

Gladiatorial Advertisements at Pompeii

D. LUCRETI SATRI
VALENTIS FLAMINIS [[NERONIS]] CAESARIS AUG F PERPETUI
GLAD PAR XX ET D. LUCRETI VALENTIS FILI [**GLAD**] **PARIA X**
EX A D V K APRIL VENATIO ET VELA ER[UNT].

Common Abbreviations:

GLAD PAR	<i>gladiatorum paria</i>	“pairs of gladiators”
PUGN	<i>pugnabunt</i>	“(they) will fight”
POM(PEIS)		“at Pompeii”
SUPP	<i>suppositicii</i>	“substitutes”

Dates/The Calendar:

K		“the Kalends” = the 1 st of the month
NON		“the Nones” = the 5 th or 7 th of the month
ID		“the Ides” = the 13 th or the 15 th of the month
PR	<i>pridie</i>	“the day before”
EX A D	<i>ex ante diem</i>	“from (so many?) days before the...”

Other terminology:

VENATIO		beast-hunt
VELA (ERUNT)		“(There will be) awnings”
FLAMEN		type of priest (honorary position)
SINE IMPENSA PUBLICA		“without public expense”
SUA PECUNIA		“with his/her own money”

Advertisements for Gladiatorial Games

Advertisements for gladiatorial spectacles (*edicta munerum*) took the form of painted inscriptions posted along busy streets within Pompeii as well as on funerary monuments lining the roads leading into town. More than forty examples have been discovered at Pompeii so far. Less wall-plaster on building facades has survived at Herculaneum and the roads into town have not yet been uncovered. Herculaneum, therefore, has not yet yielded this type of inscription.

Many *edicta munerum* posted at Pompeii advertise games to be held in Pompeii, while others advertise games that will take place in other cities of the region. Excavations in the 1980s along the via Nocera just south of Pompeii uncovered advertisements for games in two cities not previously mentioned at Pompeii: Capua and Forum Popilii.

These advertisements often present the same set of information:

1. the motivation for the spectacle (*optional*)
2. the type of entertainment that will be presented
(e.g. *glad(iatorum) par(ia) XX*)
3. the name of the individual sponsoring the games
4. the abbreviation *pugn(abunt)* (“they will fight”)
5. the location of the spectacle
6. the date(s) of the spectacle

Discussion questions

What was the purpose in advertising these games? (Were there other motivations?)

How effectively do these advertisements use marketing strategies to reach their audience?

Can these advertisements illustrate anything about ancient literacy?

Examples of Advertisements for Gladiatorial Games posted at Pompeii

Pro salute

[Imp(eratoris) Vespasiani] Caesaris Augu[sti] li[b]e[ro]rumqu[e]
[eius ob] dedicationem arae [fam(ilia) gladiat(orum)] Cn(aei) [All]ei Nigidi Mai
flami[nis] Caesaris Augusti pugn(abit) Pompeis sine ulla dilatione
III Non(is) Iul(iis) venatio vela erunt

Venat(io) et glad(iatorum) par(ia) XX M(arci) Tulli
pug(nabunt) Pom(peis) pr(idie) Non(as) Non(is) VIII VII Idu(s)
Novembr(es)

Glad(iatorum) par(ia) XL P(ubli) Furi et L(uci) R[---]ami(?) pug(nabunt)
Cap(uae) d(ie) Eid(ibus)(!) X IX K(alendas) Februar(ias) vela et
[---]erunt
aqua(?)

Glad(iatorum) par(ia) XXIII et venatio pug(nabunt)
in Falerno Foro Popili L(uciorum) Attiliorum
a(nte) dies XIII XII XI X K(alendas) Iuni(as)

Puteol[is - - -] V [- - Id]us Dec(embres)
Pugn(abunt) Herculanei pro sal[ute Cae]sarum et Liviae Aug(ustae).
Vela erunt. Iole sal(utem)

Glad(iatorum) • Par(ia) • XX • A(uli) • Suetti
[An]tenionis [e]t Nigri liberti • pugna(bunt)
Puteol(is) • XVI • XV • XIV • XIII • Kal(endas) Ap(riles) • venatio • et
athletae [- - - vela?] erunt.

Select Bibliography

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- Cooley, Alison E. and M.G.L. Cooley. 2014. *Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Sourcebook*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, esp. pp. 65-80.
- Sabbatini Tumolesi, Patrizia. 1980. *Gladiatorum paria. Annunci di spettacoli gladiatorii a Pompei*, Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura.
- Tuck, Steven L. 2008/2009. "Scheduling Spectacle: Factors Contributing to the Dates of Pompeian "Munera"." *Classical Journal* 104:123-143.

Online Resources about Gladiators

VRoma page on sources about the arena, with a gallery of images:

http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/arena_sources.html

Most major museums will have some artifact concerning gladiators.

- E.g. The Hermitage Museum, Russia – oil lamp with gladiator
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston – statuettes, lamps
Walters Museum of Art, Baltimore – statuette
Art museum at Princeton University – “gladiator doll” (terracotta)
Worcester Art Museum – gladiator helmet
Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC – glass cup, lamps, gems, statuettes

*N.B. Watch out for Neoclassical art depicting gladiators.

Direct links to gladiatorial artefacts:

The Hermitage Museum – oil lamp with gladiator

<http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/25.+Archaeological+Artifacts/973552>

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston – statuettes, lamps

http://www.mfa.org/search?search_api_views_fulltext=gladiator

Princeton University Art museum – gladiator “doll”

<http://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/30494>

Worcester Art Museum – gladiator helmet

<http://www.worcesterart.org/collection/higgins-collection/2014.115.html>

Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC – glass cup, lamps, gems, statuettes

<http://www.metmuseum.org/search-results?ft=gladiator#!?q=gladiator&page=1>