

= Gladiator ( 2000 film ) =

Gladiator is a 2000 British @-@ American epic historical drama film directed by Ridley Scott , and starring Russell Crowe , Joaquin Phoenix , Connie Nielsen , Ralf Möller , Oliver Reed ( in his final film role before his death ) , Djimon Hounsou , Derek Jacobi , John Shrapnel , and Richard Harris . Crowe portrays the fictional character , loyal Roman general Maximus Decimus Meridius , who is betrayed when Commodus , the ambitious son of Emperor Marcus Aurelius , murders his father and seizes the throne . Reduced to slavery , Maximus rises through the ranks of the gladiatorial arena to avenge the murders of his family and his emperor .

The film was released in the United States on May 5 , 2000 , and was a box office success , receiving generally positive reviews and being credited with rekindling interest in the historical epic . The film won multiple awards , including Best Picture , Best Actor for Crowe , and three other Oscars at the 73rd Academy Awards .

= = Plot = =

In AD 180 , Hispano @-@ Roman General Maximus Decimus Meridius leads the Roman army to a decisive victory against the Germanic tribes near Vindobona , ending a long war on the Roman frontier and winning the favor of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius . Maximus , weary of battle , desires to retire to his Spanish farm estate , but the Emperor tells him that his own son and heir to the throne , Commodus , is unfit to rule and so appoints Maximus as regent to help save Rome from corruption . Marcus Aurelius tells Commodus that he will not be emperor ; Commodus murders him in a fit of rage and becomes the Emperor of Rome .

Commodus asks Maximus for his loyalty , but the general suspects foul play and refuses . Soon after , Maximus is arrested and is scheduled to be executed at dawn . Maximus manages to escape and makes the long journey to his farm on horseback , but arrives to find it burnt and his family dead , under orders of Commodus . He buries them and collapses in despair . He is then captured by slavers who take him to Zucchabar , a North African province . He is sold to a man named Proximo , who trains him as a gladiator . There he befriends two of Proximo 's gladiators , a Numidian named Juba and a German named Hagen .

Reluctant at first , Maximus is forced to fight in local tournaments . He wins every match because of his superior military skills and traumatized indifference to death . His newfound fame and recognition is brought to Proximo 's attention . Proximo reveals to Maximus that he himself was once a gladiator , and had fought well enough to have gained his freedom . He encourages Maximus to go to Rome and fight in the Colosseum , where the Emperor has organized 150 days of games to commemorate his late father . Proximo advises him to " win the crowd " to earn their respect and eventually his freedom . He could then use this leverage to possibly overthrow or kill the Emperor as part of his plan for revenge .

Maximus ' first taste of gladiatorial combat in the Colosseum is depicted as a re @-@ enactment of the Battle of Zama . With his team portrayed as Carthaginian infantry , they defy all expectations and are able ( solely due to Maximus ' commands ) to defeat " Scipio 's legionaries " who were supposed to obliterate them . A surprised and delighted Commodus comes into the arena to personally congratulate them . Maximus braces himself to kill the Emperor , but at the last moment decides against it because of the presence of Commodus ' young nephew Lucius Verus . He then reveals himself to the startled Commodus and vows to have his vengeance . As the Praetorian Guard prepares to kill him , the crowd chants " Live ! " repeatedly , earning their favor and showing their support . Commodus relents and leaves angrily .

Next , Maximus is pitted against the formidable Tigris of Gaul , an undefeated gladiator . After a fierce and lengthy duel which Commodus attempted to fix , Maximus is able to gain the upper hand , but spares his opponent 's life despite the crowd 's urging that he kill him . Angered by this action , Commodus berates him , even taunting him with harrowing details of his family 's death . Undaunted , Maximus turns around and walks away . This act of defiance , along with his victory over Tigris , makes him more popular than the Emperor himself .

