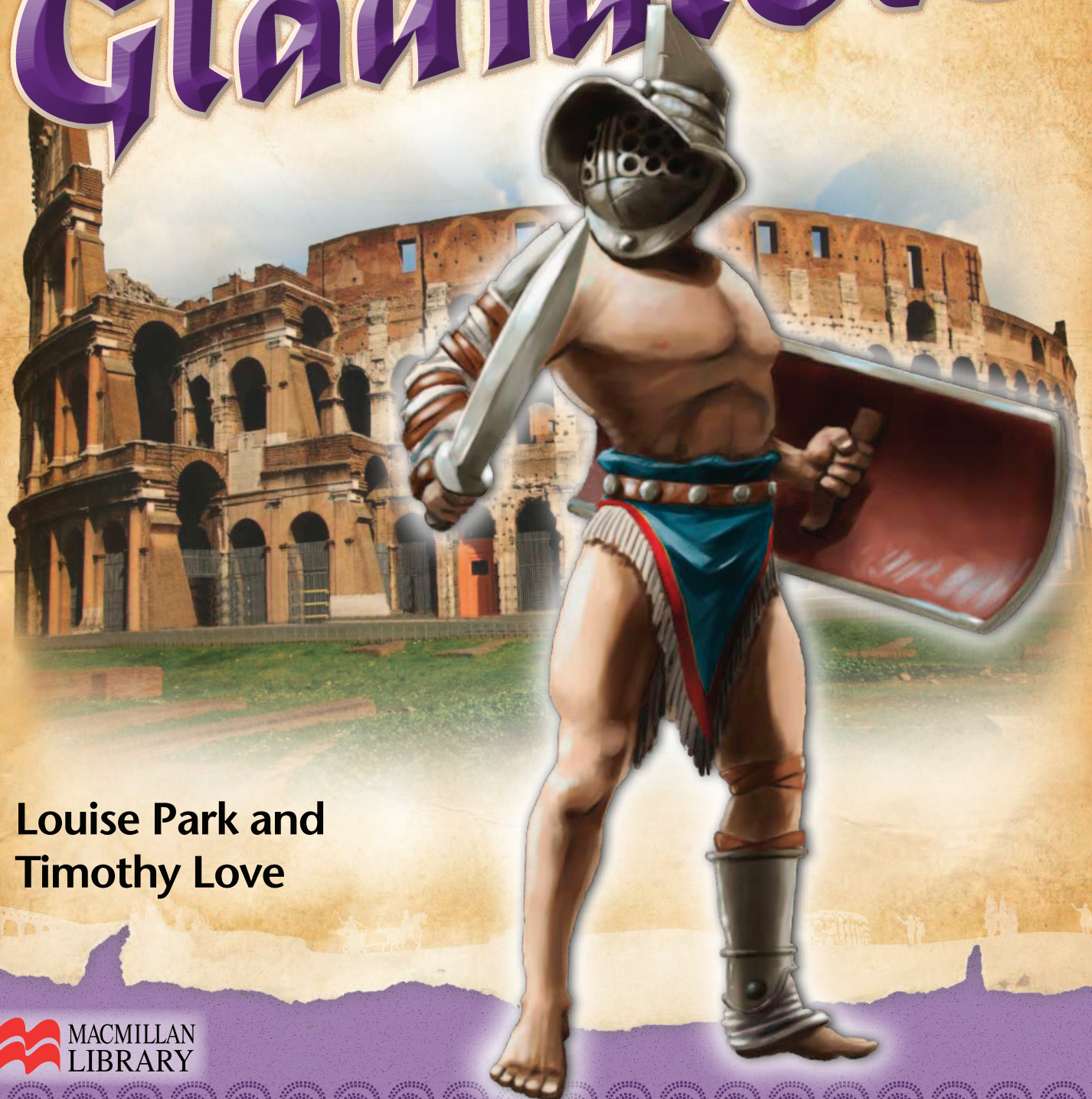


ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL PEOPLE

The Roman Gladiators



Louise Park and
Timothy Love

Contents

Who were the Roman gladiators?	4
The development of the gladiatorial games	6
Training to be a gladiator	8
Spotlight on the Ludus Magnus	10
Types of gladiators	12
Gladiator weapons and armour	14
In profile: Flamma	16
Roman amphitheatres	18
Spotlight on the Colosseum	20
Emperor gladiators	22
In profile: Emperor Commodus	24
Attitudes towards the gladiatorial games	26
In profile: Spartacus	28
The decline of the Roman gladiators	30
Glossary	31
Index	32

Glossary words

When a word is written
in **bold**, click on it to find
its meaning.

Who were the Roman gladiators?

The Roman gladiators were trained fighters who performed for huge crowds in **amphitheatres** throughout the Roman Empire. Gladiators fought each other and wild animals, sometimes to death.

The Roman Empire

The Roman Empire extended through Europe and parts of the Mediterranean and Africa. It is believed to have begun around 27 BCE and lasted until around 395 BCE. The Roman Empire was ruled by an **Emperor** and governed by a **senate**, both based in Rome.



The Roman Empire stretched across the continents of Europe and Africa.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Gladiator

The name *gladiator* comes from the Latin word *gladiatores*. It means 'one who uses a sword'.



The formation of the Roman gladiators

Roman gladiators formed during the early periods of the Roman Empire. Gladiators were mostly slaves, criminals or prisoners of war who were condemned to gladiator schools. Sometimes these slaves were sold to gladiator owners, who forced them to train and fight. As the gladiatorial games grew so did the number of **volunteer gladiators**. Volunteer gladiators were often poor men attracted by the chance to be famous and earn some money.

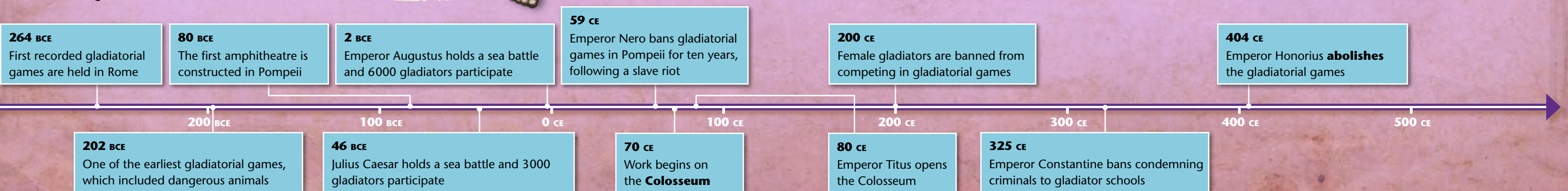
Quick facts

When did the gladiatorial games take place?

The gladiatorial games took place for over 600 years to entertain those in the Roman Empire.

- ❖ Rome's first recorded gladiatorial games took place in 264 BCE, in honour of the death of a Roman called Brutus Pera. The games used three pairs of slaves as gladiators.
- ❖ The gladiatorial games were officially abolished by Emperor Honorius in 404 CE, 600 years after they began.

Roman gladiators timeline



The development of the gladiatorial games

The gladiatorial games were popular among the Roman **elite** as well as among ordinary citizens. Over time, they became the most popular form of entertainment in Rome.

The origins of the games

It was once believed that the gladiatorial games may have come from the **Etruscans**, who killed prisoners at the funerals of important people because they believed it kept spirits away. Many historians now believe that the idea of gladiators came from Greece. The Ancient Greeks held fights, contests, games and sacrifices at their funerals.

