

## The Gladiatrix: 2,000-year-old statue shows topless FEMALE gladiator standing triumphant over defeated foe

- Only second ever statue showing women forced to fight in Roman arenas
- Women were banned from gladiatorial matches in AD200

By [Rob Waugh](#)

**PUBLISHED:** 08:41 GMT, 19 April 2012 | **UPDATED:** 10:52 GMT, 19 April 2012



© Alfonso Manas, University of Granada

---

She was clearly skilled - her pose is one of victory, and the precise details of the statue suggest it is of a real woman who fought in Roman arenas say University of Granada researchers.

---

She is wearing only a loincloth, and holding up a short sword as a salute to the crowd - and archaeologists believe the statue shows one of the few female gladiators to fight in ancient Rome.

She was clearly skilled - her pose is one of victory, and the precise details of the statue suggest it is of a real woman who fought in Roman arenas.

She holds up a 'sica' - a cruel curved short sword used in arena matches by gladiators, who were often captured warriors from other countries.

Few statues of female gladiators have ever been found, after the Emperor Septimus banned the fairer sex from gladiatorial combat in AD200.

Before that point, though, captured female slaves could be made to fight, just as men were.

There is only one other piece of direct visual evidence of women fighting in the Romans' cruel 'sport.'

A carved relief from the site of Halicarnassus, now in the British Museum also shows a pair of female gladiators fighting.

The 2,000-year-old bronze statue is in a museum in Hamburg, and holds aloft a 'sica' - a short sword used by gladiators.

Researcher Alfonso Manas, of the University of Granada said her pose was, 'A salute to the people, to the crowd.'

Remains of a 'massive, muscular woman' who may have been a female gladiator during the Roman occupation of Britain were also discovered in 2010.

The woman was buried in an elaborate wooden coffin with iron straps and copper strips in Credenhill, Herefordshire - close to the headquarters of the SAS.



**Female gladiators at a re-enactment: Remains of a 'massive, muscular woman' who may have been a female gladiator during the Roman occupation of Britain were also discovered in 2010**

'It seems to indicate that the statuette at the museum represents a gladiator, thus becoming the second piece of visual evidence we have of female gladiators,' says Manas.

The one perplexing detail is that she appears to be wearing no armour - but the topless pose may have been to emphasise the fact she was a female fighter, and to show off her attributes.

## MOST READ NEWS