As Maximus is being escorted back to the gladiators ' quarters , his former orderly Cicero approaches him and says that he still has the loyalty of the legions , encamped near Rome . Commodus ' sister Lucilla and the chief senator Gracchus secure a meeting with Maximus , and he obtains their promise to help him escape Rome , rejoin his soldiers , topple Commodus by force , and hand power over back to the Senate . Suspicious , Commodus learns of this plot from Lucilla by threatening young Lucius , then dispatches his men to arrest and / or kill the conspirators . Gracchus is quickly apprehended , while a contingent of Praetorians is sent to Maximus ' quarters . Proximo lets Maximus escape and sacrifices himself and his men ( including Hagen ) to gain him more time . Maximus reaches the rendezvous point but falls into a trap ; Cicero is killed and Maximus is captured .

Commodus , desperate and jealous of Maximus ' growing popularity , challenges him to a duel in the Colosseum . Before the fight , and unknown to the crowd , he stabs him in the side to put him at a disadvantage . During the fight , Maximus manages to evade Commodus ' blows and disarm him . Commodus asks the Praetorians to give him a sword , but his request is denied . He produces a hidden stiletto , but Maximus instinctively turns the blade back into his throat , killing him .

However , Maximus succumbs to the stab wound , asking with his last words that reforms be made , his gladiator allies freed , and that Senator Gracchus be reinstated . He is then carried away for an honorable funeral as a " soldier of Rome " , while Commodus ' corpse is left unceremoniously on the ground . Later , Juba revisits the Colosseum at night , now free to go back to his own family , and he buries Maximus ' figurines of his wife and son at the spot where he died . He promises that he will see Maximus again , " but not yet " .

= = Cast = =

Russell Crowe as Maximus Decimus Meridius : a Hispano @-@ Roman legatus forced into becoming a slave who seeks revenge against Commodus . He has earned the favor of Marcus Aurelius , and the love and admiration of Lucilla prior to the events of the film . His home is near Trujillo in today 's Province of Cáceres , Spain . After the murder of his family he vows vengeance . Maximus is a fictional character partly inspired by Marcus Nonius Macrinus , Narcissus , Cincinnatus , and Maximus of Hispania . Mel Gibson was first offered the role , but declined as he felt he was too old to play the character . Antonio Banderas and Hugh Jackman were also considered .

Joaquin Phoenix as Commodus : The corrupted , twisted and immoral son of Marcus Aurelius , he murders his father when he learns that Maximus will hold the emperor 's powers in trust until a new republic can be formed .

Connie Nielsen as Lucilla : Maximus 's former lover and the older child of Marcus Aurelius . Lucilla has been recently widowed . She resists her brother 's incestuous advances for she hates him , while also having to be careful to protect her son , Lucius , from her brother 's corruption and wrath .

Oliver Reed as Antonius Proximo : An old , gruff gladiator trainer who buys Maximus in North Africa . A former gladiator himself , he was freed by Marcus Aurelius , and gives Maximus his own armor and eventually a chance at freedom , and becomes somewhat of a mentor to Maximus . This was Reed 's final film appearance , before he died during the filming . In the original film script , Proximo was supposed to live .

Derek Jacobi as Senator Gracchus : A member of the Roman Senate who opposes Commodus 's rule and an ally of Lucilla and Maximus .

Djimon Hounsou as Juba : A Numidian tribesman who was taken from his home and family by slave traders . He becomes Maximus 's closest ally and friend .

David Schofield as Senator Falco : A Patrician , a senator opposed to Gracchus . He helps Commodus to consolidate his power .

John Shrapnel as Senator Gaius : Another Roman senator allied with Gracchus , Lucilla , and Maximus against Commodus .

Tomas Arana as General Quintus : another Roman legatus , who served under and was a friend to Maximus . Made commander of the Praetorian Guard by Commodus , after betraying Maximus . In the extended version , Quintus sees the mad side of the Emperor when he is forced to execute two

innocent men . Quintus later redeems himself by refusing to allow Commodus a sword during his duel with Maximus .

Ralf Möller as Hagen : A Germanic warrior and Proximo 's chief gladiator who later befriends Maximus and Juba during their battles in Rome .

Spencer Treat Clark as Lucius Verus : The young son of Lucilla . He is named after his father Lucius Verus . He is also the grandson of Marcus Aurelius .

David Hemmings as Cassius : the master of ceremonies for the gladiatorial games in the Colosseum .