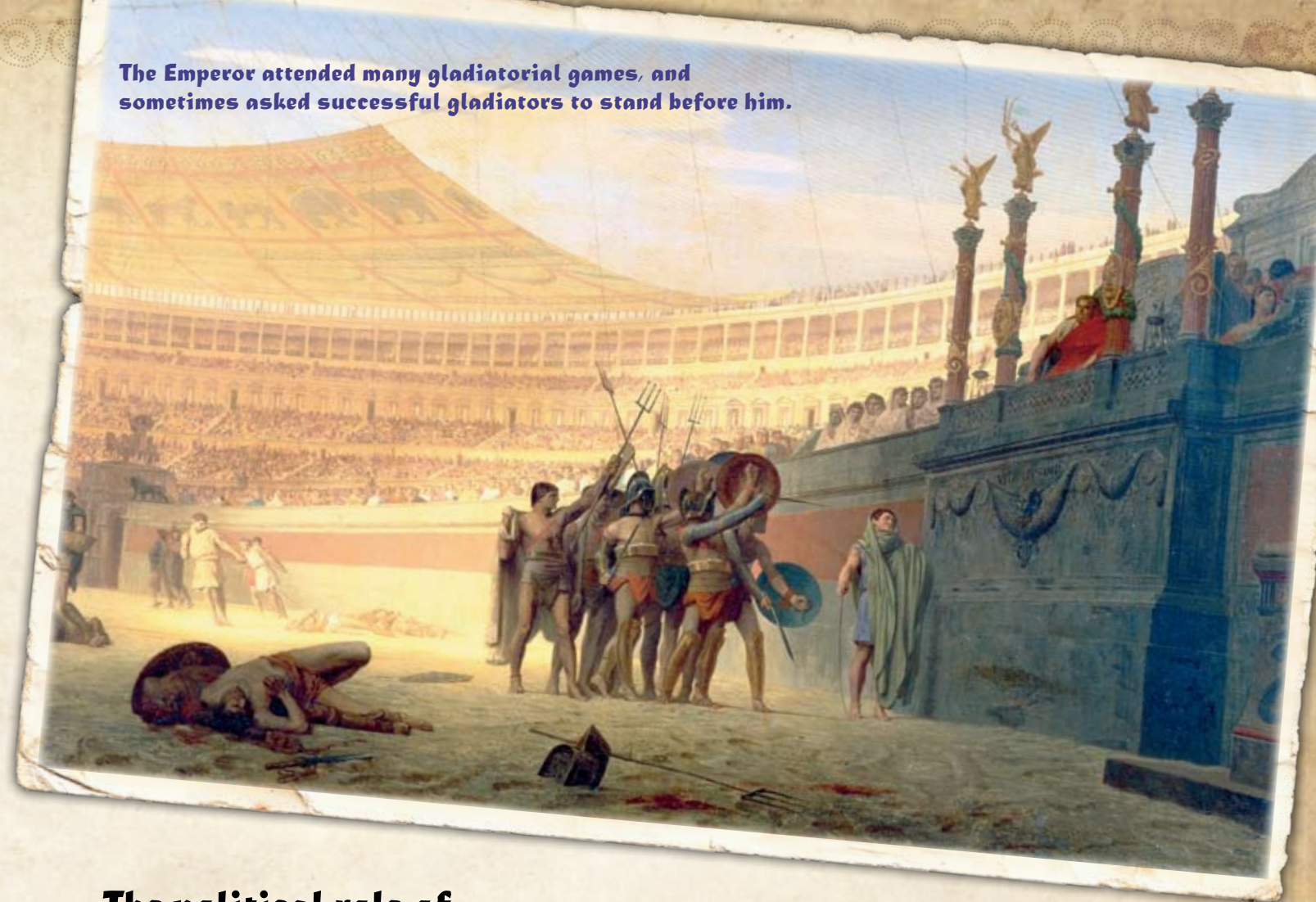
The development of the games

In the film *Gladiator*, Maximus (played by actor Russell Crowe, right) fights in gladiatorial games.

The first gladiatorial games took place at the funerals of important Roman officials. Some believed that a gladiator killing another at a funeral would please the gods. Soon every official in Rome was planning bigger and better events for their own funerals. Musicians even played during the fights, matching the **tempo** of their music to the pace of the combat.



The Emperor attended many gladiatorial games, and sometimes asked successful gladiators to stand before him.



The political role of the games

Over time the gladiatorial games came to play an important political function. Politicians in the senate needed votes to keep their positions. Many politicians discovered that the citizens' desire for gladiatorial games could help them to win votes. The Emperor also learnt that holding gladiatorial games was the best way to keep power and stay popular.

Quick facts

What were the largest planned gladiatorial games?

There were several large planned gladiatorial games during the Roman Empire, some involving thousands of gladiators.

- ❖ The largest gladiatorial games were held by Emperor Trajan in 107 CE. They involved 5 000 pairs of gladiators.
- ❖ General Titus Flaminus held gladiatorial games to mark the death of his father. The games lasted three days and involved 74 gladiators.
- ❖ Julius Caesar planned to hold 320 gladiator fights at his daughter's funeral. However, the senate stopped him by ruling that there had to be a limit put on the amount of money that could be spent on gladiatorial games.

Training to be a gladiator

Slaves, prisoners and volunteers trained to be gladiators in gladiator schools. Life in gladiator schools was often harsh and difficult.

Gladiator schools

Gladiator schools were found all over the Roman Empire. Some historians estimate that there were more than 100 gladiator schools. The men who owned these schools were called lanistae, and they were often ex-gladiators who had won their **freedom**. These lanistae often visited slave markets and bought slaves to train as gladiators.

Life in a gladiator school

Gladiators lived harsh lives in gladiator schools. They slept in tiny, dark cells within **barracks**, where they were constantly guarded. A gladiator's typical diet consisted of grains, beans, oatmeal and barley. It was believed that eating these foods would stop gladiators from bleeding to death.

Gladiators trained in the same groups every day. Training involved learning a series of routines. These routines were broken into various acts or scenes, similar to a play. Gladiators were even trained how to die in a way that would satisfy the audience.

Lanistae trained gladiators to fight in gladiator schools.



A gladiator took an oath to the gods when he first joined a gladiator school.

Taking oaths and signing contracts

Each gladiator had to take the gladiator's oath, known as the *sacramentum gladiatorium*. Taking the oath meant agreeing to be treated as a slave without **civil rights**. It also meant suffering social disgrace, or being seen as the lowest members of society. The oath was, 'I will endure to be burned, to be bound, to be beaten and to be killed by the sword', and it was made to the gods.

Gladiators also signed contracts with the lanistae. These contracts covered:

- ❖ how often gladiators were to perform
- ❖ what weapons they would use
- ❖ how much money they would earn for a fight
- ❖ what medical care and living conditions they would receive.

Quick facts

What were the most famous gladiator schools?

The most famous gladiator schools were found in Italy.

- ❖ Two well-known gladiator schools were Capula, which was near Naples, and the Pompeii Gladiator Barracks in Pompeii.
- ❖ The most important school in Rome was the Ludus Magnus. It was connected to the Colosseum by an underground tunnel.
- ❖ The Ludus Matutinus, in Rome, was a famous school where gladiators learned to fight against animals.

