of examples of cases where members of the Roman political or social elite attacked those who had previously been enslaved, especially those who had gone on to achieve political or financial influence. In such contexts, the language of dirt and staining was particularly effective. Recalling one of the earliest examples of freedman participation in politics in the Republic, Livy described Appius Claudius Caecus the censor as the man who first polluted (*inquinare*) the senate by allowing the sons of freedmen to stand for office.[5] When Valerius Maximus wished to disparage the son of a freedman (by which, of course, he means a freeborn citizen) who had spoken out against Pompey, he also evoked the idea of social and physical dirtiness to undermine his target, describing the man as reeking (*redolere*) of his father's

[3] Purcell (1987) 36–7 describes the individuals who would have used Balbus' graveyard as the town's 'free poor', noting that such gifts might provide sufficient space to last a small town several years. Cf. Borg (2019) 84–6.

[4] *CIL* 9.5570 (*ILS* 7847); Bodel (1994) 105; Kyle (1998) 175; Osiek (2008) 254; Campbell (2012) 99.

[5] Livy, 9.46.11. According to Livy, Appius also enrolled members of the lower classes across the tribes of the *comitia centuriata* and, as a result, corrupted (*corrumpere*) the Forum and the Campus Martius. Cf. Bauman (1983) 51–2; Mouritsen (2011) 68, n. 11; Humm (2015) 359–60.

slavery.[6] Dirtiness provided an ideal means of explaining and reinforcing the belief in another's social inferiority. Perhaps the most infamous freedmen to be targeted were those close to the emperor Claudius, especially Pallas, who accumulated so much wealth, power, and prestige through his master (at the expense, it was felt, of his social betters) that after his death he was the subject of vicious attacks by the likes of Tacitus and Pliny the Younger. Pliny referred to him directly as filth (*caenum*) and dirt (*sordes*) and later, in reference to the honours that the Senate voted to him, said that the Senate had not yet wiped away the stain (*expiare*) of its shameful behaviour.[7] The mere accumulation of vast wealth was not enough on its own to guarantee high status or to remove social stigma, nor was it automatically a sign that someone was 'clean', as Seneca pointedly observed when he stated that money fell into the hands of bad men just like a coin falls into a sewer.[8] Equally, poverty or frugality would not tarnish one with a pure and noble spirit, as we see from Seneca's approving description of Scipio Africanus' bath which, although small, dingy, and unimpressive, was used to wash off sweat (*sudor*), not perfume, leading Seneca to assert that even if the people of Scipio's day did smell, at least it was the smell of the military camp and an honest day's work, the sort of smells that were appropriate for a proper Roman man.[9]

Given the right perspective or circumstances, anyone can be perceived or presented as unclean and subjected to comparable forms of denigration (whether they are aware of it or not is another matter). Consider, for example, the biblical case of Judas Iscariot who, before hanging himself, gave his recently acquired thirty pieces of silver to the Pharisees. The priests were reluctant to dedicate the money in their temple because they thought that it was tainted and viewed it as blood money. Their solution was to use it to purchase a potter's field seeking, just like Horatius Balbus, to provide a space for public burials, but in this instance specifying that it was to be used only for non-Jews.[10] The inference here was that the site was not deemed to be sufficiently 'intact' or ritually pure to be used as a burial ground for members of their own group, but that for those who were classified as outsiders there was no need for such concern. From the point

[6] Val. Max. 6.2.8. Cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1.6.5–6. For other attacks on freedmen, see Petron. *Sat*. 38, 57; Juv. 1.102–13; Plin. *HN* 33.23; Gell. *NA* 6.3.8–9.

[7] Plin. *Ep.* 7.29; 8.6.4–5. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 12.53; Cass. Dio, 61.3.2; Oost (1958) 113–39; Mouritsen (2011) 58, 63, 97–8. More generally, Weber (1988) 257–65.

[8] Sen. *Ep.* 87.17 (*quae sic in quosdam homines quomodo denarius in cloacam cadit*). Cf. Roberts (1971) 36.

[9] Sen. *Ep.* 86.11–12 (*quid putas illos oluisse? militiam, laborem, virum*). Cicero expressed a similar sentiment in a speech quoted in the *Orator* (232) which dismissed wealth as a measure of worth, contrasting the vast riches accumulated by slave traders with the more meagre possessions of some of Rome's most illustrious figures.

[10] *Matthew* 27.3–8. The contamination of the site was further emphasised by Judas' death, which was said to have stained the field and led to it being permanently labelled the 'field of blood': Conrad (1991) 158–68; Beaton (2005) 130–1; Jones (2013) 275–6.

of view of the Pharisees, all those who fell into this category (which would have included their Roman neighbours) were judged to be less important, to such a degree that they could be interred in a contaminated site that would mark them out to onlookers as marginal, potentially unclean, and holding a lower social value.[11]