Tommy Flanagan as Cicero : Maximus 's loyal servant who provides liaison between the enslaved Maximus , his former legion based at Ostia , and Lucilla . He is used as bait for the escaping Maximus and eventually killed by the Praetorian Guard .

Sven @-@ Ole Thorsen as Tigris of Gaul : An undefeated champion gladiator who is called out of retirement by Commodus to kill Maximus but is defeated by Maximus . Commodus then ordered Maximus to kill Tigris , but he spared him , which caused Commodus to hate Maximus even more .

Richard Harris as Marcus Aurelius : The old and wise emperor of Rome who appoints Maximus , whom he loves as a son , with the ultimate aim of returning Rome to a republican form of government . He is murdered by his son Commodus before his wish can be fulfilled .

Omid Djalili as a slave trader .

Giannina Facio as Maximus 's wife .

Giorgio Cantarini as Maximus 's son who is the same age as Lucilla 's son Lucius .

= = Production = =

= = = Screenplay = = =

Gladiator was based on an original pitch by David Franzoni , who wrote the first draft . Franzoni was given a three @-@ picture deal with DreamWorks as writer and co @-@ producer on the strength of his previous work , Steven Spielberg 's Amistad , which helped establish the reputation of DreamWorks . Not a classical scholar , Franzoni was inspired by Daniel P. Mannix 's 1958 novel Those About to Die , and he chose to base his story on Commodus after reading the Augustan History . In Franzoni 's first draft , dated April 4 , 1998 , he named his protagonist Narcissus , a wrestler who , according to the ancient sources Herodian and Cassius Dio , strangled Emperor Commodus to death .

Ridley Scott was approached by producers Walter F. Parkes and Douglas Wick . They showed him a copy of Jean @-@ Léon Gérôme 's 1872 painting entitled Pollice Verso ( Thumbs Down ) . Scott was enticed by filming the world of Ancient Rome . However , Scott felt Franzoni 's dialogue was too " on the nose " ( lacking subtlety ) and hired John Logan to rewrite the script to his liking . Logan rewrote much of the first act , and made the decision to kill off Maximus 's family to increase the character 's motivation .

Russell Crowe describes being eager for the role as pitched by Walter F. Parkes , in his interview for Inside the Actors Studio : " They said , ' It 's a 100 @-@ million @-@ dollar film . You 're being directed by Ridley Scott . You play a Roman General . ' I 've always been a big fan of Ridley 's . "

With two weeks to go before filming , the actors complained of problems with the script . William Nicholson was brought to Shepperton Studios to make Maximus a more sensitive character , reworking his friendship with Juba and developed the afterlife thread in the film , saying " he did not want to see a film about a man who wanted to kill somebody . "

The screenplay faced many rewrites and revisions . Crowe allegedly questioned every aspect of the evolving script and strode off the set when he did not get answers . According to a DreamWorks executive , " ( Russell Crowe ) tried to rewrite the entire script on the spot . You know the big line in the trailer , ' In this life or the next , I will have my vengeance ' ? At first he absolutely refused to say it . " Nicholson , the third and final screenwriter , says Crowe told him , " Your lines are garbage but I 'm the greatest actor in the world , and I can make even garbage sound good . " Nicholson goes on

to say that " probably my lines were garbage , so he was just talking straight . "

Russell Crowe described the script situation : " I read the script and it was substantially underdone . Even the character didn 't exist on the pages . And that set about a long process , that 's probably the first time that I 've been in a situation where the script wasn 't a complete done deal . We actually started shooting with about 32 pages and went through them in the first couple of weeks . "

Of the writing / filming process , Crowe added , " Possibly , a lot of the stuff that I have to deal with now in terms of my quote unquote volatility has to do with that experience . Here was a situation where we got to Morocco with a crew of 200 and a cast of a 100 or whatever , and I didn 't have anything to learn . I actually didn 't know what the scenes were gonna be . We had , I think , one American writer working on it , one English writer working on it , and of course a group of producers who were also adding their ideas , and then Ridley himself ; and then , on the occasion where Ridley would say , ' Look , this is the structure for it -- what are you gonna say in that ? ' So then I 'd be doing my own stuff , as well . And this is how things like , ' Strength and honor , ' came up . This is how things like , ' At my signal , unleash hell , ' came up . The name Maximus Decimus Meridius , it just flowed well . "