SPOTLIGHT ON the Ludus Magnus

Spotlight on

WHAT: the Ludus Magnus

ALSO KNOWN AS: Rome's most famous gladiator school

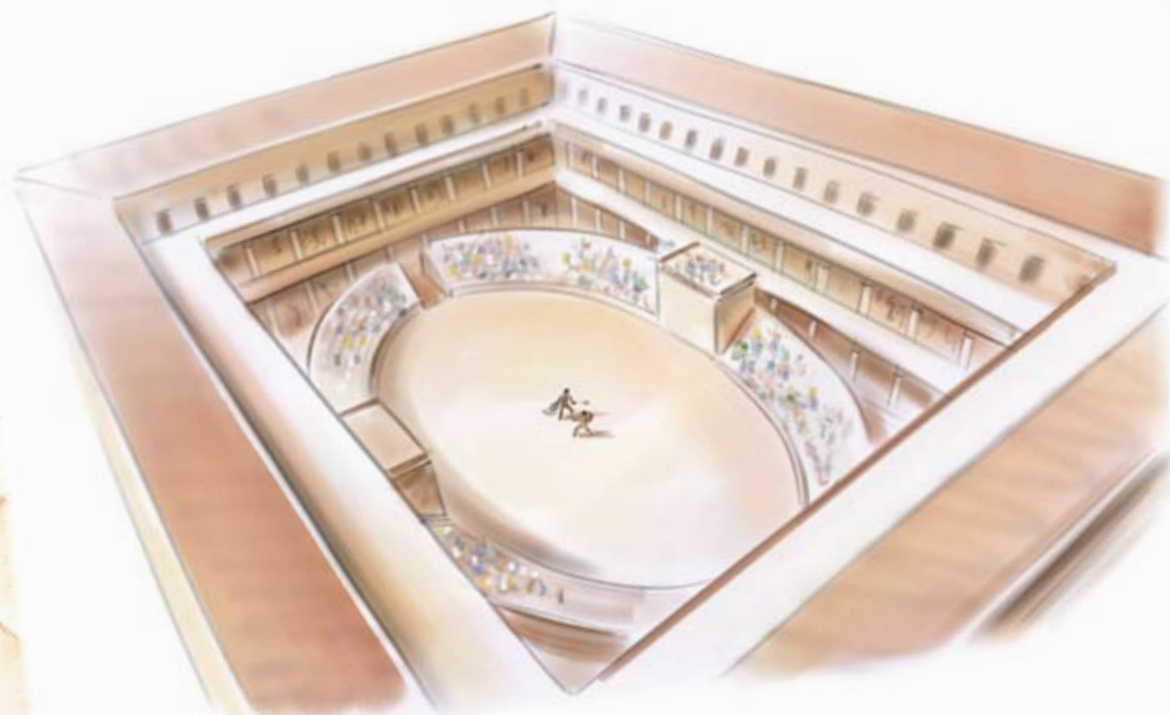
BUILT BY: Emperor Domitian

The Ludus Magnus was the largest and most **prestigious** gladiator school in Rome. It had two levels built around a large **arena**, in which gladiators trained and exercised. At least 3000 seats were built in the arena for **spectators** to watch the gladiators training.

The Ludus Magnus also had about 130 cells where gladiators slept under guard. The cells were grouped into four wings.

The school closed when gladiator performances were abolished by Emperor Honorius in 404 CE. Its ruins were discovered in 1937, and **excavations** continued until 1957.

Many gladiators learnt to fight at the Ludus Magnus.



What you should know about...

The Ludus Magnus

- ❖ Some spectator entrances were reserved for important people. An entrance located at the centre of the building on the northern side held a special seat, or place of honour.
- ❖ A marble blueprint of the Ludus Magnus was found among the building plans for the city of Rome. It shows the layout of the school, including the tunnel that connected it to the Colosseum. The marble city plans hung on a wall in the **Forum** during the Roman Empire.

Ruins of the Ludus Magnus consist of almost half the arena and around half the gladiator cells on the bottom level.

Tunnel to the Colosseum

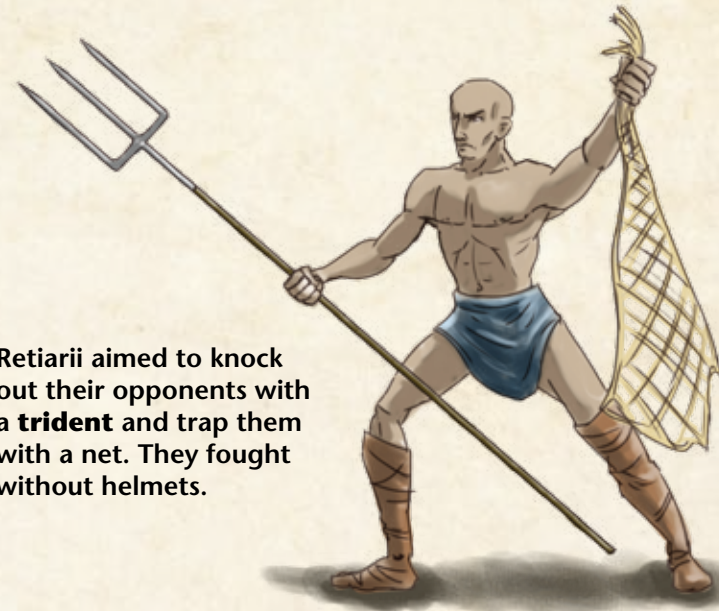
The Ludus Magnus was connected to the Colosseum by an underground tunnel. The tunnel began under the Colosseum and emerged in the south-west corner of the Ludus Magnus. The entrance to the tunnel was 2.17 metres wide.

Types of gladiators

Many different types of gladiators fought in gladiatorial games. Some types of gladiators fought other types of gladiators, and even animals. Some types of gladiators fought each other.



Bestiarii fought large, dangerous animals, such as lions and tigers. They were often killed by these animals.



Retiarii aimed to knock out their opponents with a **trident** and trap them with a net. They fought without helmets.



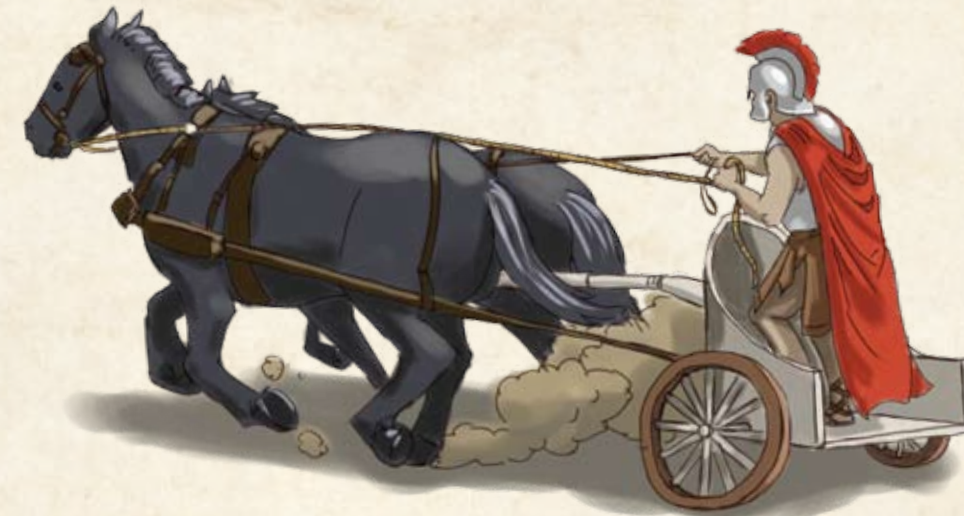
Andabatae rode on horseback, charging at each other like knights in a medieval joust.



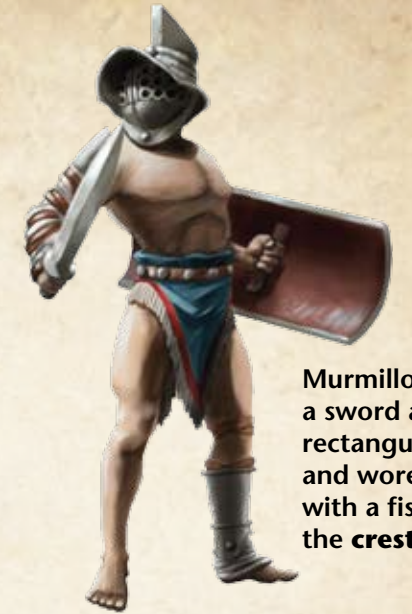
Secutores fought against retiarii gladiators. Their helmets were smooth so that they did not get caught in the retiarii nets.

Gladiators who fought each other

Retiarii and secutores gladiators usually fought against each other, while murmillone, thraeces and hoplomachi gladiators sometimes fought each other.



Essedarii rode **chariots**. During battle, essedarii would try to break their **opponent's** chariot. Their battles often ended with sword fights on foot.



Murmillone carried a sword and a rectangular shield, and wore a helmet with a fish on the **crest**.

