

A DAY AT THE ARENA:

Gladiatorial games began with a procession that included the gladiators and the sponsor of the games, the *editor*; in Rome during the imperial period, this usually was the emperor, and in the provinces it was a high-ranking magistrate.

The parade and subsequent events were often accompanied by music. The morning's events sometimes began with mock (false) fights. After that, animal displays, usually the animals made tricks or they were hunted.

During the lunch break the criminals were executed (the Christians, for example, were considered to be guilty of sacrilege and treason). One form of execution in the arena was *damnatio ad bestias*, in which the condemned were attacked by animals.

In the afternoon came the high point of the games—individual gladiatorial combats. These were usually matches between gladiators with different types of armor and fighting styles.

There were, however, many rituals in the arena. When a gladiator is wounded and defeated, he held up an index finger. At this point the crowd indicated with gestures if the gladiator died or not.

Some people think that there was also a ritual for removing the bodies of dead gladiators, with a pretending to be (Hades) hitting the body with a hammer to make sure he was really dead and then a slave dragging the body with a hook.



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