== Pre @-@ production ==

In preparation for filming , Scott spent several months developing storyboards to develop the framework of the plot . Over six weeks , production members scouted various locations within the extent of the Roman Empire before its collapse , including Italy , France , North Africa , and England . All of the film 's props , sets , and costumes were manufactured by crew members due to high costs and unavailability of the items . One hundred suits of steel armour and 550 suits in polyurethane were made by Rod Vass and his company Armordillo . The unique sprayed @-@ polyurethane system was developed by Armordillo and pioneered for this production . Over a three @-@ month period , 27 @,@ 500 component pieces of armor were made .

== Filming ==

The film was shot in three main locations between January and May 1999 . The opening battle scenes in the forests of Germania were shot in three weeks in the Bourne Woods , near Farnham , Surrey in England . When Scott learned that the Forestry Commission planned to remove a section of the forest , he convinced them to allow the battle scene to be shot there and burn it down . Scott and cinematographer John Mathieson used multiple cameras filming at various frame rates and a 45 @-@ degree shutter , creating stop motion effects in the action sequences , similar to techniques used for the battle sequences of Saving Private Ryan ( 1998 ) . Subsequently , the scenes of slavery , desert travel , and gladiatorial training school were shot in Ouarzazate , Morocco just south of the Atlas Mountains over a further three weeks . To construct the arena where Maximus has his first fights , the crew used basic materials and local building techniques to manufacture the 30 @,@ 000 @-@ seat mud brick arena . Finally , the scenes of Ancient Rome were shot over a period of nineteen weeks in Fort Ricasoli , Malta .

In Malta , a replica of about one @-@ third of Rome 's Colosseum was built , to a height of 52 feet ( 15 @.@ 8 meters ) , mostly from plaster and plywood ( the other two @-@ thirds and remaining height were added digitally ) . The replica took several months to build and cost an estimated \$ 1 million . The reverse side of the complex supplied a rich assortment of Ancient Roman street furniture , colonnades , gates , statuary , and marketplaces for other filming requirements . The complex was serviced by tented " costume villages " that had changing rooms , storage , armorers , and other facilities . The rest of the Colosseum was created in computer @-@ generated imagery using set @-@ design blueprints and textures referenced from live action , and rendered in three layers to provide lighting flexibility for compositing in Flame and Inferno software .

== Post @-@ production ==

British post-production company The Mill was responsible for much of the computer-generated imagery effects that were added after filming. The company was responsible for such tricks as compositing real tigers filmed on bluescreen into the fight sequences, and adding smoke trails and extending the flight paths of the opening scene's salvo of flaming arrows to get around regulations on how far they could be shot during filming. They also used 2,000 live actors to create a computer-generated crowd of 35,000 virtual actors that had to look believable and react to fight scenes. The Mill accomplished this by shooting live actors at different angles giving various performances, and then mapping them onto cards, with motion capture tools used to track their movements for three-dimensional compositing. The Mill created over 90 visual effects shots, comprising approximately nine minutes of the film's running time.

An unexpected post-production job was caused by the death of Oliver Reed of a heart attack during the filming in Malta, before all his scenes had been shot. The Mill created a digital body double for the remaining scenes involving his character Proximo by photographing a live action body double in the shadows and by mapping a three-dimensional computer-generated imagery mask of Reed's face to the remaining scenes during production at an estimated cost of \$3.2 million for two minutes of additional footage. Visual effects supervisor John Nelson reflected on the decision to include the additional footage: "What we did was small compared to our other tasks on the film. What Oliver did was much greater. He gave an inspiring, moving performance. All we did was help him finish it." The film is dedicated to Reed's memory.

= = Historical authenticity = =

= = = Development = = =

The film is loosely based on real events that occurred within the Roman Empire in the latter half of the 2nd Century AD. As Ridley Scott wanted to portray Roman culture more accurately than in any previous film, he hired several historians as advisors. Nevertheless, some deviations from historical fact were made to increase interest, maintain narrative continuity, and for practical or safety reasons. Scott also stated that due to the influence of previous films affecting the public perception of what ancient Rome was like, some historical facts were "too unbelievable" to include. For instance in an early version of the script, gladiators would have been carrying out product endorsements in the arena; while this would have been historically accurate, it was not filmed for fear that audiences would think it anachronistic.

