

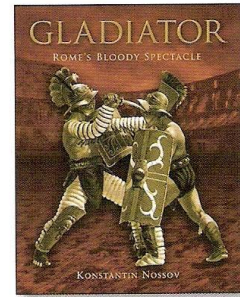
Gladiator. Rome's bloody spectacle

The author of this book, Konstantin Nossov has published before for Osprey and this book about gladiators was already published in Russian in 2005. Gladiators became a popular topic in the recent years and this is one of many books about the arena fighters. It attempts to cover all aspects concerning gladiators and *venatores* (beast hunters) and even the architecture of amphitheatres, but considering that it has only 208 pages of which nearly 40 pages are appendices, notes and glossary, it is obvious that it could not cover all the subjects in detail. Nonetheless, no important issue is left out: the origins of gladiatorial games are explained, the types and armature of the gladiators and even that of the *venatores* (the latter are commonly ignored) are described according to the latest finds. He also includes the *arbelas* (formerly known as *scissor*) who was widely discussed under this name in the second edition of Junkelmann's book of 2008. Due to the date of the Russian publication he could refer to Junkelmann's first edition only. Because of the limited space in this book the chapter about the development and architecture of amphitheatres only scratches the surface since this is a vast topic about which numerous full length books have been written.

The book contains many photographs, some taken by the author himself during his extensive travels throughout Europe. Although the majority of the pictures is known from other publications the pictures of the frescoes from Ashik's crypt in Pantecapaeum on the Black Sea are presumably unknown to most readers in the western world. The author's reconstruction of the various gladiatorial types are illustrated by artist Vladimir Golubev. The drawings are very accurate and represent the actual *armatura* and pairings of gladiators and also *venatores* from different centuries. Unfortunately the figures are not numbered, therefore it is not always easy to find the corresponding picture Nossov refers to in his text.

The book is rounded off by appendices about gladiator types and most common gladiator pairs as well as a glossary (although Italian taken for Latin appears under one point) and notes and a bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

Due to its briefness this book is a good introduction for readers new to the topic of gladiators. But for those who are already into this subject it does not offer any new insights.



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