

Roman Jobs and Roman Gods



The Ashmolean
Latin Inscriptions Project
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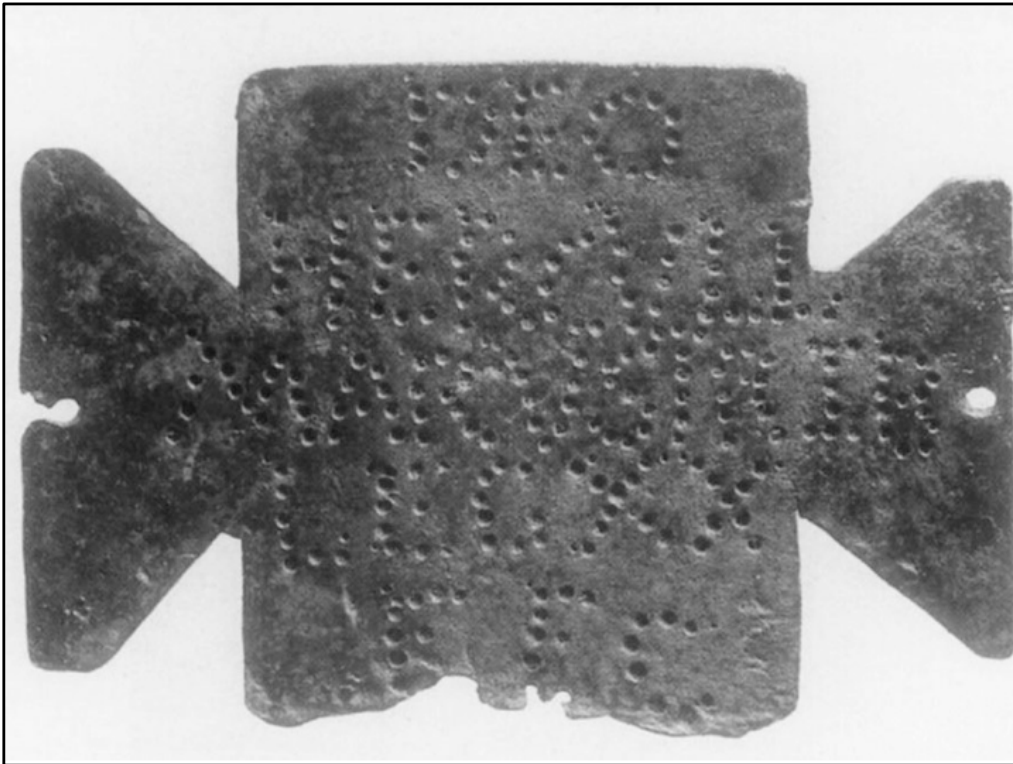
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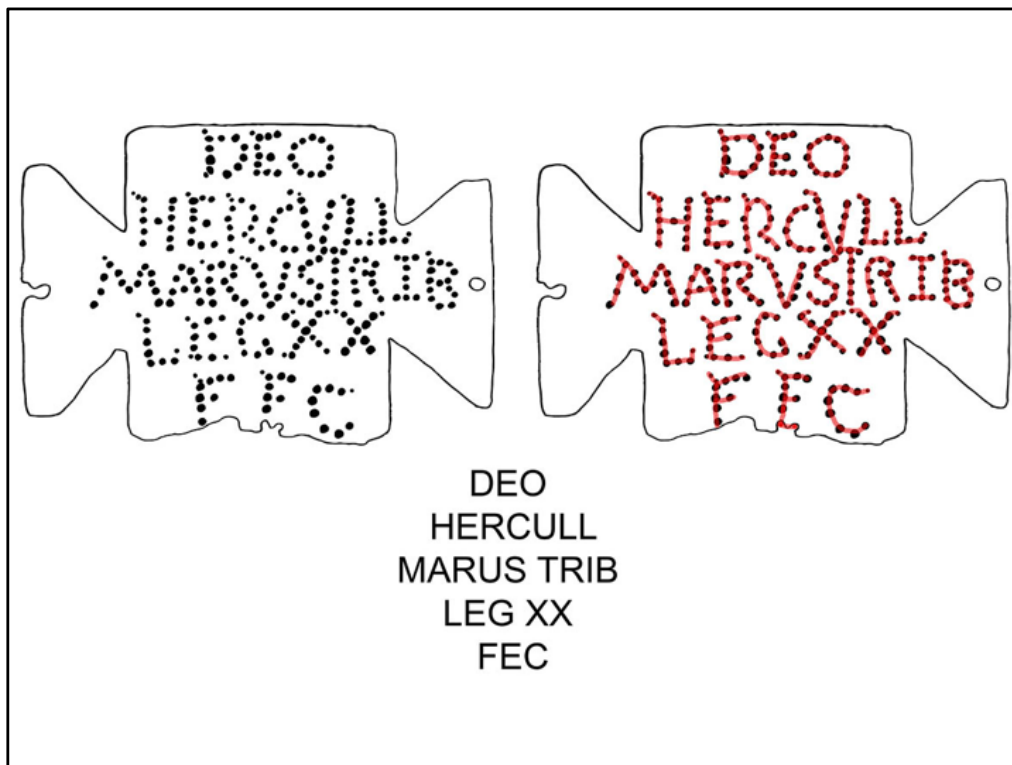