Thraeces wore broad helmets and carried curved swords, which could reach around their opponents' shields.



Dimachaeri did not wear armour or protective clothing. They carried two daggers but did not carry shields.



Hoplomachi were based on Spartan hoplite soldiers, and they wore full body armour.



Gladiator weapons and armour

As gladiatorial games became more popular, different types of weapons and armour were developed. Gladiators used different weapons and wore different armour to suit their fighting styles.

Weapons

Gladiator weapons included swords, lances, nets and bows.

- ❖ Two common types of sword were the Thracian sica and the Acinace. The Thracian sica was a curved, single-edged sword used by thraeces gladiators. The Acinace was a single-edged sword used by dimachaeri gladiators.

- ❖ Three common types of lance were the trident, the hasta and the pilum. The trident was a spear with three prongs used by retiarii gladiators. The hasta was a long pole used by essedarii gladiators. The pilum was a **javelin** with a long, metal point used by many types of gladiators.
- ❖ Two common types of net were the laquesus missilis and the rete. The laquesus missilis was a lasso made out of leather or strong rope and used by laquerarius gladiators. The rete was a net made from strong rope with blades or weights attached to its edges. It was used by retiarii gladiators.
- ❖ The arcus et Sagittiae was a bow used to shoot opponents during special gladiatorial games. It was used by many types of gladiators.



Retiarii gladiators carried tridents to knock out opponents, and nets to trap and wound them.

Armour

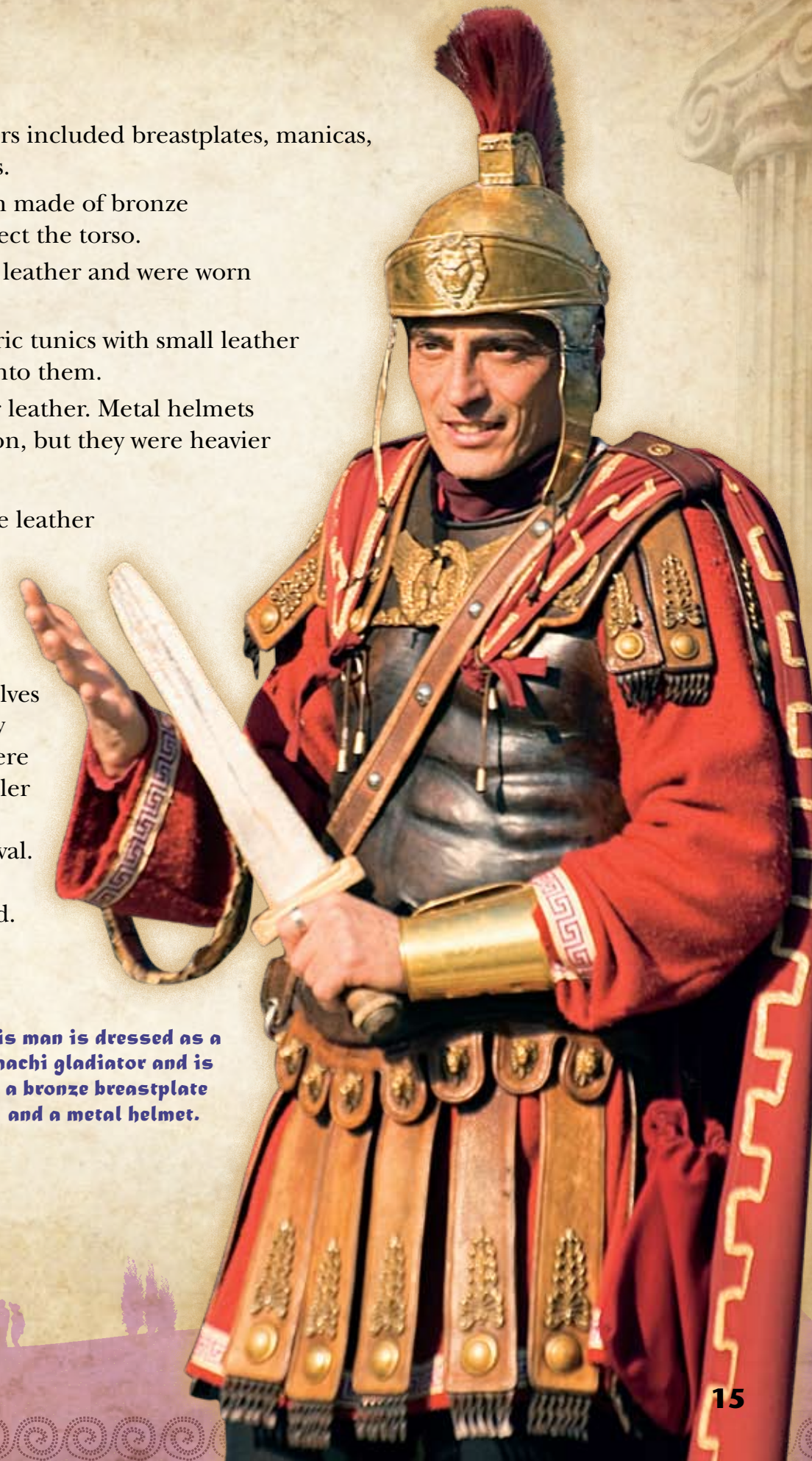
Armour worn by gladiators included breastplates, manicas, cataphractes and helmets.

- ❖ Breastplates were often made of bronze and were worn to protect the torso.
- ❖ Manicas were made of leather and were worn to protect the arms.
- ❖ Cataphractes were fabric tunics with small leather or metal scales sewn onto them.
- ❖ Helmets were metal or leather. Metal helmets offered more protection, but they were heavier than leather helmets.

Some gladiators also wore leather shin guards and belts.

Shields

Most gladiators carried shields to protect themselves during battle. Large body shields, called scutum, were rectangular or oval. Smaller defensive shields, called clypeus, were round or oval. Wooden shields, called parma, were always round.



This man is dressed as a hoplomachi gladiator and is wearing a bronze breastplate and a metal helmet.

IN PROFILE: *Flamma*

In profile

WHO: Flamma

NICKNAME: Loach

TYPE OF GLADIATOR: Secutor

DIED: Aged 30 years, in his 34th fight



Flamma was one of the most famous and successful gladiators of his time. He performed in 34 gladiatorial games during his lifetime.

Flamma came from Syria, and it is thought that he was once a soldier in a private army. Some historians believe that he was condemned to become a gladiator for **insubordination**.

During his career as a gladiator, Flamma won 21 fights. He became so popular that sculptors made statues of him. His head was even used on a Roman coin.

Notable moment

A gladiator's ultimate reward was freedom from fighting as a gladiator. Gladiators who survived three to five years of battle or won five fights could earn their freedom. Flamma was awarded his freedom four times but chose to remain a gladiator.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Rudis

The act of earning freedom was called *rudis*. The symbol of *rudis* was a wooden sword.



Flamma (left) fought in the Colosseum in Rome.

Flamma's gladiator record

Not many records were kept of gladiators who fought in the gladiatorial games. Flamma's achievements, however, were recorded on his gravestone.

FLAMMA

'LOACH'

SECUTOR GLADIATOR

LIVED TO 30 YEARS OLD

FOUGHT 34 TIMES

WON 21 TIMES

DREW NINE TIMES

WAS DEFEATED FOUR TIMES

What you should know about...

Flamma

- ❖ Flamma was a secutor gladiator, so he fought with a shield, a dagger and a smooth helmet. Most of his fights were against retiarii gladiators who fought with tridents and nets.
- ❖ It is believed that Flamma trained at the Ludus Magnus.
- ❖ Flamma was so popular with the crowd that even when he lost, the Emperor would spare his life so that he could continue fighting.

Roman amphitheatres

As the number of spectators at gladiatorial games grew, it became difficult to hold the games in open-air arenas, markets or forums. Ancient Romans designed special buildings, called amphitheatres, to hold the games. Each amphitheatre contained an arena, on which gladiators fought one another.