At least one historical advisor resigned due to these changes. Another asked not to be mentioned in the credits (though it was stated in the director's commentary that he constantly asked, "where is the proof that certain things were exactly like they say?"). Historian Allen Ward of the University of Connecticut believed that historical accuracy would not have made *Gladiator* less interesting or exciting because "creative artists need to be granted some poetic license, but that should not be a permit for the wholesale disregard of facts in historical fiction".

= = = Fictionalization = = =

Marcus Aurelius died at Vindobona (a Roman camp on the site of modern-day Vienna in Austria) in 180 AD; he was not murdered by his son Commodus following the final battle of the Marcomannic Wars. In reality Marcus Aurelius gave succession to his immoral son. In doing so the great philosopher emperor ended the beneficent tradition of previous Adoptive Emperors.

The character of Maximus is fictional, although in some respects he resembles the historical figures Narcissus (Commodus's real-life murderer and the character's name in the first draft of the screenplay), Spartacus (who led a significant slave revolt), Cincinnatus (a farmer who became dictator, saved Rome from invasion, then resigned his six-month appointment after 15 days), and Marcus Nonius Macrinus (a trusted general, Consul in 154 AD, and friend of Marcus Aurelius). Although Commodus engaged in show combat in the Colosseum, he was not

killed in the arena ; he was strangled in his bath by the wrestler Narcissus . Commodus reigned for over twelve years , unlike the shorter period portrayed in the film .

The character of Maximus had a similar career ( and personality traits as documented by Herodian ) to Claudius Pompeianus ( a Syrian ) who married Marcus Aurelius ' daughter Lucilla following the death of Lucius Verus . It is believed Aurelius may have wanted Pompeianus to succeed him as Caesar in preference to Commodus but was turned down . Pompeianus had no part in any of the many plots against Commodus . He was not depicted in the film .

In the film the character Antonius Proximo claims " the wise " Marcus Aurelius banned gladiatorial games in Rome forcing him to move to Mauretania . The real Marcus did ban the games but only in Antioch as punishment for the city 's support of the usurper Avidius Cassius . No games were ever banned in Rome . However , when the Emperor started conscripting gladiators into the legions , the resulting shortage in fighters allowed lanistae such as Proximo to make " windfall " profits through increased charges for their services .

In real life , the death of Commodus did not result in a peace for Rome , nor a return to the Roman Republic . Rather , it ushered in a chaotic and bloody power struggle that culminated in the Year of the Five Emperors of AD 193 .

= = = Anachronisms = = =

Costumes within the film are almost never completely historically correct . Some of the soldiers wear fantasy helmets . The bands wrapped around their lower arms were rarely ever worn . Their appearance is the product of historical movies always depicting peoples of antiquity wearing such bands . Although the film is set within the 2nd century AD , the Imperial Gallic armor and the helmets worn by the legionaries are from AD 75 , a century earlier . This was superseded by new designs in AD 100 . Likewise the Legions ' standard bearers ( Aquilifer ) , centurions , mounted forces , and auxiliaries would have worn scale armour : Lorica squamata . The Germanic tribes are dressed in clothes from the stone @-@ age period .

The Roman cavalry are shown attacking using stirrups . This is anachronistic in that the horse @-@ mounted forces of the Roman army used a two @-@ horned saddle . Stirrups were only employed for safety reasons because of the additional training and skill required to ride with a Roman saddle . Catapults and ballistae would not have been used in a forest . They were reserved primarily for sieges and were rarely used in open battles .

The Praetorian Guards seen in the film are all wearing black uniforms . No historical evidence supports that . On Campaign they usually wore standard legionary equipment albeit with some unique decorative elements .

In the bird 's eye view of Rome when the city is introduced for the first time there are several buildings that did not exist at the time of Gladiator . For example , the Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine is quite prominent ; however , it was not completed until AD 312 .

