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Mosaics

Roman Gladiators

2 x 8 historical coloring-in templates for solo and group work



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PRINT SETTINGS

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INTRODUCTION

Mosaics - Roman Gladiators

Gladiators were professional fighters in ancient Rome - warriors who fought against each other in public events. The word gladiator comes from the Latin word 'gladius,' which means 'sword'. Along with chariot races, theatrical performances, and animal fights, gladiator fights were an integral part of the entertainment program in Rome. The emperors, whose motto was „bread and games“, made themselves especially popular with the citizens by staging gladiator fights.

The majority of gladiators were slaves, prisoners of war or convicted criminals. A gladiator battle was a fight to the death. The ancient Romans loved this kind of cruel entertainment.



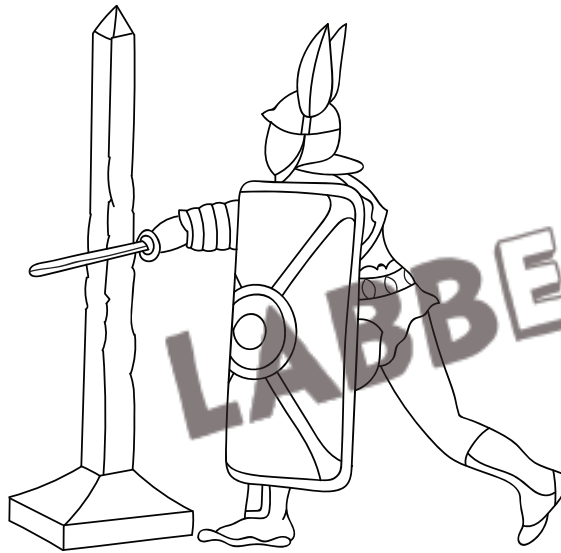
Gladiators didn't just swing their swords about wildly, as is often depicted in the movies. Gladiators had to use their physical strength sparingly and cleverly, otherwise they had no chance of survival. For this they were trained to fight in the arena in gladiator schools. If they were lucky and stayed alive for long enough, they were sometimes even given back their freedom.

Over the centuries, several gladiatorial styles developed in Rome, each of which varied in their equipment and fighting technique. The historical gladiator coloring-in templates presented here are based on depictions on tombstones, in frescoes and mosaics.

Micha Labbé

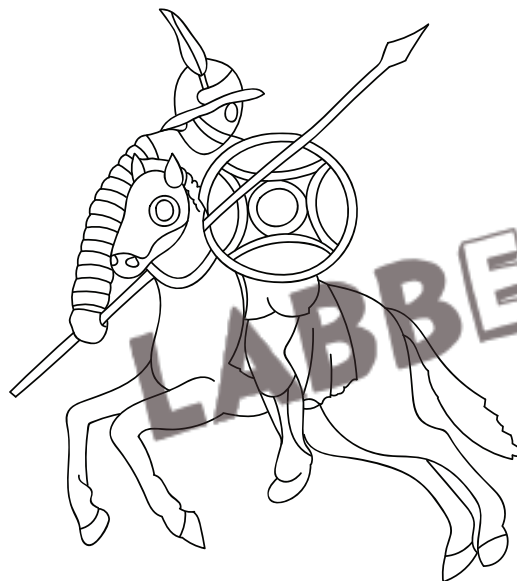
PALUS, THE PRACTICE STAKE

A young, inexperienced fighter ferociously strikes the wooden practice post in the gladiator school again and again. He has to train for hours every day, just like a Roman soldier, so that later he's able to use his spear and shield properly. Only then is he ready to go into hand-to-hand combat with other gladiators. It's a good thing this young combatant's sword arm is wrapped in thick padding, since this arm can easily get injured during training if he hits it against the sharp edges of his big shield.



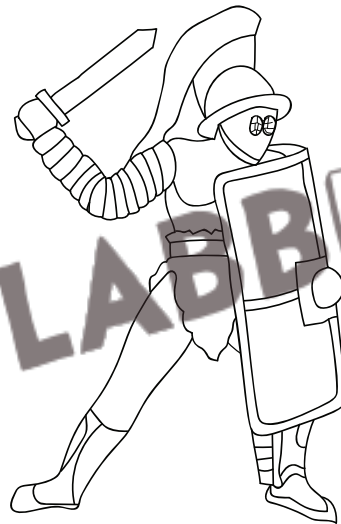
EQUES, THE RIDER

The helmet has a wide rim and protects the whole head. It's decorated with just two feathers on each side. The rider wears a tunic that reaches almost to his knees, covering his upper body. His right arm is thickly padded and he holds a lance tightly in his right hand. The rider carries a round shield on his left that's like those used by the Roman cavalry. His legs are protected only by leather bindings that have no soles. Riders fought only other riders in the arena and were always the first gladiators at events. At first they'd fight on horseback with a lance, but then they'd usually dismount to settle the battle on foot with swords.



MURMILLO, THE SWORD FIGHTER

The helmet is big and has an ornate crest. The combatant wears a belted loincloth - his upper body is bare. His right sword-arm is protected by thick padding. In his right hand he holds a short, straight-bladed sword. On his left, the Murmillo holds a large, curved shield like the ones often used by the Roman infantry. His right lower leg is protected by leather straps with no sole. The left leg, however, is covered in thick padding and a metal shin guard. The Murmillo with his huge shield would often fight against gladiators who only had small shields such as lancers. The most famous Murmillo was Spartacus, who led a slave uprising in 79 B.C. The Romans suffered numerous defeats before finally defeating Spartacus' forces.



SECUTOR, THE PURSUER

The helmet is egg-shaped and has small eye holes, like that of the chariot fighter. On top of it there's also a half-moon crest. The Secutor's upper body is bare, beneath which he wears a belted loincloth. Since the pursuer pictured here is left-handed, he also wears thick padding on his left sword arm, and he holds a straight-bladed short sword in his left hand. The shield is large and curved like that of the Murmillo. His left leg is protected by leather straps with no sole, but the right leg is covered in thick padding and a short metal shin guard. The pursuer probably adopted the use of a round helmet from the chariot fighter. He also needed such a helmet because his opponent was the net fighter. Incidentally, it's said that the Roman Emperor Commodus also fought in the arena as a pursuer.