Roman amphitheatres were packed with spectators during gladiatorial games.

Building amphitheatres

Amphitheatres were built because they could seat large audiences. Each amphitheatre had many levels of seating that went all the way around the arena. As Roman amphitheatres were not carved into hills as Greek theatres were, they could be built almost anywhere.

The first amphitheatre in Ancient Rome was the Circus Maximus. It could seat 25 000 spectators, and many gladiatorial games were held there during the Roman Empire. Other events, such as chariot races, foot races, boxing and wrestling, were also held there.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Arena

The word *arena* means 'sand'. A thick layer of sand was laid down in arenas to soak up the blood from injured gladiators and animals.

Amphitheatre

The word *amphitheatre* comes from the Latin word *amphitheatrum*, which means 'having seats on all sides'. These seats often surrounded the arena in an oval shape known as an ellipse.



This carving shows gladiatorial games held at the Circus Maximus during the Roman Empire.

Types of amphitheatres

The first Roman amphitheatres were wooden, but they were quickly replaced by stone amphitheatres. Wooden amphitheatres sometimes caught fire or collapsed, whereas stone amphitheatres could handle all weather conditions. Today, the ruins of more than 220 stone amphitheatres are scattered across countries that were once part of the Roman Empire.

The first known stone amphitheatre was built in Pompeii around 80 BCE. It could seat around 20 000 people. In 70 CE, the Romans began building a stone amphitheatre that was designed to be bigger and better than all others. It became known as the Colosseum, and it could seat around 50 000 spectators.

Seating arrangements

Prior to the rule of Emperor Augustus, there were no official rules about where citizens sat in amphitheatres. Emperor Augustus gave a **decree** to ensure that the first row of seats was always given to senators. He also allocated special seating to married men and young boys, and he separated soldiers from ordinary citizens.

SPOTLIGHT ON the Colosseum

Spotlight on

WHAT: the Colosseum

ORIGINAL NAME: Amphitheatrum Flavium

WHERE: Rome

BUILT: 70–83 CE

The Colosseum was the most spectacular amphitheatre of its time. It took between 20 000 and 30 000 slaves, engineers and skilled workers more than ten years to complete, and when it was finished it was opened by Emperor Titus.

The amphitheatre was 49 metres high, 188 metres long and 156 metres wide. It had about 80 entrances for spectators. Four of these entrances were reserved for the Emperor, his family and other important people.

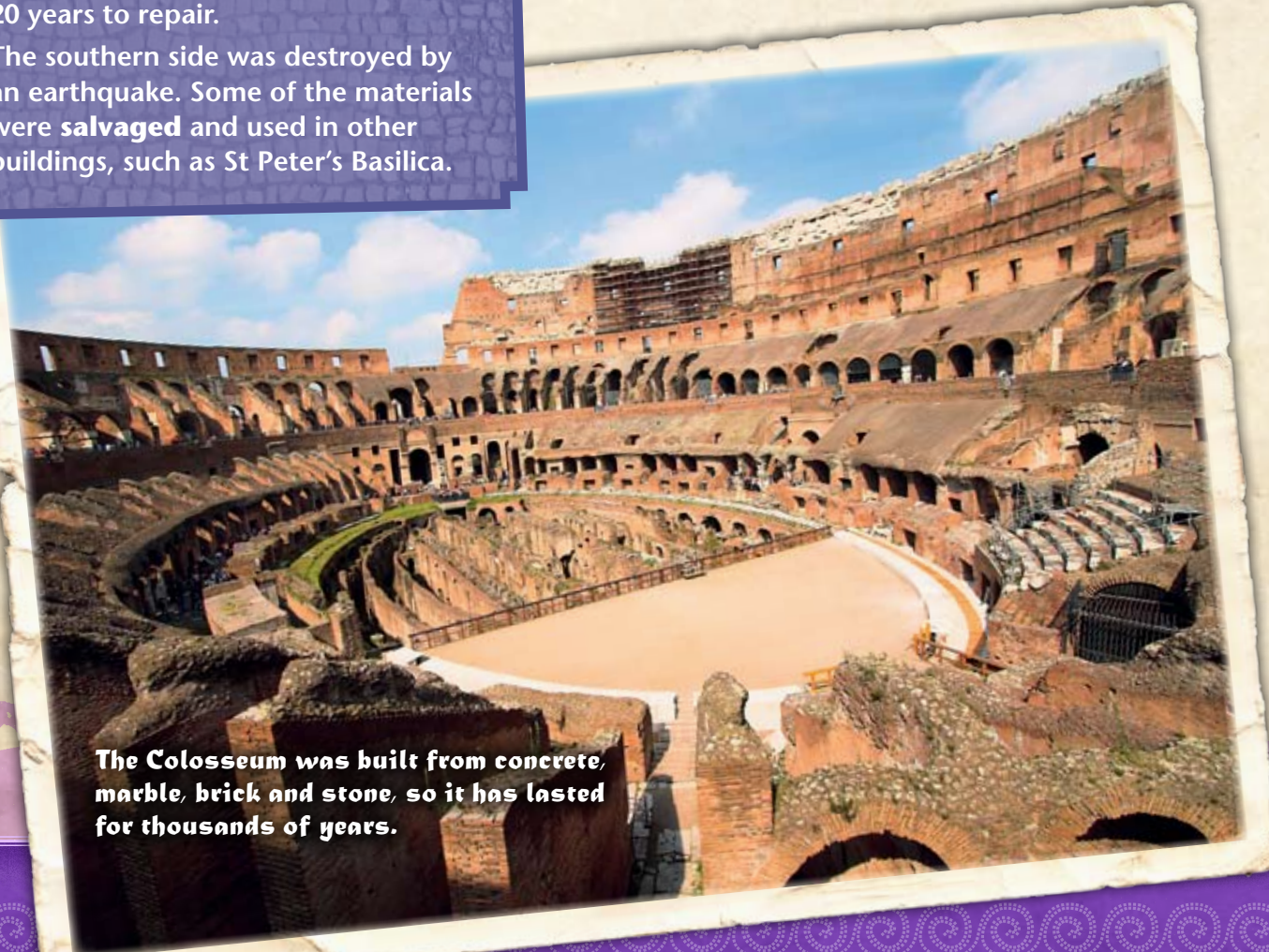
Seating was spread over four levels, reaching 30 metres high. The upper storey held the lower **social classes** and most women while the lowest floor, which had the best view, was reserved for the most important citizens. Their seats were made from marble.

Quick facts

Was the Colosseum ever damaged?

The Colosseum was damaged by fire and an earthquake.

- ❖ The damage sustained by fire took 20 years to repair.
- ❖ The southern side was destroyed by an earthquake. Some of the materials were **salvaged** and used in other buildings, such as St Peter's Basilica.



The Colosseum was built from concrete, marble, brick and stone, so it has lasted for thousands of years.



Armed guards are believed to have lined the tunnel between the Ludus Magnus and the Colosseum, to make sure that gladiators entered the arena safely.

Tunnels

The Colosseum had many tunnels that connected it to surrounding buildings. The north-east tunnel connected the Colosseum to the Ludus Magnus. Gladiators used this tunnel to make a dramatic entrance into the arena. The tunnel was believed to be known as the gate of life, because only the winning gladiators travelled back through it to the Ludus Magnus. The Colosseum had another tunnel known as the gate of death. Gladiators who were killed in battle were believed to have been dragged through this gate.

What you should know about...

The Colosseum

- ❖ To celebrate the opening of the Colosseum, Emperor Titan held a 100-day festival of games. These games included gladiator fights and animal spectacles. More than 9 000 animals were killed during these performances.
- ❖ The Colosseum had an enormous **awning** that protected spectators from the sun. It took about 1 000 men to put up the awning.
- ❖ There were many cages of wild animals beneath the Colosseum. These cages could be raised so that animals could appear in the middle of the arena.