There is a lot at stake when one or more groups are branded as unclean by the rest of society, and it can have profound implications for those on both sides of the divide that it creates. This book aims to use as case studies those groups or individuals in ancient Rome who were labelled as dirty, impure, or polluting by the rest of society or by specific sections of it, and who were marginalised to some degree as a result. By examining these groups, it seeks to demonstrate the pivotal role that denigration (which for the purposes of this study will be taken to mean attacks against groups or individuals with specific reference to their supposed dirtiness or impurity) played in justifying forms of marginalisation and reinforcing social hierarchies across various contexts. That many groups within Roman society suffered marginalisation to varying degrees is clear. Men and women could be pushed to the side-lines legally, politically, socially, ritually, or economically as a result of numerous factors, such as their class or profession, their behaviour, gender or ethnicity, any of which might lead to their being forced into a socially insecure or disadvantaged position. As Christian Stein has noted in his discussion of marginality in relation to early Christians, the effect of such acts of marginalisation is to impose upon its victims a heightened degree of precarity within their society, but also, crucially, to identify them to others as having in some way deviated from an understood set of socially agreed norms.[12] As the quote from George Orwell at the start of this book implies, few forms of social stigma are as effective as allegations of dirtiness or associations with revulsion, disease, and contamination, and Roman writers frequently called upon such language and imagery when targeting those who were considered to be threatening or problematic, even in cases where there was no reason to suppose that they were physically dirtier than any other section of society or had no apparent connection with substances or processes that were deemed to be dirty.

The idea of inherent dirtiness helped to maintain the peripheral status that was forced upon certain groups, regardless of the form that their particular marginalisation might take. In ancient Rome, just as in any other society, every time one person labelled another as unclean or perpetuated the assumption that they were somehow dirty, the position of both the accuser and the accused was renegotiated or reinforced. As we see from the cases of both Horatius Balbus and the Pharisees, the point of view recorded by our historical sources most commonly

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[11] Similarly, *Deuteronomy* 14.21 stipulated that no animal that died of natural causes was clean enough to be eaten, but that the meat could be sold to foreigners.

[12] Stein (2016) 141. Cf. Avidov (2008) 165–6.

presents the view of the accusers, who saw or portrayed the unclean 'other' as somehow dangerous or unworthy. Dirt was therefore an integral component within the processes of social marginalisation and stigmatisation.[13] In order to consider fully the role of dirt within these processes, however, it is necessary to examine the myriad ways in which the idea of other groups' dirtiness was understood, disseminated and revealed to the rest of the populace. Any situation where the impurity of another was asserted, whether through clothing, gesture, rhetoric, drama or physical appearance, served as an opportunity for Roman citizens to reflect upon, be reminded of, or even learn for the very first time, their own social position or the positions of those around them, as well as the appropriate responses that were expected of them. As a result, the concept of dirtiness was vital to the formation and maintenance of Rome's social structure and cultural *mores*. By recognising, labelling, and shunning the unclean, citizens could demonstrate their conformity to commonly held beliefs. In the process, they could make clear to everyone else that they were free from such contamination and thus that they 'belonged' within the group.

Recent years have seen a surge of interest in examining the phenomenon of dirt and ideas about cleanliness and (im)purity within Roman life, literature and society. A number of avenues have begun to be explored. Significant advances have been made in the study of emotions and senses in the Roman world, with works placing particular emphasis on the concepts of dirt and disgust in Latin language, for example in Robert Kaster's *Emotion, Restraint and Community in Ancient Rome* (2005) and, more recently, in Donald Lateiner and Dimos Spatharas' wide-ranging volume *The Ancient Emotion of Disgust* (2017), or on Roman physical senses more broadly, such as sight, smell and touch through the *Senses in Antiquity* series.[14] Others have focused on the practical problems posed by dirt within the ancient city, considering the various attempts either to remove physical dirt from the city or to maintain cleanliness and ritual purity (potentially by expelling the sources of dirt or removing those trades associated with unpleasant sights or smells).[15] Michel Blonski's *Se nettoyer à Rome* (2014) has taken a philological approach, providing a far broader study of the importance of cleanliness as a determining social factor in ancient Rome, examining the extensive variety of Latin terms available to describe and define

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13 The word stigma, which has become a commonly used (if vaguely defined) term in modern studies of marginalisation, comes from the Greek στίγμα, meaning 'mark', 'brand' or 'spot'.

14 For example, Bradley (2015a) 1–16; Id. (2014b) 133–45; Koloski-Ostrow (2014) 90–109; Morley (2014) 110–19; Lennon (2017). Cf. Kaster (2001a) 143–89. For recent criticism of Lateiner and Spatharas' approach to disgust, see Boddice (2019) 67–71, 202.

15 Bradley (2002) 20–44; Liebeschuetz (2000) 51–61; Jansen (2000) 37–49; Gelichi (2000) 13–23; Almeida (2000) 123–7; Davies (2012) 67–80. On the purification and ritual removal of pollution within the city, see Ziolkowski (1998–9) 191–218; Lennon (2012) 55–6.

dirt and impurity.[16] Previously, my own work has focused on the phenomenon of religious pollution in Rome, exploring the ways in which various forms of ritual impurity were conceptualised, as well as the consequences of looking for and finding pollution. In a similar vein to Blonski (2014), it stressed the need to recognise the diverse range of Latin terms for dirt, pollution, cleanliness, and purity.[17] While this work remained focused on the subject of Roman religion, much of the underlying theory has had some bearing on the present study. Although being classified as religiously polluted had an immediate effect on one's ability to attend or take part in certain rituals, such a classification must inevitably have had social consequences as well, further strengthening the idea that certain groups were inherently more unclean or dangerous.[18] As we shall see, the denial of access to religious rituals and procedures on the grounds of dirtiness or impurity could undermine a group's social presence and validity, potentially leading to their being treated not only with scorn or repugnance, but even violence.[19] Such social consequences to religious sanctions are apparent across the ancient world: the murderer polluted by *miasma* in ancient Greek society was required to leave his homeland and seek ritual purification in the house of a stranger;[20] in Caesar's discussion of Gallic customs he stated that those who were prohibited from attending public sacrifices were shunned by the rest of their group as though they were infected by a form of contagion (*contagio*);[21] and one of the most severe forms of Roman religious censure was the branding of a citizen as *homo sacer* – one who was, for all intents and purposes, classified as an external enemy who might be killed by any other citizen without fear of recriminations or the incurring of religious pollution.[22]

