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Science News

Ancient statue that of female gladiator?

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The newly identified bronze statue reveals what may be a female gladiator standing in a victory pose, while looking down at what is presumably her fallen opponent. Credit: Alfonso Manas, University of Granada

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HAMBURG, Germany, April 17 (UPI) -- A 2,000-

may be that of a female gladiator, and a victorious one at that, researchers suggest.

If true, the statue would constitute only the second visual depiction of a female gladiator known to exist, scientists at the University of Granada in Spain said.

The statue in a Hamburg museum depicts a topless woman, wearing only a loincloth and holding aloft what researcher Alfonso Manas said he believes is a sica, a short curved sword of a type used by gladiators.

The gesture with the sword is a "salute to the people, to the crowd," Manas said, as done by gladiators who have been victorious in a fight.

The "precise real-life" details of the statue suggest the depiction is of an actual person, a real woman who fought, Manas told LiveScience, although where the statue was discovered is not known.

Females gladiators were banned by Emperor Septimius Severus in A.D. 200 A.D. with only about a

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dozen references to them found in surviving ancient writings, researchers said.

The only other known depiction of female gladiators is a carved relief from the site of Halicarnassus, now in the British Museum, that shows a pair of them fighting, they said.

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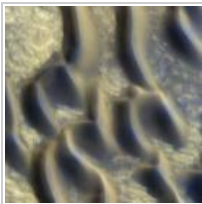
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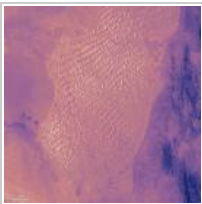
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