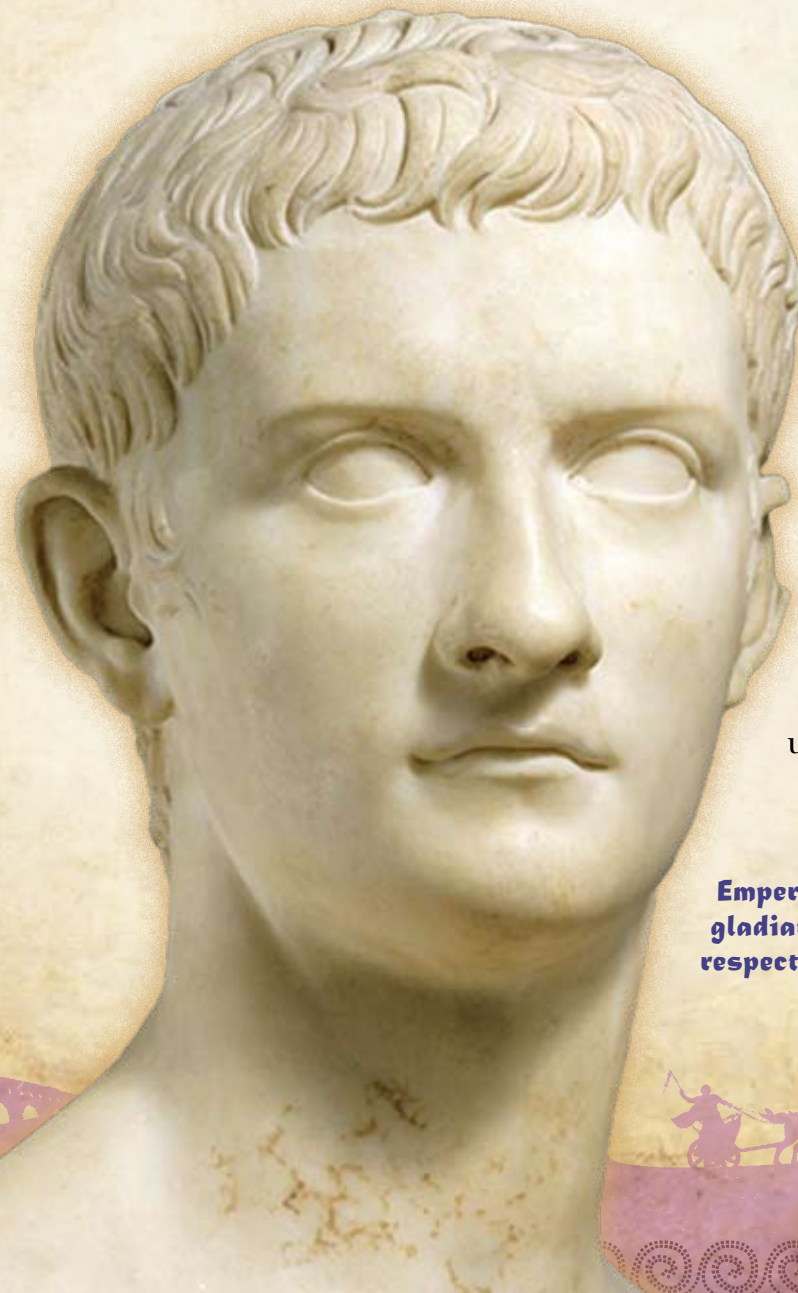
Emperor gladiators

Although gladiators were considered the lowest members of society, if they were successful they often won fame and respect from spectators. Emperors hungry for fame were known to fight as gladiators.

Which Emperors fought?

Emperors who fought gladiators include:

- ❖ Caligula
- ❖ Commodus
- ❖ Lucius Verus
- ❖ Nero
- ❖ Didius
- ❖ Hadrian.



Fixed fights

Generally fights between gladiators and Emperors were fixed so that Emperors would be protected from harm. It is believed that many Emperors fought knowing that they would not be killed or seriously injured. Emperors could choose their opponents and set the limits of the fight. In addition, most games between Emperors and gladiators were performed using wooden swords.

Emperor Caligula fought as a gladiator in order to win fame and respect from the Roman people.

Emperor Caligula and Emperor Commodus

Emperor Caligula and Emperor Commodus used the arena to demonstrate their power and authority over gladiators and spectators.

- ❖ Both Emperors demanded that ordinary citizens enter the arena and fight as gladiators.
- ❖ Roman historians reported a fight in which Emperor Caligula killed a gladiator by producing a real sword and stabbing his opponent to death. Caligula also had the awning removed from the Colosseum on an extremely hot day. He refused to let any spectator leave the Colosseum, in order to see the crowd suffer.
- ❖ Emperor Commodus is believed to have slaughtered thousands of bears, tigers and other wild animals. While most gladiators fought against these animals to save their lives, Commodus often killed the animals when there was no threat to his life.



Emperor Commodus fought wild animals in order to impress spectators.

IN PROFILE: Emperor Commodus

In profile

WHO: Emperor Commodus

TYPE OF GLADIATOR: Secutor

BORN: 161 CE

DIED: 192 CE



Emperor Commodus ruled the Roman Empire between 180 CE and 192 CE, and was considered a **tyrant**.

Commodus thrived on public performance and participated in over 735 gladiatorial games. He fought as a secutor gladiator dressed as Hercules, and carried a lion's club and hide. He would **emulate** Hercules's triumphs by fighting wild animals. When Commodus fought against other gladiators he would win easily because fights were always fixed in his favour.

Many people plotted to take Commodus's life, due to his poor leadership and cruelty. His sister and cousin were involved in a failed plot to **assassinate** him. He was eventually poisoned and **strangled** to death in his bath.

Infamous moments

Commodus became known for his cruelty and vanity in the arena. It was reported that he often went into battle with a real sword, while his opponent had only a wooden sword. He also slaughtered many helpless animals. At one event it was said that he killed 100 bears.