= = Influences = =

The film 's plot was influenced by two 1960s Hollywood films of the sword @-@ and @-@ sandal genre , The Fall of the Roman Empire and Spartacus , and shares several plot points with The Fall of the Roman Empire , which tells the story of Livius , who , like Maximus in Gladiator , is Marcus Aurelius 's intended successor . Livius is in love with Lucilla and seeks to marry her while Maximus , who is happily married , was formerly in love with her . Both films portray the death of Marcus Aurelius as an assassination . In Fall of the Roman Empire a group of conspirators independent of Commodus , hoping to profit from Commodus 's accession , arrange for Marcus Aurelius to be poisoned ; in Gladiator Commodus himself murders his father by smothering him . In the course of Fall of the Roman Empire Commodus unsuccessfully seeks to win Livius over to his vision of empire in contrast to that of his father , but continues to employ him notwithstanding ; in Gladiator , when Commodus fails to secure Maximus 's allegiance , he executes Maximus 's wife and son and tries unsuccessfully to execute him . Livius in Fall of the Roman Empire and Maximus in Gladiator kill

Commodus in single combat , Livius to save Lucilla and Maximus to avenge the murder of his wife and son , and both do it for the greater good of Rome .

Scott cited Spartacus and Ben @-@ Hur as influences on the film : " These movies were part of my cinema @-@ going youth . But at the dawn of the new millennium , I thought this might be the ideal time to revisit what may have been the most important period of the last two thousand years ? if not all recorded history ? the apex and beginning of the decline of the greatest military and political power the world has ever known . "

Spartacus provides the film 's gladiatorial motif , as well as the character of Senator Gracchus , a fictitious senator ( bearing the name of a pair of revolutionary Tribunes from the 2nd century BC ) who in both films is an elder statesman of ancient Rome attempting to preserve the ancient rights of the Roman Senate in the face of an ambitious autocrat ? Marcus Licinius Crassus in Spartacus and Commodus in Gladiator . Both actors who played Gracchus ( in Spartacus and Gladiator ) , played Claudius in previous films ? Charles Laughton of Spartacus played Claudius in the unfinished 1937 film I , Claudius and Sir Derek Jacobi of Gladiator , played Claudius in the 1976 BBC adaptation . Both films also share a specific set piece , wherein a gladiator ( Maximus here , Woody Strode 's Draba in Spartacus ) throws his weapon into a spectator box at the end of a match , as well as at least one line of dialogue : " Rome is the mob " , said here by Gracchus and by Julius Caesar ( John Gavin ) in Spartacus .

The film 's depiction of Commodus 's entry into Rome borrows imagery from Leni Riefenstahl 's Nazi propaganda film Triumph of the Will ( 1935 ) , although Scott has pointed out that the iconography of Nazi rallies was itself inspired by the Roman Empire . Gladiator reflects back on the film by duplicating similar events that occurred in Adolf Hitler 's procession . The Nazi film opens with an aerial view of Hitler arriving in a plane , while Scott shows an aerial view of Rome , quickly followed by a shot of the large crowd of people watching Commodus pass them in a procession with his chariot . The first thing to appear in Triumph of the Will is a Nazi eagle , which is alluded to when a statue of an eagle sits atop one of the arches ( and then is shortly followed by several more decorative eagles throughout the rest of the scene ) leading up to the procession of Commodus . At one point in the Nazi film , a little girl gives flowers to Hitler , while Commodus is met by several girls who all give him bundles of flowers .

= = Music = =

The Oscar @-@ nominated score was composed by Hans Zimmer and Lisa Gerrard , and conducted by Gavin Greenaway . Zimmer was originally planning to use Israeli vocalist Ofra Haza for the score , after his work with her in The Prince of Egypt . However , Ofra died in her early 40s in late February 2000 , before she was able to record , and so Gerrard was chosen instead . Lisa Gerrard 's vocals are similar to her own work on The Insider score . The music for many of the battle scenes has been noted as similar to Gustav Holst 's " Mars : The Bringer of War " , and in June 2006 , the Holst Foundation sued Hans Zimmer for allegedly copying the late Holst 's work . Another close musical resemblance occurs in the scene of Commodus 's triumphal entry into Rome , accompanied by music clearly evocative of two sections ? the Prelude to Das Rheingold and Siegfried 's Funeral March from Götterdämmerung ? from Richard Wagner 's Ring of the Nibelung . On February 27 , 2001 , nearly a year after the first soundtrack 's release , Decca produced Gladiator : More Music From the Motion Picture . Then , on September 5 , 2005 , Decca produced Gladiator : Special Anniversary Edition , a two @-@ CD pack containing both the above @-@ mentioned releases . Some of the music from the film was featured in the NFL playoffs in January 2003 before commercial breaks and before and after half @-@ time . In 2003 , Luciano Pavarotti released a recording of himself singing a song from the film and said he regretted turning down an offer to perform on the soundtrack .

