

## FIRING INSULTS: ROMAN BULLETS



One of the most effective weapons used by the Roman army was the sling bullet (or slingshot). Romans slings were made from a length of rope with a small cradle to hold the bullet. The sling was swung around to generate speed, and the bullet was fired when one end of the rope was released.

A soldier who specialized in this type of missile was called a *funditor*. *Funditores* were lightly armed so that they could move quickly around the battlefield, and they carried their sling bullets in front of them in the folds of their cloaks.

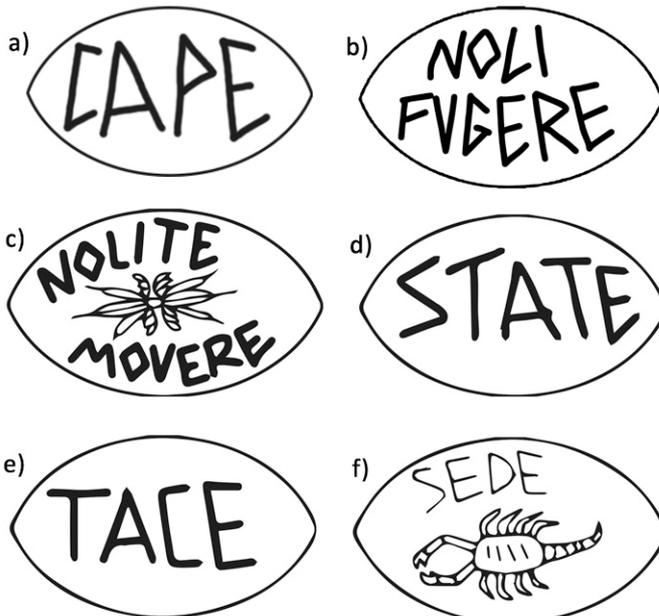
Roman sling bullets were roughly the same weight as a modern golf ball, but were lemon-shaped. A good *funditor* could fire his slingshot several hundred metres.

### Bullies with Bullets

Sometimes Roman soldiers wrote messages for the enemy on their sling bullets. They did this by scratching letters backwards inside the hollow moulds which were filled with clay or lead. When the bullets were turned out of the moulds, the messages could be read the right way around. As you'd expect, the messages weren't usually very polite, but they could be quite funny.

#### Exercise 1:

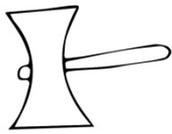
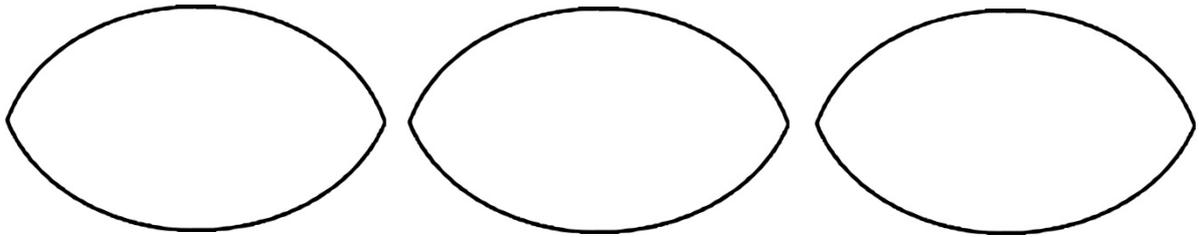
What do these sling bullets tell the enemy to do?



- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_
- f) \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 2:**

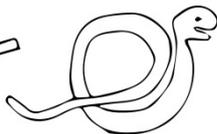
Design your own sling bullets, using the words you have learned and an authentic Roman design.



AXE



SPEAR TIP



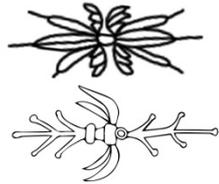
SNAKE



BEE



SCORPION



THUNDERBOLT