



PRIMARY SOURCE

BOX 2.3 Cassius Dio 73.21.1–2.¹

Here is another thing that Commodus did to us senators that gave us every reason to look for our death. Having killed an ostrich and cut off his head, he came up to where we were sitting holding the head in his left hand, and in his right hand he raised his bloody sword. Though he did not say a word, he wagged his head with a grin, suggesting that he would treat us in the same way. In fact, many of us would have been slain on the spot for laughing at him (for it was laughter rather than indignation that overcame us), if I had not chewed some laurel leaves. These I got from my garland, and I persuaded the others who were sitting near me to do the same, so that we might conceal the fact that we were laughing by the steady movement of our jaws.

Note

1. Adapted from Cary, E. 1925. *Dio Cassius: Roman History*, vol. 8, bks 61–70. Loeb Classical Library 176. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.