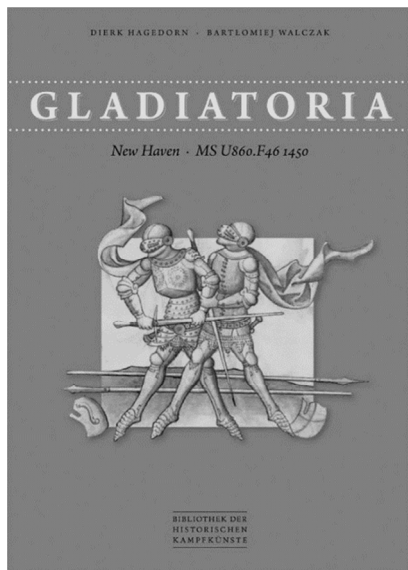


**Hagedorn, Dierk and Walczak, Bartłomiej:
*GLADIATORIA.***

New Haven MS U860.F46 1450

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Reviewed by Szabolcs Waldmann



This book offers an edition and the reproduction of the newly re-surfaced Ms U860.F46 1450, thought to be lost member of the so-called Gladiatoria-Group; a manuscript that deals with fencing in harness with different weapons in the first part of the fifteenth century. It should be noted that the two authors of the book itself are independent scholars and fight interpreters, members of the HEMA (Historical European Martial Arts) community, and have been working with the Gladiatoria since the early 2000s.

The volume is bi-lingual, German and English, throughout. We find both a foreword and a preface, from two noted authors. The first is from Dr. Hans-Peter Hils, who is a reknown expert in the field with his 1985 dissertation and his papers, including the 1987 paper

dedicated to the Gladiatoria group where he described the MS U860.F46 1450 as lost. The second was written by Dr. Sydney Anglo, expert in the field of Renaissance Martial Arts with his 2000 monograph and his numerous articles.

The first part of the volume is devoted to introducing the context and the whole Gladiatoria-Group (p.35 – 93), providing the reader with key information about the genre, the arms and armours and the specificities of this group of manuscripts. It includes two essays from B. Walczak, on Fight Books (p.35–50) and on the Gladiatoria-Group (p.51–66); two essays from D. Hagedorn, on arms and armour (p. 67–116) and on the history of conservation of the manuscript – its disassembling and selling as separate leafs and its journey to be whole again – (p.133–172) and an essay by Daniel Jaquet, researcher of historical harness fighting, and at the time of this review, the chairman of the International Federation of Historical European Martial Arts (IFHEMA). The later deals with the experiments of armoured fighting (p.117 – 132).

The tables and plates range from page 173 to 197, and show concordance between the different witnesses of the Gladiatoria-group as well as comparisons with contemporary artworks and depictions of armour and weapons.

The main part is the edition of the manuscript (p.197 – 371). The reader is presented with a colour reprint of the original leafs, a transcription, transliteration to modern German and translation to English, with a well-documented critical apparatus, including interpretation notes for difficult passages.

The book ends with a glossary in modern German (p.373 – p377) as well as a Bibliography (p.380 – 391) which in itself is a worthy up to date compilation of primary sources and secondary literature, including online references.

As the fourth volume in the collection “*Bibliothek der historischen Kampfkünste*”, its main strength relies on the accessibility to the previously unedited source, accompanied with helpful contributions to the context, in a very good layout. And since the authors have been working with manuscripts of the Gladiatoria-group before, have presented articles and held trainings at international HEMA-events, the transcription and translation show their basic understanding of the techniques in question. The book deserves a place on the shelf for any serious students of the historical European martial arts.