

No Supernatural Entities, Forces, or Powers and No Ghosts

Post by “Patrikios” of September 28, 2024 at 6:28 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

There is an interesting remark by Stephen Greenblatt in *The Swerve* about libraries in antiquity, but I haven't been able to track down a source for the claim.

Quote

At the games in the Colosseum one day, the historian Tacitus had a conversation on literature with a perfect stranger who turned out to have read his works. Culture was no longer located in close-knit circles of friends and acquaintances; Tacitus was encountering his "public" in the form of someone who had bought his book at a stall in the Forum or read it in a library.

In any case, This article (PDF) gives an interesting look into how these texts might have been distributed in antiquity. Just in case Don needs a cheering-up!

[Joshua](#) , interesting question on how Epicurean texts got circulated in Ancient Greece & Italy. When I visited Greece earlier this month my tour included Olympia and Delphi, which was home to the “Pythian Games”. Each location held their games every 4 years off-set by 2 years. While the athletic games only lasted 3 or 4 days, the festival was 8 days or more.

These gatherings included opportunities for dialogue with people from around the Mediterranean. Next to the stadiums was the theater, where lectures given, along with plays and music. Many of the travelers to Olympia and Delphi paid some appropriate “alms” to the temple(s), on their way to the stadiums and theaters. Yet, many also then listened or had dialogue with teachers from Epicurean schools in Greece. While there wasn’t any direct archaeological evidence for the spreading of Epicurean discussions at these large festivals in Greece.

So, it is very likely that similar gatherings occurred around the Colosseum and Forum in Rome until around 4th century CE. My facts and memory may not be exact, but in Greece the crossroads of ideas frequently occurred around the festivals.

Here’s the Wikipedia text on Pythian Games.

“The **Pythian Games** ([Greek](#): Τα Πύθια, [translit.](#) *Ta Pythia*) were one of the four [Panhellenic Games](#) of [Ancient Greece](#). They were held in honour of [Apollo](#) at his sanctuary in [Delphi](#) every four years, two years after the [Olympic Games](#), and between each [Nemean](#) and [Isthmian Games](#). The Pythian Games were founded sometime in the 6th century BC. In legend they were started by Apollo after he killed [Python](#) and set up the [Oracle at Delphi](#). They continued until the 4th century AD.”