

# CLASSICAL TIMES



## Amphitheaters

by Luis A. Rowe

Several different types of shows all took place in the arena of an Amphitheater. The word arena comes from the Latin for "sand," which was placed on the Amphitheater floor to soak up spilled blood.

Amphitheaters were most commonly used for gladiatorial matches which were adapted from Etruscan funeral rites (**munera**). At the end of the 1st century BC, however, the games had lost their ritualistic significance.

Gladiators came from various lots of life. Originally, there were gladiatorial schools, but these came under state control in the 1st century BC to avoid them becoming private armies. The majority of gladiators were either condemned criminals (**damnati**), slaves, prisoners of war, or volunteers who signed up to do shows for a fee. There were four main types of gladiator:

**Murillo:** Fought with a helmet adorned by a fish crest, an oblong shield, and a sword. He usually fought a retiarius.

**Retiarius:** A lightly armed gladiator with a net, brandishing either a trident or a dagger.

**Samnite:** Utilized a sword, visor and helmet, and an oblong shield.

**Thracian:** Combated with a curved scimitar and round shield.

Various other weapons, women, and sometimes even dwarves were used in the games. Special types of "wild animal matches" (**venationes**) were introduced in the 2nd Century BC and became very popular. Such

bouts included men on foot and on horseback, known as **bestiarii**, who were usually either criminals, prisoners of war, or trained and paid fighters. **Bestiarii** fought exotic animals, which eventually led to an extensive trade market.

Originally, wild animal matches took place on the morning of the games. The public executions were held at midday, and then the gladiatorial matches. Over time, however, these divisions became blurred, and often many fights would take place at once, giving the appearance of a battle.

Other spectacles included mock naval battles (**naumachiae**), known to take place on artificial lakes, as well as animal performances, accompanied by music.

The amphitheater itself is a Roman, not Greek, contrivance; and is particularly common in the west. The very first gladiatorial and wild beast contests were held in open areas, such as the forum or circus. The first known amphitheater dates to 80 BC at Pompeii; the first permanent one in Rome goes back to 29 BC. The design itself was oval or elliptical. Sloped seating could be supported on solid banks of earth held by retaining walls with external staircases or vaulted masonry structures. An awning (**velum** or **velarium**) provided protection from the elements for spectators, and in larger amphitheaters, service corridors and chambers beneath the floor held animals until they were to go out onto the arena, which was

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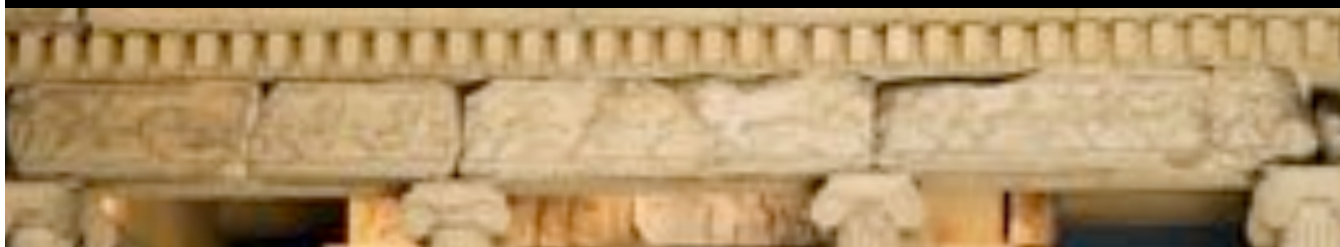
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### LOQUITUR

Welcome to this week's newsletter. The cartoon on the back is to give you a little taste at what happens in Enrichment Day. I hope everyone will be able to make it to next week's scrapbooking party! May you all do well on your National Latin Exam!

*Sarah Rust*  
 Editor



**CALENDAR:**

**NATIONAL LATIN EXAM**  
Wednesday March 12th at 10:30 a.m.

**STATE PROJECTS**  
All State Precontests Due March 15th

**SPRING BREAK**  
March 17th to 21st

**SPRING CERTAMEN**  
Wake Forest U. March 29th

**SPRING CONVENTION**  
Wake Forest U. April 25th-26th

**NATIONAL JCL**  
July 28th to August 2nd at Miami U.



**Geometric Art**

This art is a phase of Greek art, characterised largely by geometric motives in vase painting, that flourished towards the end of the Greek Dark Ages, circa 900 BCE to 800 BCE. Its centre was in Athens, and it was diffused throughout the trading cities of the Aegean.

**FAMOUS CLASSICAL PHRASE**

**Omnia tempus habent...tempus nascendi et tempus moriendi**

To everything there is a season ...a time to be born and a time to die.

Ecclesiastes 3:2

*continued from front*

done by facility of trapped doors.

In small towns, the local Amphitheater could be the only entertainment. Due to their massive size, they were usually constructed on the edge of a city or directly outside its walls. Military amphitheaters (**ludi**) built near forts and fortresses served as training grounds for soldiers.