The growing interest in the subject has helped to develop discussions of the significance of dirt, impurity, and disgust as categories in the ancient world. The present work aims to combine elements from these various approaches in order to consider not only who was viewed as unclean in Rome, or even why they were labelled as such, but also the various ways in which Roman society at all levels learned, spread, and perpetuated these ideas and the role that they played in supporting or undermining social and political hierarchies. The primary focus of this study will be the city of Rome and the cities of Roman Italy during the

[16] Cf. Blonski (2008) 41–56, which emphasises the political power of dirt and appearance among the senatorial Roman aristocracy and notes the 'negative potential' of dirtiness when applied to people and social contexts.

[17] Lennon (2014) 30–44. Also Id. (2012) 43–5.

[18] Cf. Thome (1992) 85–7; Rachman (2004) 1230.

[19] Dube (1998) 1–2; Narula (1999) 23–41; Moffatt (2015) 93.

[20] Hom. *Od*. 22.27–32; Hdt. 1.35. For a full catalogue of examples of exile following homicide, as well as discussion of the concept of μίασμα in Greek society, see Parker (1983) esp. 117, 375–92.

[21] Caes. *B Gall.* 6.13. On *contagio*, Wagenvoort (1947) 128–86.

[22] Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.181; Festus s. v. "*Homo Sacer*"; Bennett (1930) 5–18; Agamben (1998) 81–6; Jońca (2004) 48; Beek (2012) 26–8; Lennon (2014) 52–3.

second century BC to the second century AD. In addressing the issues of denigration and marginalisation it is necessary to cover a fairly broad chronological period because, as will be shown, in a number of cases it appears that attitudes towards certain groups, professions or segments of society were maintained over an extensive timeframe. That said, dirt and dirtiness are neither static nor steady concepts. They shift and change in line with a given group's wider social developments and priorities.[23] As a result, we should expect that the application of labels such as 'dirty' or 'polluted' to marginalised groups would similarly adapt to reflect the social situation in Rome, relaxing or intensifying as circumstances demanded. While Christian sources can help to inform us about broader social developments under the early Empire, this study will not be able to address the Christian era in detail due to the various social changes that occurred during this time, particularly in terms of attitudes concerning the boundaries of purity and cleanliness in both social and religious contexts. Following the rise of Christianity, the social dynamics behind the denigration of many groups changed significantly, although in some cases the same attitudes continued to be displayed and similar terms continued to be used, only now using new Christian rationalisations.

To understand fully the impact of dirt as a social category it is necessary to consider the subject from a variety of angles, placing it within the wider context of a number of scholarly discourses. Beyond the study of the ancient world there has been a great deal of interest across various disciplines in the social impact of ideas about dirt, disease, and hygiene. Social anthropology has made some inroads in this area, leading to a renewed interest in the theories surrounding dirt and impurity that stemmed from the early work of scholars like Mary Douglas (theories which continue to be influential today). Moreover, since the labelling of specific groups as 'unclean' is often intended to have a detrimental impact on them within a given society, our study must also refer throughout to the various theories surrounding the wider processes of marginalisation and stigmatisation – two vital yet complex terms that contain a host of potential meanings. In this area, by far the greatest advances have come in recent years from the fields of psychology and sociology, building upon and progressing beyond the groundwork provided by Erving Goffman. These disciplines have shown an increasing willingness to refer to and expand upon one another's findings and have sought to explain the processes of social exclusion, marginalisation and stigmatisation from a number of different approaches (whether economic, biological, psychological, or cultural). The role of dirt has been acknowledged within studies of stigma and exclusion in various historical societies, but within the study of the ancient Mediterranean its significance is still

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[23] Ibid. 14; Bendlin (1998) 412–13; Id. (2007) 178–89; Osten (2011) 222–3; Peršak (2017) 167.

in the process of being untangled. Using Republican and Imperial Rome as its focus, this book will attempt to rectify this situation, and in the process it is hoped that it may help to open the door for further discussions of later European societies that followed in the footsteps of Rome and often looked to it directly for guidance, justification, or inspiration. Before we can begin, however, it is necessary to discuss in greater detail the advances in the surrounding areas of academic scholarship.