= = Reception = =

Gladiator received generally positive reviews , with 76 % of the critics polled by Rotten Tomatoes

giving it favorable reviews , with an averaged score of 7 @. @ 2 out of 10 . At the website Metacritic , which employs a normalized rating system , the film earned a favorable rating of 64 / 100 based on 37 reviews by mainstream critics . The Battle of Germania was cited by CNN as one of their " favorite on @-@ screen battle scenes " , while Entertainment Weekly named Maximus as their sixth favorite action hero , because of " Crowe 's steely , soulful performance " , and named it as their third favorite revenge film . In December 2000 , Gladiator was named the best film of the year by viewers of Film 2000 , taking 40 % of the votes . In 2002 , a Channel 4 ( UK TV ) poll named it as the sixth greatest film of all time . Entertainment Weekly put it on its end @-@ of @-@ the @-@ decade , " best @-@ of " list , saying , " Are you not entertained ? " .

It was not without its deriders . Roger Ebert gave the film 2 out of 4 stars , and criticized the look of the film as " muddy , fuzzy , and indistinct . " He also derided the writing , claiming it " employs depression as a substitute for personality , and believes that if characters are bitter and morose enough , we won 't notice how dull they are . " Camille Paglia called the film " boring , badly shot and suffused with sentimental p.c. rubbish . "

The film earned US \$ 34 @. @ 83 million on its opening weekend at 2 @, @ 938 U.S. theaters . Within two weeks , the film 's box office gross surpassed its US \$ 103 million budget . The film continued on to become one of the highest earning films of 2000 and made a worldwide box office gross of US \$ 457 @, @ 640 @, @ 427 , with over US \$ 187 million in American theaters and more than the equivalent of US \$ 269 million in non @-@ US markets .

= = = Accolades = = =

Gladiator was nominated in 36 individual ceremonies , including the 73rd Academy Awards , the BAFTA Awards , and the Golden Globe Awards . Of 119 award nominations , the film won 48 prizes .

The film won five Academy Awards and was nominated for an additional seven , including Best Original Screenplay , Best Supporting Actor for Joaquin Phoenix and Best Director for Ridley Scott . It was the first movie to win Best Picture without winning either a directing or screenwriting award since All the King 's Men at the 22nd Academy Awards in 1950 . In 2003 , Chicago became another Best Picture winner which didn 't win an Academy Award in either of these two major categories . Due to Academy rules , only Hans Zimmer was officially nominated for Best Music , Original Score , and not to Lisa Gerrard at the time . However , the pair did win the Golden Globe Award for Best Original Score as co @-@ composers .

73rd Academy AwardsBest Picture

Best Actor in a Leading Role ( Russell Crowe )

Best Visual Effects

Best Costume Design

Best Sound Mixing ( Bob Beemer , Scott Millan and Ken Weston )

BAFTA Awards

Best Cinematography

Best Editing

Best Film

Best Production Design

58th Golden Globe Awards

Best Motion Picture ? Drama

Best Original Score ? Motion Picture

American Film Institute Lists

AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Heroes and Villains :

General Maximus Decimus Meridius ? # 50 Hero

AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Movie Quotes :

" Father to a murdered son . Husband to a murdered wife . And I will have my vengeance , in this life or the next . " ? Nominated

AFI 's 100 Years of Film Scores ? Nominated



AFI's 100 Years ... 100 Cheers ? Nominated

AFI's 100 Years ... 100 Movies ( 10th Anniversary Edition ) ? Nominated

AFI's 10 Top 10 ? Nominated Epic Film

= = Impact = =

The film's mainstream success is responsible for an increased interest in Roman and classical history in the United States . According to The New York Times , this has been dubbed the " Gladiator Effect " .