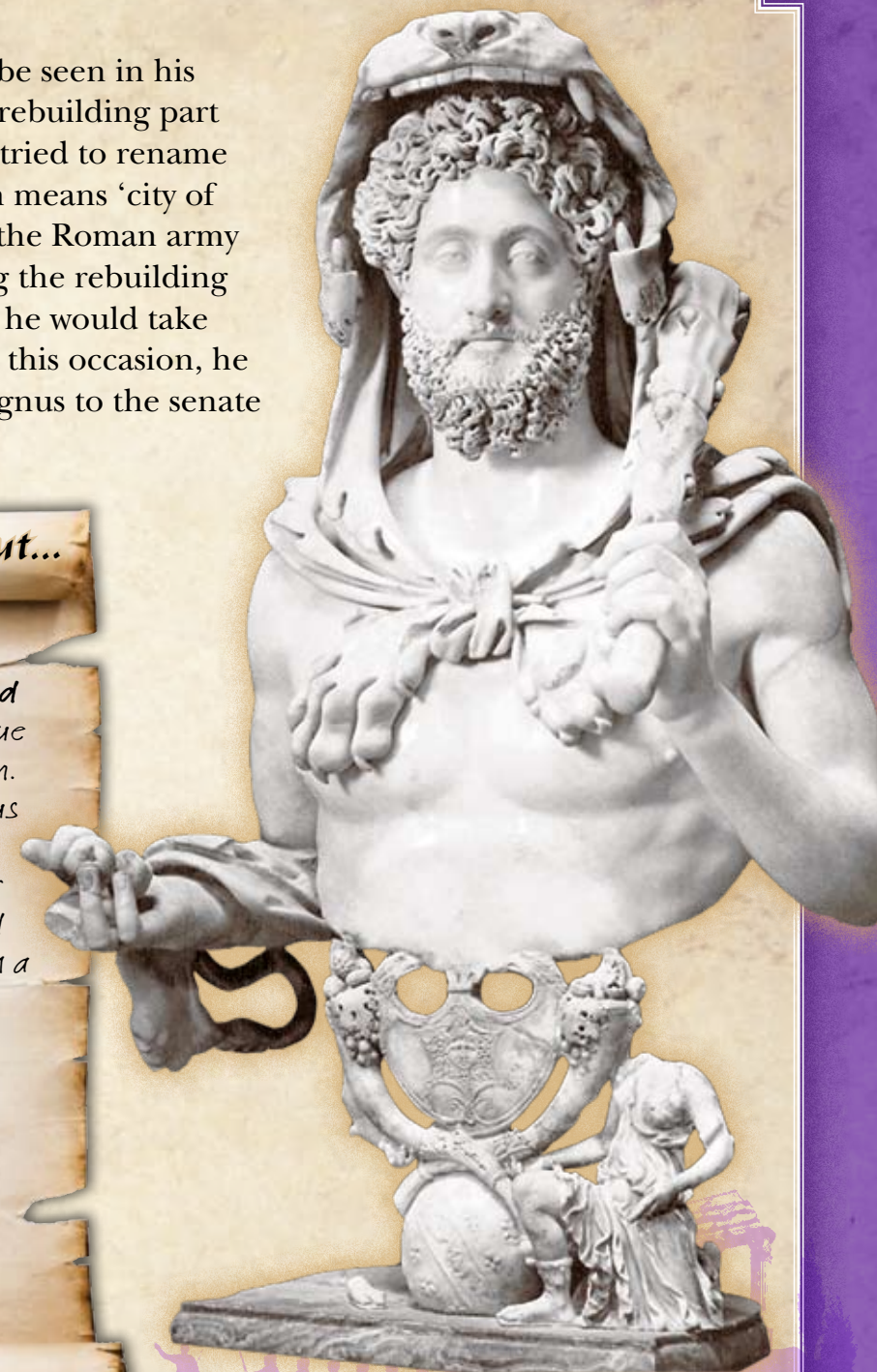
Political leadership

Commodus's desire for fame can also be seen in his political leadership as Emperor. After rebuilding part of Rome that was damaged by fire, he tried to rename the city 'Colonia Commodiana', which means 'city of Commodus'. He also tried to rename the Roman army and the senate after himself. Following the rebuilding of Rome, Commodus announced that he would take on extra duties in 193 CE. To celebrate this occasion, he planned to march from the Ludus Magnus to the senate dressed as a gladiator.

What you should know about...

Emperor Commodus

- ❖ Commodus had statues inscribed with his achievements. One statue claimed that he killed 12 000 men.
- ❖ Commodus was said to be jealous of successful gladiators. It is believed that he had a gladiator called Julius Alexander executed because he had killed a lion with a javelin while on horseback.
- ❖ Commodus charged the city of Rome large amounts of money to see him perform. For every performance he charged one million sesterces, which were extremely valuable coins. Over time these payments damaged Rome's economy.



Emperor Commodus timeline

150 CE

160 CE

170 CE

180 CE

190 CE

200 CE

161 CE

Born to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius

166 CE

Made junior Emperor at age five

177 CE

Made joint Emperor with Marcus Aurelius at age 16

180 CE

Becomes sole Emperor when Marcus Aurelius dies

192 CE

Assassinated while taking a bath

Attitudes towards the gladiatorial games

While most citizens in the Roman Empire enjoyed gladiatorial games, some Emperors and philosophers did not support this violent form of entertainment.

Emperors who took a stand

Many Emperors took a stand against the bloodshed and violence of the games. It is believed that Emperor Marcus Aurelius did not enjoy gladiatorial games very much. However, he did see the gladiators as superior athletes. In order to prevent bloodshed, he decreed that gladiator swords had to have blunt points, and he banned iron blades from the arena. Emperor Severus banned female gladiators from fighting in 200 CE. Emperor Constantine stopped gladiatorial games from being held in 325 CE and, in 404 CE, Emperor Honorius officially abolished the games.

Although the games were disliked by some Emperors, they were popular with spectators, who would fill the Colosseum.

A philosopher who spoke out

The Roman philosopher Seneca was one of few philosophers who spoke out against the gladiatorial games. He wrote of his distaste for the games during the reign of Emperor Caligula.

'There is nothing so ruinous to good character as to idle away one's time at some spectacle. Vices have a way of creeping in because of the feeling of pleasure that it brings. Why do you think that I say that I personally return from shows greedier, more ambitious and more given to luxury, and I might add, with thoughts of greater cruelty and less humanity, simply because I have been among humans?'

- THE ROMAN PHILOSOPHER SENECA

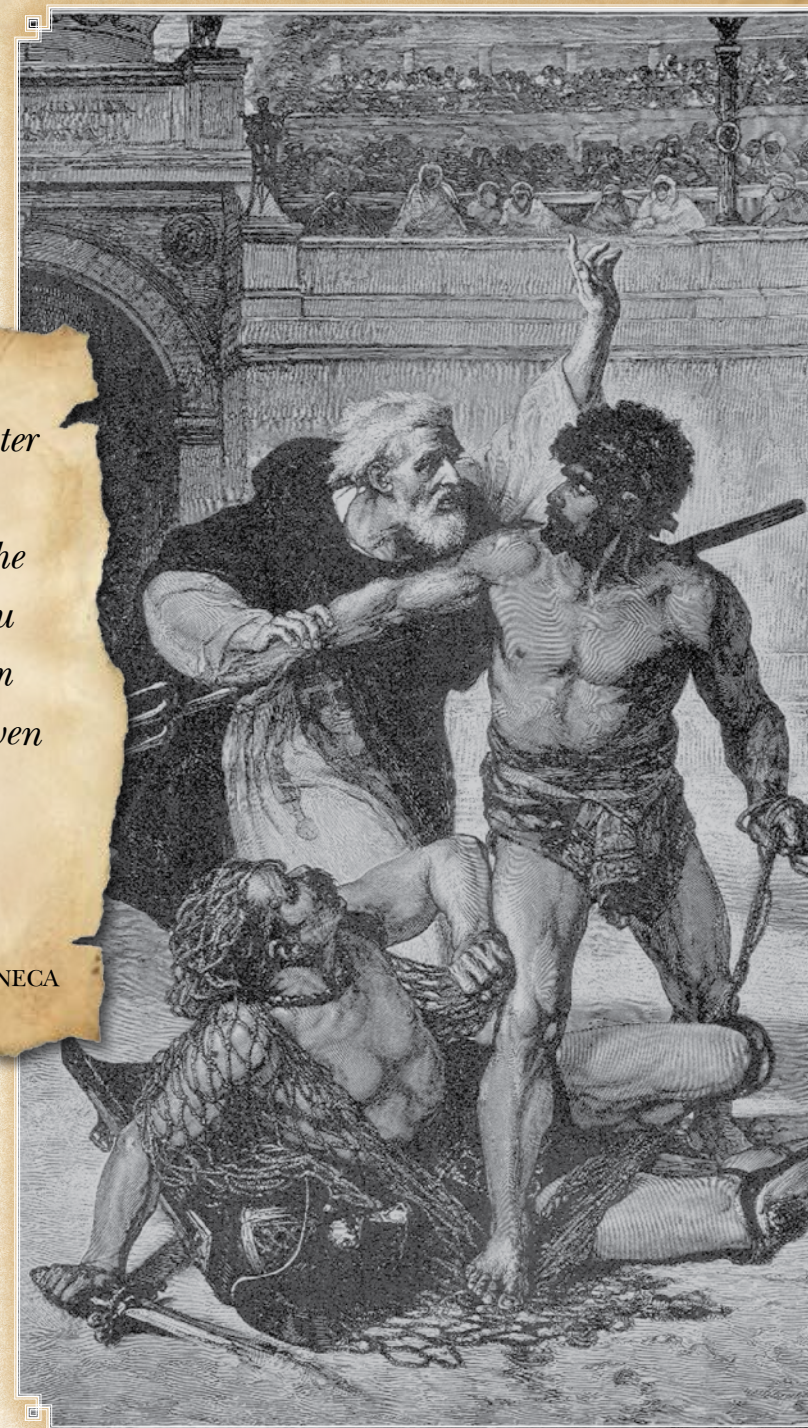
Quick facts

Did gladiators ever protest against the gladiatorial games?