Discussing Dirt

It has been over fifty years since the publication of Mary Douglas' seminal work *Purity and Danger* (1966) provided scholars with a firm foundation on which to develop the study of dirt in human society. Despite undergoing frequent revision, analysis, and criticism, including by Douglas herself, her theories have remained pivotal to many of the ensuing studies of dirt and pollution across human history, as well as informing Douglas' later work on social symbols.[24] At the heart of Douglas' theories was the notion that where there is dirt, there is a system – a shared acknowledgement and understanding of what is acceptable or unacceptable.[25] Douglas viewed dirt as an artificial construct, devised by human societies to express notions of order. It also served to convey a sense of danger which not only put it, in Douglas' words, 'above dispute', but also served to enforce conformity within a given group.[26] This is particularly relevant to our present study since it was through the sharing and voicing of views about the supposed impurity of particular groups in Roman society that their marginalised status and, simultaneously, the status quo was strengthened and reaffirmed. Identifying or asserting where the margins lie typically has the result of revealing and protecting those who perceive themselves to be on the 'inside' or at an imagined centre as much as it enforces the position of those on the outside or those relegated to the fringes. Those who are situated at the centre in this context and are able to dictate the rules concerning purity and cleanliness are invariably those who have power and especially, as Burschel clarifies, the 'power of interpretation' (Deutungsmacht), which can be used to establish who belongs inside the group and, in the process, who is marginalised or excluded.[27] According to Douglas' theory, 'a polluting person is always in the wrong.

[24] See Fardon (2016) for an excellent overview of the key revisions to Douglas' initial thesis. Also Reinhart (1990); Yoo and Watts (2021) 2–6.

[25] Douglas (1975) 111. Bond (2016) 14 somewhat conflates the ideas of dirt and pollution using Douglas' commonly cited idea of 'matter out of place', yet the distinction between the two concepts is important, since there were many ways in which one could be dirty in ancient Rome without being polluted.

[26] Douglas (1966) 49, 160–72.

[27] Burschel (2014) 16–18. Cf. Bauman (1997) 6.

He has developed some wrong condition or simply crossed some line which should not have been crossed … Pollution can be committed intentionally, but intention is irrelevant to its effect.'[28] Concerted shunning or marginalisation can, under such conditions, be perceived as beneficial both to a society and to cohesion between its various members. As was noted more recently by the late Valerio Valeri, however, Douglas' initial theories about 'the system' were too broad and vague to be used without qualification. Valeri stressed that within any society there are multiple systems, many 'coexisting orders of classification', each with different levels of significance depending upon the context in which they appear.[29] This can apply not only at the group level, but also in interactions that occur between individuals.

Heavily influenced by the theories of Émile Durkheim, Douglas understood these ideas and symbols as being more relevant to society as a whole than to the individual.[30] Within this emerging forest of symbols it was the human body itself which held the greatest significance. In Douglas' view the body was both the greatest source of dirt and impurity and, at the same time, the entity most at risk from contamination from outside forces, acts, substances, and individuals. This is especially true of the body's various orifices, which are often perceived as liminal boundaries, which produce so many of the substances which can inspire fear or revulsion in others, and which are at the same time vulnerable to invasion and contamination by external impurities.[31] In terms of its symbolism, the body is also used frequently to stand as a microcosm of larger structures, whether physical or social.[32] In her later work *Natural Symbols* (2nd ed. 1996) Douglas took these theories further, arguing that different sets of ideas about the body and how it should be viewed or treated could be identified within specific types of society, and that the study of dirt offered a useful means of classifying these different types of social structure:

> … [A] social structure which requires a high degree of conscious control will find its style at a high level of formality, stern application of the purity rule, denigration of organic process and wariness toward experiences in which control of consciousness is lost.[33]

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28 Douglas (1966) 140; Bharj (2007) 61–3.

29 Valeri (2000) 71. Cf. Herzfeld (1987) 7, 99.

30 Douglas (1966) 24–7, 43; Fardon (1987) 406.

31 Turner (1967) 107; Id. (1979) 236; Meigs (1978) 310–11; Stuart (1999) 182; Valeri (2000) 103–5.

32 Douglas (1966) 142: 'The functions of [the body's] different parts and their relation afford a source of symbols for other complex structures. We cannot possibly interpret rituals concerning excreta, breast milk, saliva and the rest unless we are prepared to see in the body a symbol of society, and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced in small on the human body.'; Isenberg and Owen (1977) 2–4; Douglas (1996) xxxviii, 80. Cf. Turner (1967) 107 Kristeva (1984) 69; Parry (1982) 99; Meigs (1984) esp. 125–36; Mullin (1996) 509–24; Branham (1997) 54–9; Shilling (2012) 33, 77–8; Cole (2004) 94.

33 Douglas (1996) 90. Cf. Pile (1996) 185–7; Valeri (2000) 73.

Such ideas about bodily symbolism work both ways, and in the ancient world, larger, more complex structures (especially cities and social groups) were often described in terms of a human body. In the case of Rome this has been highlighted by Gowers in her study of the Cloaca Maxima sewer, which was conceptualised by many ancient writers as part of a larger analogy that imagined Rome or the state as a physical body.[34] While these images could be used to great effect within works of philosophy, comedy, and satire, the analogy also went a long way towards furthering the notions of hierarchy within Roman society, since it allowed those who perceived themselves as being 'at the top' (i. e. 'the head') to look with scorn or even hostility towards those who were viewed as occupying the lowest social rungs (hence, for example, Cicero's casual references to the *faex populi* regarding the urban poor, his contemplation of his standing among 'the filth and the shit of the city' (*apud sordem urbis et faecem*), or his assertion that all labourers were unclean), and those associated or positioned (willingly or otherwise) around the most notoriously unclean areas of the city.[35] Other groups might be held directly responsible for the metaphorical fouling of the city, for example the eastern immigrants who were the target of Juvenal's perpetually disgruntled Umbricius, who bemoaned the corrupting foreign influences which had taken root, making it harder for 'proper Romans' to thrive in the city.[36] Each of these ideas will be explored in greater detail later on in our study, especially within discussions of locations within the city most frequently associated with dirt, impurity, or general 'low-living'. In fact, these brief examples illustrate a central thrust of this investigation. Since dirt implies the presence of systems, the study of dirt provides an ideal lens for examining how particular groups maintain social, geographical, or ethnic barriers. If we follow Douglas' theories, combined with Valeri's qualifications, then understanding the use of dirt as a form of sanction is essential when attempting to interpret the categorisation of marginal groups as they are perceived from those who assert that they are somehow on the 'correct side' of a social divide. The most obvious 'insider' group in the case of Rome consisted of a powerful minority in the shape of the male, aristocratic elite whose writings made frequent use of polemical attacks using the language and imagery of dirt. However, this study will also aim to demonstrate the various ways in which the wider citizen populace contributed to, or participated in, these same acts of stigma and marginalisation. The language and imagery of dirt and staining was especially prevalent when applied to marginal groups or individuals that threatened not

