

A faded fresco from the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum, depicting two gladiators in combat. The gladiator on the left is in a defensive stance, wearing a dark tunic and a tall, dark helmet. The gladiator on the right is in an offensive stance, wearing a red tunic and a red helmet, and is holding a sword. The background is a light-colored wall with a red diagonal line.

Entertainment and blood-sports

Pompeii: The life, death and rediscovery of a Roman town
(HPAH5078/HPAH6078)

Drama comes to Campania

- Greek drama spread across Magna Graecia.
 - Thespis (534 BC).
- Early drama in places like Capua or Neapoli?
- Atellan farce and mime.
- Touring troupe of Actius Anicetus (inscriptions at Pompeii, Herculaneum and Puteoli).

House of the Tragic Poet (VI.8.5)



The theatres at Herculaneum and Pompeii

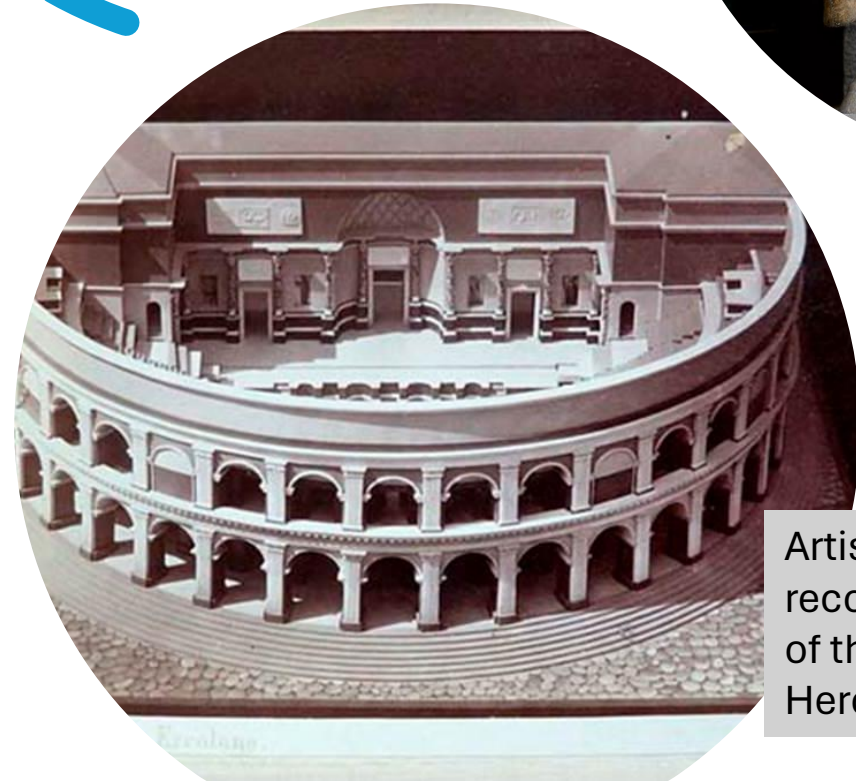
- Herculaneum theatre, first excavated in 1738.
 - Architect: Publius Numisius; celebrated benefactors: Lucius Annius, Appius Claudius and Marcus Nonius Balbus.
- Theatre and social hierarchy – Pompeii:
 - “Marcus Holconius Rufus and Marcus Holconius Celer at their own expense built the vaulted corridor, the boxes and the auditorium.” [C/I 10.833 & 834]
- Providing plays and games.
 - Inscriptions, painted notices of games and programmata.



Large Theatre of Pompeii



Marcus Nonius Balbus



Artistic reconstruction of the Theatre of Herculaneum

The development of blood-sports in Campania

- **When, where and why did gladiatorial games develop?**
- First century BC to Imperial period:
 - the expansion of *munera* and the role of the *lanista*.
 - New and old venues for performance.
- *edicta munerum* and *libelli munerari*.

CIL 4.2508

Thracian vs. Murmillo	
Won	Pugnax, Neronian, fought 3
Killed	Murranus, Neronian, fought 3
Thracian vs. Murmillo	
Killed	Lucius Fabius, fought 9
Won	Astus, Julian, fought 14



Potential funerary duel in a 4th Century BC tomb painting at Paestum

Gladiatorial games – who were the combatants

- House of the Gladiators (V.5.3) and “portico” next to the Large Theatre.
- Etched drawing and graffiti.
 - e.g., House of L. Ceius Secundus and Fabia Prima (I.6.15).
- As a rule, a gladiator would be paired against a suitably matched appointment.
 - Advantages and disadvantages balancing out.



CIL 4.8056



Gladiator type	Weapons	Armour	Main opponents
Thracian	Short curved sword (<i>sica</i>)	Small square shield (<i>parmula</i>); arm-guard (<i>manica</i>) on right arm; two leg guards; highly decorated helmet	Mainly the Hoplomachus; sometimes the Murmillo and Retiarius
Hoplomachus	Straight sword	Similar armour as above, including high leg-guards, helmet, and a small shield	Thracian or the Murmillo
Retiarius	Net and trident (or short sword)	An arm-guard (<i>manica</i>) on the left arm; rectangular bronze plate tied to left shoulder	Murmillo or Secutor
Secutor	Short sword	Long rectangular shield; metal greaves (<i>ocrea</i>) and an eclosed plain helmet	Retiarius
Murmillo	Short sword (<i>gladius</i>)	High rectangular wooden shield covered in leather; helmet with visor and square crest; an arm-guard (<i>manica</i>) on his right arm and potentially a leg-guard on the left leg	Thracian, Hoplomachus or Retiarius
Eques	On horseback with a lance	A small round shield (<i>parma equestris</i>); helmet with a visor and guards on thighs and right arm	Only against other Equites

Amphitheatre at Pompeii

- “Gaius Quinctius Valgus, son of Gaius, and Marcus Porcius, son of Marcus, quinquennial duumvirs, for the honour of the colony, saw to the construction of this *spectacula* at their own expense and gave the land in perpetuity to the colonists” [C/I 10.852].
- The balustrades and three tiers.
 - 35 rows, *im cavea* accessed by small tunnel, *media cavea* and *summa cavea* by stairs.
- Now lost frescos on podium walls.



Home fans and visitors

- Nonlocals at games held in Pompeii.
 - Size of Amphitheatre; Tacitus *Annals* 14.17.
- Travel to games held elsewhere:
 - “49 pairs of gladiators from the Capinian troupe will fight in the games of the Augusti at Puteoli on the 4th day before the ides of May, the day before the ides of May and the 17th and 15th days before the kalends of June [i.e., 12, 14, 16 and 18 May], There will be awnings, Magnus wrote this.” [C/I 4.7994, 3.4.1-2]
- Local economies and concession stands:
 - “Gnaeus Annius Fortunatus occupies this spot with permission of the aediles” [C/I 4.1096].



Wall-painting from I.3.23 [riot of AD 59]