Gladiators such as Spartacus protested against the gladiatorial games.

- ❖ Three slave **revolts** occurred during the period when the games were held. These revolts were known as the Servile wars.
- ❖ The largest of these revolts was led by the gladiator Spartacus.

Some protestors ran out into the arena to try to stop gladiators from killing each other.



IN PROFILE: *Spartacus*

In profile

WHO: Spartacus

TYPE OF GLADIATOR: Thracian

BORN: 109 BCE

DIED: 71 BCE



Spartacus lived in Thrace, Greece, until he left home to join the Roman army. Later, he **deserted** the army and was captured and sold into slavery. Eventually, he was sent to a gladiator school in the city of Capula.

Spartacus led a large slave revolt in Capula. At the height of the revolt Spartacus had gathered around 120 000 followers to support him. Spartacus became a hero not just for his fighting ability but for his cleverness in battle and his qualities as a leader.

Spartacus and the other **rebel** slaves were defeated in a major battle in southern Italy. It is believed that Spartacus died in this battle.

Notable moment

In 73 BCE Spartacus initiated a slave revolt to strike for freedom. Spartacus and his chief aide, Crixus, escaped with 70 to 80 other gladiators, and carts filled with weapons. They set up camp at the top of Mount Vesuvius, where they were joined by more slaves.



Spartacus died in a battle in southern Italy, and the slave revolt was defeated soon afterwards.

What you should know about...

Spartacus

- ❖ Crixus died in battle during the second conflict with Roman soldiers. To avenge Crixus's death, Spartacus forced 300 prisoners from the legions to battle in pairs to the death, as gladiators did.
- ❖ When some of the slaves in his group began robbing and destroying villages, Spartacus separated from them and formed another army.

Defeating enemies

The senate sent **legions** of 3000 soldiers to capture or kill Spartacus and the rebel slaves, but Spartacus defeated them. The soldiers aimed to attack Spartacus and the other slaves at the top of Mount Vesuvius, believing that they would be trapped there. However, Spartacus led his men down the other side of the mountain before the soldiers arrived, and came up behind the soldiers. The senate then sent two more legions, which were also defeated by Spartacus and the slaves.

Spartacus timeline

110 BCE

109 BCE

Born in Thrace, Greece

100 BCE

90 BCE

73 BCE

Leads the gladiator revolt at Capula

80 BCE

72 BCE

Defeats two legions of soldiers sent by the senate in Rome

70 BCE

71 BCE

Dies in battle in southern Italy

60 BCE

The decline of the Roman gladiators

Historians believe that the worsening Roman **economy** and the rise of Christianity led to the decline of the Roman gladiators.

The decline of the Roman economy

The Roman Empire began to fall into decline during the 300s and 400s, and its economy suffered. Putting on gladiatorial games was always extremely costly, but it became more difficult for Rome to fund these events as the economy worsened.

The rise of Christianity

Most Christians believed that the gladiatorial games were cruel, and many protested against them. In 337 CE, Emperor Constantine made Christianity the Roman Empire's official religion. This allowed Christians who were critical of the games to become more outspoken about their concerns. In 325 CE Emperor Constantine stopped the games, although they continued to be held illegally. In 399 CE Emperor Honorius closed all remaining gladiator schools. In 404 CE he abolished the games, after spectators at the Colosseum killed a Christian who tried to stop a gladiator fight.

Many Christians believed that the gladiatorial games went against the teachings of Jesus Christ, who preached kindness and compassion.



Glossary

abolishes makes illegal or puts a complete stop to

amphitheatres open-air stadiums with arenas surrounded by seats

arena an oval space in the centre of an amphitheatre

assassinate to murder in a surprise attack, often for political reasons

awning a canvass canopy used to protect spectators from the weather

barracks a type of military housing

chariots a type of carriage that essedarii gladiators drove

citizens members of a society

civil rights rights that people in a society have, such as the right to vote

Colosseum a large amphitheatre built in Rome

crest the top of a helmet

decree an order issued by the Emperor

deserted left without giving warning

economy the system of producing and distributing resources, business and money in a society

elite the wealthiest or most powerful citizens in a society

Emperor the ruler of a society, similar to a king

emulate imitate or copy

Etruscans people from the region of Etruria, in the country today known as Italy

excavations digging that exposes historical artefacts

Forum a public square in Rome where people could gather for discussion

freedom the right to live and work in society without fighting as a gladiator

inscribed carved onto an object

insubordination not obeying authority or breaking the rules

javelin a long, pointed spear

joust a sport in which men would charge towards each other on horseback with a pointed lance

legions units of the Roman army made up of 3 100 to 6 200 soldiers

opponents other contestants that a gladiator fought in gladiatorial games

prestigious respected and important

rebel people who take part in a revolt

revolts attempts to start a revolution

salvaged saved from damage

senate a group of politicians based in Rome, who met regularly to make decisions on political issues within the Roman Empire

social classes groups of people with different degrees of importance in a society

spectators people who watch an event

strangled cutting off someone's air supply, usually by squeezing their neck

tempo the speed at which a musical piece is played

trident a large fork with three prongs, used as a weapon by gladiators

tyrant a person who uses power in a cruel manner, to make others fear them

volunteer gladiators ordinary citizens who chose to become gladiators



Index

A

amphitheatres 4, 18–19, 20
andabatae gladiators 12
animals 4, 9, 12, 18, 21, 23, 24
arenas 10, 11, 18, 21, 23, 24, 26
armour 13, 14–15

B

bestiarii gladiators 12
Brutus Pera (Roman official) 5

C

Capula 9, 28
Circus Maximus 18, 19
Colosseum 5, 9, 11, 17, 19, 20–21, 23, 26
Crixus (slave) 28, 29

D

dimachaeri gladiators 13

E

Emperor Augustus 4, 19
Emperor Caligula 22, 23, 27
Emperor Commodus 22, 23, 24–25
Emperor Constantine 5, 26, 30
Emperor Honorius 5, 10, 26, 30
Emperor Julius Caesar 4, 7
Emperor Marcus Aurelius 24, 26
Emperor Severus 26
essedarii gladiators 13, 14

F

female gladiators 5, 26
Flamma (gladiator) 16–17
forum 11, 18

G

gladiator contracts 9
gladiatorial games 4, 5, 6–7, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 24, 26–27, 30
gladiator schools 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 25, 28
gladiator's oath 9

H

helmets 13, 15, 17
Hercules (Greek hero) 24
hoplomachi gladiators 13, 15

L

lanistae (slave owners) 8, 9
laquerarius gladiators 14
Ludus Magnus 9, 10–11, 17, 21, 25

M

murmillone gladiators 13

O

opposition to gladiatorial games 26, 27, 30

P

political role of the games 7
politicians 7
Pompeii 4, 5, 9, 19

R

retiarii gladiators 12, 13, 14, 17
Roman army 25, 28
Roman Empire 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 18, 19, 24, 26, 30
Roman gods 6, 9
Rome 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 25, 29, 30

S

secutores gladiators 12, 13
senate 4, 7, 25, 29
Seneca (philosopher) 27
shields 12, 13, 15, 17
slave revolts 27, 28, 29
slaves 5, 8, 20, 28, 29
social classes 20
Spartacus (gladiator) 28–29
spectators 10, 11, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 26, 30
swords 4, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, 26

T

Thrace, Greece 28
thraeces gladiators 13, 14

V

volunteer gladiators 5, 8

W

weapons 9, 14–15