[34] Gowers (1995) esp. 25–9. Cf. McVay (2000) 135–47; Larmour (2007) 202.

[35] Cic. *Q Fr.* 2.4.5; *Att.* 1.16.11; *Off.* 1.150; Richlin (2017) 99. On the perception of the urban poor and the impact of impurity, see Beer (2010) 63–4. More generally, Sibley (1995) 37–8; Pile (1996) 179.

[36] Juv. *Sat.* 3.62–8; Jenkyns (2013) 164–5. This example is discussed in chapter five: see p. 166–8.

Index

Actors 1, 19, 36n, 37, 81n, 94, 99–101, 104–13, 117, 132, 157, 204
– comparison with prostitutes 94–5
– expulsions of 110–11
– *infamia* 20–1
– legal restrictions 33
– opportunities for wealth 102, 111–12, 118
– status outside Rome 112
Agrippa, Marcus Vipsanius 186
Animals
– comparison with 38–9, 40n, 45, 46, 54, 120, 186–7, 189, 202–3
– unclean 40, 128, 194
– worship of 184
Antonius, Marcus 54, 56, 92, 185, 186n
Aquarioli 48
Army
– and actors 105
– corruption of 68n, 106, 186n
– dishonourable discharge 21, 105n
– gladiators 113
– restrictions 105
Atellan farce 105, 110
Augustus 25, 35, 60–3, 93n, 101n, 107–8, 109n, 110, 121–2, 171n, 203–4
– and Egyptian culture 185–7
– forum 183
– laws against adultery 61–3
– punishment of actors 111–12

Bacchus, cult of 50, 178–81
Balbus, Horatius 1–3, 4, 20, 26, 117–18, 155, 164n
Ballio (pimp) 36, 37, 38n, 41, 54, 56, 73, 79
Bankers 37n, 38n
Bathing 73, 90, 140
– denial of 149
– restrictions 28, 74, 141, 148–51, 161
– social interaction 44n, 149, 184, 206
Baths 3, 19, 90
– and prostitution 32, 151n
Behavioural immune system 12, 137–8
Bells 148, 152
Body, the
– contamination 9, 75, 76, 78, 82, 89, 96, 159, 194
– on display 79, 123, 145
– orifices 9, 13, 75, 76, 89, 96
– physical punishment 113, 159
– senses 5, 72, 78
– symbolism 9, 10, 39
– waste and excreta 75, 137, 163
Bradley, Mark 158
Brothel 24, 33–4, 39, 44–51, 74, 81–2, 129, 187
– dirty 45, 46, 48–9, 51, 58, 71–3, 84
– in dreams 77
– linked to sedition 51–6
– pimp's house 45, 46, 79
– *popina* 49, 51, 67
– smell 46, 48, 72
– social mixing 50–1, 53, 56, 65, 83
– use of water 48
– violence around 52, 56, 57, 59, 78
Burakumin 40n
Burial, denial of 1–2, 3–4, 26, 27, 117, 119, 122, 163n, 164
Butchers 73, 127, 171, 203

Caecus, Appius Claudius 2, 48n
Caesar, Gaius Julius 6, 109–10, 116n, 122, 131
Caligula 46–7, 52, 104, 111, 130
Cannibalism 169, 172–3
Capua 87, 116n, 131, 173, 175
Carnifex (see: executioner)

Carthaginians 84, 171–5, 194, 198
– cannibalism 172
– cruelty 173–4
– human sacrifice 174, 175
– pollution 170–1, 174, 175
– sexual practices 172
Catilina, Lucius Sergius 53, 131
Cato, Marcus Porcius (the elder) 51, 83n, 88, 108, 156, 157n, 158, 191, 197
– and Greeks 177–78, 180, 181
Cato, Marcus Porcius (the younger) 94
Catullus (poet) 77, 90, 147, 155–6
Chrysogonus (freedman) 181–2
Cicero, Marcus Tullius 10, 20, 34, 37, 40, 49, 53–5, 61, 64, 83, 89, 92, 109, 113–14, 119, 131, 147, 153, 157, 160, 181–2, 184, 190, 191, 193, 197–8, 204
Cleopatra 186
– followers 186–7
Cloaca Maxima 10, 41, 158, 164, 166
Clodius Pulcher, Publius 147
Clothing
– and stigma 5, 92, 108
– corpse handlers 151
– dirty 108, 158n, 167, 185, 204
– indicator of status 92, 108, 152n, 154, 162, 187
– mourning 140
– prostitutes 58, 79, 85n, 92–4
Commodus 47, 48n, 114, 126
Contamination
– of land 3n, 4, 157–8, 160, 166
– of the mouth 9, 13, 89–90
– of water 149–50
– sexual 46, 77–8, 82, 84, 85, 86, 91
– social order 2, 5, 14, 24–5, 41–2, 45, 49, 50, 54, 56, 59, 61, 84, 87, 90, 99, 118, 142, 152, 161, 166, 172, 177, 197, 202
– touch 58, 75, 159, 162
Corpse handlers 1, 28, 96, 100, 135–6, 142–3, 144, 145–6, 151–2, 155, 157, 163–4
Corpses
– disposal 136, 140, 146, 147, 148, 163–4
– liminal status 135–6, 137, 138
– odour 137n, 143–4
– source of contamination 2, 28, 136–7, 172
– treatment 145–6, 147, 151
– visibility 141, 146–7, 148n, 152
Criminals 14–15, 16, 17, 18, 26, 33, 47, 60, 103, 115, 119, 135, 143, 153, 163
Cumae 148, 152, 168
Curculio 15n, 38–9, 41, 42, 54, 82, 154

