

18 October 2008

By: Dan Talpalariu, Science Editor



The remains of the Roman gladiator's tomb
Discovery

[Roman Tomb Proves "Gladiator" Movie Wasn't Fiction](#)

A general-gladiaator's monumental tomb was recently unearthed

A recent discovery of a Roman tomb that holds the remains of a former general who got to be a gladiator after being held in high regard by Rome's emperor proves that this may be the source of inspiration for Russel Crowe's character, Maximus Decimus Meridius, from Ridley Scott's "Gladiator" movie.

The tomb was found accidentally, while conducting building works for a residential complex at Saxa Rubra in Italy. The monument contained marble columns, friezes, beams and carvings, buried deep in the soil long ago.

Similarly to the [Mount Vesuvius](#)' tight sealing of the [town of Pompeii](#) in a layer of volcanic ash, the tomb built during the late 2nd century AD on the shore of the Tiber River was also well preserved due to a natural catastrophe, although not intact. But the marble features could still be easily reconstructed based on a 3D computer design currently in development. "We know that the area was subjected to frequent floods in ancient times. Just like Pompeii, a disaster helped preserve the monument. After a particularly strong flood, the mud from the river basically sealed the collapsed marble blocks," said Daniela Rossi, an archaeologist from Rome. A large inscription unearthed by the experts indicated that the tomb housed a Roman general by the name of Marcus Nonius Macrinus. Just like in the movie, Marcus, born in 138 AD has led a large series of important victorious battles while he was in the service of 2 Roman emperors: Antoninus Pius (who ruled from 138 to 161) and Marcus Aurelius (161 to 180), earning their favor. He was made consul (highest military and civil degree) in the year 154 and proconsul of Asia between 170 and 171. His monument will be fully reconstructed and will serve as a landmark for the residential area when it is done.