

Ruins of ancient arena discovered outside Rome

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British archaeologists work at the discovered ruins of an arena built early in the third century BC outside Ostia, the ancient imperial port 25 kilometres (16 miles) from Rome.

British archaeologists have discovered the ruins of an arena built early in the third century BC outside Ostia, the ancient imperial port 25 kilometres (16 miles) from Rome, the team leader said Friday.

"Gladiators and wild animals may have fought in this place, but it also may have been used for important meetings, or, because of its proximity to the sea, to stage historical naval battle scenes," Simon Keay told AFP.

Since the small arena, measuring some 1,600 square metres (17,000 square feet), was next to the imperial procurator's palace, "we think it was intended mainly for private use," Keay said.

"More research will be needed to determine its use and the height of the amphitheatre -- which will give us a better understanding of the functioning of the entire port," he added.

The ruins were uncovered in three years of digging by the British team from Southampton and Cambridge Universities in cooperation with the British School at [Rome](#), an archaeological academy.

Italian archaeologist Rodolfo Lanciani determined the approximate location of the site in 1868, but more systematic research finally led to its discovery 140 years later.

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