Death (see also: corpse handlers; corpses) 1–2, 27–28, 40n, 74, 86n, 119, 121–2, 128, 135–40, 141, 142, 144–5, 154–5, 157, 163–4, 192
Declamation 24–5, 56–7, 59–60, 81n, 83, 88, 127–8, 158, 159
Dining
– shared spaces 12, 26, 84–5, 87, 161–2, 196–7, 24–5
– status 156, 162
– table 84, 86, 88, 161, 173
Disease 4, 7, 13, 17, 29–30, 39, 41, 78, 90, 100n, 137, 163, 167, 168, 170–1, 174, 177, 179, 186–7, 189–90, 193–5, 198, 207–8
Disgust 5, 6, 12–13, 18, 32, 38, 39–41, 42, 72, 74, 77, 81–2, 84, 86, 87n, 89, 96, 128, 129, 136–8, 140, 146, 155, 158–9, 162, 167, 170, 172, 183–4, 189, 195, 197, 203, 205, 207
– facial expressions 12
– *fastidium* 79, 81–2, 97, 146, 205–6
Doctors 177
– in the *ludus* 130, 131n
Domitian 93, 104, 111, 146, 159, 181
Douglas, Mary 7, 8–10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 40n, 52, 75–6, 84, 195, 206
Dreams 40n, 41, 77
Drinking 50, 86, 90, 91, 94, 97, 156, 161–2, 204, 205

Eating (see also: food) 86, 87, 87, 90, 159, 204
Education 5, 6, 12
– role of comedy in 38, 83
– role of rhetoric in 25, 57, 109, 207
Egyptians 30, 183–8
– animal worship 184

– devotion to cleanliness 185
– religion 185–6, 187
Equestrian order 33, 107, 109, 122, 123, 183
– gold rings 109, 183
Excrement 35n, 41, 42, 143, 172
Executioner 27–9, 99, 129, 132, 147, 151, 152, 155–60, 161
– as performer 152, 157
– hands 159–60
– pay 157

Facial expressions 12
faeces 36, 40–1, 42, 143, 158, 172
Flamininus, Lucius Quinctius, 88, 108, 156–7, 173n
Flamininus, Titus Quinctius 176
Floralia 94–5
Food (see also: eating) 90, 121, 162, 193
– Contaminated 84–6, 87–8, 91, 158–9, 204–5
– sharing 12, 26, 84–6, 87, 90, 97, 156, 161, 163
Forum 2n, 33, 38, 41, 47, 80, 91–2, 158, 160, 179, 181, 182n, 183
Freedmen 2, 3n, 32, 50, 85, 102, 109n, 125, 129, 130, 154, 162, 181, 182, 188, 201–2, 204, 206
– Imperial 3, 182, 183
Funeral 144–5, 146, 154
– rites 144

Gaius (grandson of Augustus) 140–1
Galen (doctor) 89, 130, 172
Gauls 6, 166, 175, 197–8
Germans 167, 196n
– Medieval 18–19, 152
Gladiators 1, 21, 23, 26–7, 43n, 52, 54, 99–100, 101, 102–3, 104, 106n, 113–25, 126, 131, 132–3, 153, 157, 202–3
– burial 1, 118–19
– *ludus* 119, 120, 122–3, 126, 130, 131
– oath 113
– *sine missione* 121, 123, 128
Goffman, Erving 7, 14–15, 32
Gracchus, Gaius Sempronius (tribune) 109
Graffiti 77–8, 116
Graveyards 1–4, 20, 74, 86, 117, 118, 142, 144, 146n, 147, 155, 164n
Greece
– culture 6, 36n, 85, 104, 112–13, 133, 138, 164, 166, 179–80, 183, 188, 198
– viewed as inferior 176–77, 179, 181–2, 190n, 204
– viewed as superior 173–4, 175, 176, 178, 197
Gruen, Eric 180, 183, 188, 191–2

Hannibal 165n, 171–5, 177
– army 171–3
Hierarchies
– of cleanliness 40, 42, 60, 69–70, 71–3, 80, 102, 145, 194
– social 4, 6, 10–11, 13, 14, 18–19, 22, 23, 26, 42, 57, 65, 80, 81n, 82, 88, 91, 95–6, 101–2, 115, 123–5, 126, 131, 152, 198, 202, 206
Hooks 148, 151
Horace (poet) 46, 62–3, 74, 92, 113, 144, 145n, 176, 186–7, 205