It's called the ' Gladiator ' effect by writers and publishers . The snob in us likes to believe that it is always books that spin off movies . Yet in this case , it's the movies ? most recently Gladiator two years ago ? that have created the interest in the ancients . And not for more Roman screen colossals , but for writing that is serious or fun or both . "

The Cicero biography Cicero : The Life and Times of Rome's Greatest Politician and Gregory Hays's translation of Marcus Aurelius's Meditations received large spikes in sales after the release of the film . The film also began a revival of the historical epic genre with films such as Troy , The Alamo , King Arthur , Alexander , 300 , Kingdom of Heaven and Robin Hood ( the last two were also directed by Scott ) . The character of Maximus was placed 12th in the Total Film list of 50 best movie heroes and villains and 35th in the Empire's 100 Greatest Movie Characters . Maximus is also featured on 55c " Australian Legends " postage stamp series . Russell Crowe attended a ceremony to mark the creation of the stamps .

= = Home media = =

The film was first released on DVD on November 21 , 2000 , and has since been released in several different extended and special edition versions . Special features for the Blu-ray Disc and DVDs include deleted scenes , trailers , documentaries , commentaries , storyboards , image galleries , Easter eggs , and cast auditions . The film was released on Blu-ray in September 2009 , in a 2-disc edition containing both the theatrical and extended cuts of the film , as part of Paramount's " Sapphire Series " ( Paramount bought the DreamWorks library in 2006 ) . Initial reviews of the Blu-ray Disc release criticized poor image quality , leading many to call for it to be remastered , as Sony did with The Fifth Element in 2007 . A remastered version was later released in 2010 .

The DVD editions that have been released since the original two-disc version , include a film only single-disc edition as well as a three-disc " extended edition " DVD which was released in August 2005 . The extended edition DVD features approximately fifteen minutes of additional scenes , most of which appear in the previous release as deleted scenes . The original cut , which Scott still calls his director's cut , is also selectable via seamless branching ( which is not included on the UK edition ) . The DVD is also notable for having a new commentary track featuring director Scott and star Crowe . The film is on the first disc , the second one has a three-hour documentary into the making of the film by DVD producer Charles de Lauzirika , and the third disc contains supplements . Discs one and two of the three-disc extended edition were also repackaged and sold as a two-disc " special edition " in the EU in 2005 .

= = Cancelled sequel = =

In June 2001 , Douglas Wick said a Gladiator prequel was in development . The following year , Wick , Walter Parkes , David Franzoni , and John Logan switched direction to a sequel set fifteen years later ; the Praetorian Guards rule Rome and an older Lucius is trying to learn who his real father was . However , Russell Crowe was interested in resurrecting Maximus , and further researched Roman beliefs about the afterlife to accomplish this . Ridley Scott expressed interest , although he admitted the project would have to be retitled as it had little to do with gladiators . An easter egg contained on disc 2 of the extended edition / special edition DVD releases includes a

discussion of possible scenarios for a follow @-@ up . This includes a suggestion by Walter F. Parkes that , in order to enable Russell Crowe to return to play Maximus , who dies at the end of the original movie , a sequel could involve a " multi @-@ generational drama about Maximus and the Aureleans and this chapter of Rome " , similar in concept to The Godfather Part II .

In 2006 , Scott stated he and Crowe approached Nick Cave to rewrite the film , but their ideas conflicted with DreamWorks 's idea of a spin @-@ off involving Lucius , whom Scott revealed would turn out to be Maximus 's son with Lucilla . Scott noted that a tale of corruption in Rome was too complex , whereas Gladiator worked due to its simple drive . In 2009 , details of Cave 's ultimately @-@ rejected script surfaced on the internet : the script having Maximus being reincarnated by the Roman gods and returned to Rome to defend Christians against persecution ; then transported to other important periods in history , including World War II , the Vietnam War , and finally being a general in the modern @-@ day Pentagon . This script for a sequel , however , was rejected as being too far @-@ fetched , and not in keeping with the spirit and theme of the original film .