Infamia 32, 60–1, 100, 105n, 109, 123, 130, 132
– limits 20–2, 69, 107, 111, 116, 118
Isaac, Benjamin 178–9, 181, 189, 191, 195
Isis 188
– allegations of sexual corruption 187
– shrines 185, 187

Jews 18, 30, 184, 193
– alleged political influence 188, 190–2
– as a social group 52, 183, 192, 195, 197
– associations with disease 190, 193–5
– diet 194, 196
– Exodus myth 193–4
– expulsions of 187–8, 191–2
– labelled as unclean 189, 196, 198
– rebellions 190, 195–6, 197–8
Jokes 11, 24, 37, 40, 59, 79, 83, 207
Josephus, Flavius (historian) 30, 187, 191–2, 193
Julian 135, 165
Justinian 207–8

Juvenal (satirist) 10, 21, 46, 50, 62, 74, 85–7, 88, 92, 113, 116, 123, 124, 127, 149, 161–2, 166, 168, 176, 182, 183–4, 185, 187, 192

Kisses 77, 79, 84, 89, 90–1, 204n

Laberius (writer) 109–10
Lanistae 1, 27, 86–7, 99, 103, 118, 121, 126–32, 140, 202–3
– comparisons 103, 127–9, 202–3
– profit 103, 126–7
– restrictions 127, 131–2
Laws 11, 15, 19, 21–3, 25, 32–3, 40n, 48, 51, 58–9, 60–3, 93, 96–7, 102, 107n, 110, 111, 114n, 121–2, 126, 129, 138, 144n, 148, 151–3, 157, 168n, 177, 193, 202–3, 206, 207–8
Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis 81
Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis 61
– *Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* 60
– *Lex Oppia* 177
– *XII Tablulae* 138
Lenocinium 32
– as punishment 25, 32, 49–50, 60–3, 93
Leprosy 13, 193–5
Libitina 144–5, 148, 151, 154, 155
Livy (historian) 2, 50n, 104–5, 144, 166, 170–1, 172, 175, 177–80
Lucan (poet) 169, 175

Macrobius (antiquarian) 205
Marcius (prophet) 170–1
Martial (poet) 73n, 74, 77, 88, 89, 90, 116, 126–7, 146, 148n, 149–50
Masks 37, 105
Massilia 166
McGinn, Thomas 43, 44n, 67–8, 92, 96–7, 188
Menstrual blood 89
Messalina 46
Mourning 137, 140–2, 146n, 147n, 151, 163
Mouth (see also: kisses)
– contamination 13, 84, 89, 90, 91, 155
– oral sex 86, 87n, 89, 91

Nussbaum, Martha 13, 18n, 149

Otho 106
Outsiders
– accepted in Rome 105, 168
– potential threat 30, 106n, 166–8, 172–3, 181, 193, 202
– viewed as unclean 3, 169, 186
Ovid (poet) 62, 67, 94

Pagán, Victoria 56
Pallas (freedman of Claudius) 3, 182
Perfume 3, 72, 73n, 90, 145, 181
Persians 165, 167, 198
Petronius 45, 85, 88, 90, 113, 116, 117n, 124, 154, 161–2, 204
Pimps (see also: brothel) 1, 23–5, 31–65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 73, 76, 78–9, 82, 91, 93, 95, 100–1, 103, 126, 127, 128, 129, 132, 140, 153n, 154, 187, 202, 207–8
– compared to vermin 38–40, 41, 54
– excluded from public office 32–3, 50
– unclean 31, 33, 34–5, 36, 38, 40–2, 51, 54, 55, 61–2, 79, 82, 207–8
Plague (see: disease)
Plautus (playwright) 24, 31, 35–6, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 46, 54, 56, 68, 70–2, 75, 87, 152, 154, 178, 203
Pollio, Gaius Asinius 108–9, 113, 122n
Pomerium 138, 185–6
Pompeius, Gnaeus (Pompey the Great) 2, 104, 109, 116n, 131
Prisons 28, 119, 120, 157, 158–9
Prostitutes (see also: brothel; pimps)
– clothing 58, 68, 69, 92–3, 94
– exclusion 1, 2, 33, 38n, 43, 68, 150–1
– exempted from adultery laws 61, 101n
– hierarchy 69, 70–2, 74, 95–6, 97, 150–1, 203–4
– impurity 21, 25–6, 31–3, 46, 51, 55, 71, 73, 74, 75–7, 78, 81, 84–6, 88, 89, 90, 96–7, 144, 150–1, 162, 179, 202–3, 204
– kisses 79, 84, 89, 90–1
– necessary 68, 92, 94
– on stage 94–5, 99, 101
– sharing food 84, 85, 86, 87–8, 89, 97, 156
– viewed sympathetically 43–4, 60, 67

– visibility 67–8, 79, 82, 91, 92, 97, 104n, 118, 132, 151n
Puteoli 109n, 112, 148–50, 151, 155

Quintilian (rhetorician) 109, 119
Quintilian, pseudo 24, 35, 57, 58, 60, 80, 113, 118, 119, 120, 128, 158

Rhetoric 5, 35, 43n, 45, 56, 57, 109, 115, 120, 169, 181, 187, 189, 199, 207
Roscius, Quintus, (actor) 37
Rozin, Paul 12, 13, 42, 137, 149

Sacrifice 43–4, 87, 142, 145n, 179
– exclusion from 6, 43
– human 174–5, 197–8
Saliva 9n, 77, 86, 90, 137, 162
Saturnalia 95
Senate 2, 3, 33, 53, 87n, 88, 106, 108, 116, 156, 157n, 170, 178, 180
Senatus consultum from Larinum 107, 118n, 120, 122
Seneca, Lucius Annaeus (the elder) 24, 35, 43, 45, 46, 57, 59, 76, 78, 80, 84, 88, 91, 156, 160, 206
Seneca, Lucius Annaeus (the younger) 3, 64, 91, 94, 113, 124, 127, 154–5, 205
Sewers (see also: Cloaca Maxima) 3, 10, 41, 139, 158
Sex 25, 31, 40n, 44, 46, 49, 51, 53, 61, 63, 70n, 71n, 72, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 83, 84–6, 87n, 88n, 89, 90, 91, 96, 105, 128, 146, 150n, 165, 169, 172, 179, 187, 204
Slaves 2–3, 15n, 26, 30, 32, 33, 34n, 36, 37n, 39, 40n, 42, 50, 54, 61, 68n, 70, 71, 78, 80, 90n, 92, 95, 111n, 116, 117, 119, 122n, 124, 126, 128n, 129, 130, 144, 145, 147, 148n, 149–50, 155, 157, 161, 167n, 182, 202, 203–6
Slave traders 3n, 127, 132, 168n, 202
Smell 3, 5, 46, 71, 72–4, 90, 137n, 143–4, 158, 167n, 183n, 194–5, 204
Social order
– and dirt 8, 11, 56, 65, 75, 80, 82, 97, 137, 198
– challenges to 26, 54, 56, 91, 97, 111, 182, 183, 184, 186n
– negotiation 82
– periods of change 27, 29, 52, 121–2, 168, 197, 199
– rejection of 124–5
Stigma 3, 4, 5n, 7, 10, 11, 14–20, 21, 32, 41, 49, 59, 63, 65, 73–4, 82, 85, 93, 99, 107, 118, 121, 123–4, 126, 129–31, 136, 138, 145, 148, 151–2, 157, 159n, 164n, 167, 189, 202, 206, 207
Suicide 1, 117, 124, 160, 163–4n
Sulla, Lucius Cornelius 52, 81, 100, 104, 176, 181
Sweat 3, 72n, 183
Syrians 166, 176, 190n, 195n

Tacitus (historian) 3, 104–5, 106, 110, 157, 167, 191, 192, 193–4, 195–7
Taverns 44, 46n, 47, 48, 49–50, 52, 53, 67, 83, 144, 161
Theatre
– as political platform 100, 101, 102, 109, 110, 124n, 133
– audience 37–8, 108, 111
– connected to obscenity 27, 94, 95, 97, 104, 105, 106, 117
– corrupting influence 105–6, 107, 110
– foreignness 102, 104–5
– seating 50, 108, 109n, 110n, 121n, 127, 153
Tiber, river 164, 166, 187, 196n
– and the Cloaca Maxima 166
Tiberius 45, 90, 101n, 110, 191
– suppression of Egyptian cults 187
Toga 92–3, 108n
Torturers 129, 136, 151–2, 155
Touch 6, 29, 44, 58, 69, 72–3, 79–80, 86, 87, 99, 159, 163, 172
Trimalchio 85, 110n, 154, 162
Tullianum, (see also: prisons) 158–9

Undertakers (see also: corpse handlers) 21, 28, 140, 142–3, 144, 145, 146n, 147–8, 150, 152–4, 161, 162
– *collegium* 145, 154
Urine 77

Valeri, Valerio 9, 10, 11, 65, 86, 162

Valerius Maximus 2, 33, 87, 94–5, 104, 105, 108n, 143, 154, 156–7, 160n, 171n, 173, 174n, 191
Varro, Gaius Terentius (cos. 216 BC) 171–2
Varro, Marcus Terentius (antiquarian) 104, 143, 147n, 158, 185
Vermin (see also: animals) 38–9, 40n, 46, 54, 186–7, 189
Verres, Gaius 54–5, 157
Verus, Lucius 47n, 104, 106n, 112
Vespasian 106, 136, 195, 196n
Vestal Virgins 67, 159, 184n, 196n
Vinalia 94–5
Violence 6, 33–4, 52, 59, 102–3, 110, 114, 165–6n, 170, 189, 196, 207
Vitellius 106, 129

Waste disposal 96, 139
Water 48, 73, 85, 90, 138, 150
Wealth 2, 3, 17, 50, 62, 111, 120, 122, 124, 129, 131, 132–3, 161, 182, 183, 188, 201
– and purity 3
– display of 22, 90–1, 129, 149, 162, 177, 182
– unclean professions 26, 33, 47n, 50, 100, 102, 116, 118, 125, 127, 129, 153, 161, 201, 207
– wasting 64, 120
Women
– and adultery 61, 68, 92–3, 97, 204
– corruption of 47, 71–3, 76, 78–9, 101, 111, 116, 117, 128, 166, 183, 187, 204
– dress 26, 92-3
– in public 67, 68, 87-8, 92, 101, 108, 150
– social mixing 50, 90n, 117, 179

Youth, corruption of 47, 64–5, 83, 101n, 106-7, 120, 128, 173, 179, 181