Lots of Romans made dedications to the gods. Romans would make promises to the gods or give them gifts and expect help in return. Bits of writing could be left in the temple to remind the god to keep their end of the bargain and show off to other people who visited.

These letters are from a shrine in Woodeaton, North East of Oxford. Sadly some letters are lost and others are jumbled and broken and we can't read what they said.



This is an object from the Ashmolean. It is a piece of writing made with little dots.
Can you pick out any letters?



This is clearer. It is written in Latin: the language the Romans spoke. It means:
To the god Hercules, Marus Tribune of the 20th Legion made this.

Can you see where it says Hercules? Marus has spelled Hercules' name wrong
(HERCULL instead of HERCULI)

Hercules is best known as a hero, but he became a god at the end of his adventures.
What do you know about Hercules? Why would he be a good god to help a soldier?



This is Jupiter who was the king of the Roman gods. Can you spot his eagle?

Romans had many gods. The gods all had things they were in charge of. Romans could pick the god who could help them with their problem.

We're going to look at some evidence for Roman jobs and pick gods to help with them.



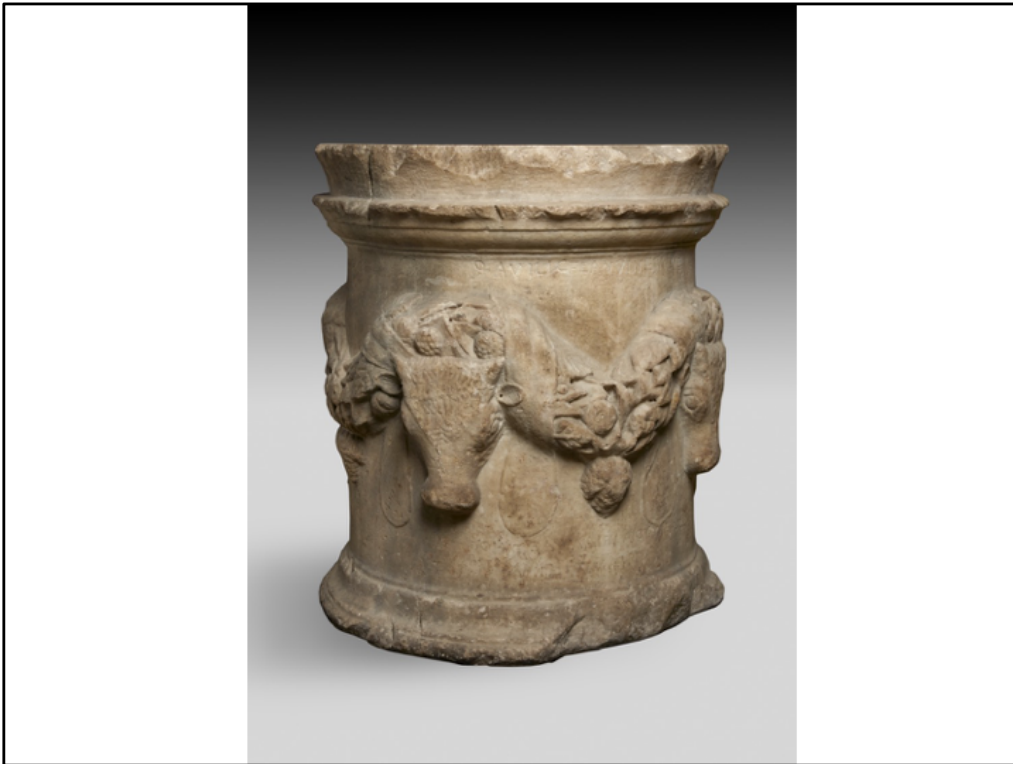
This glass bowl has a hunter on it. Can you see his dogs? Can you see what they are hunting? (a rabbit) What are they chasing the rabbit into? (a net – bottom right)

Which god was in charge of hunting? (Diana)



Women with a flair for the dramatic could be professional mourners. They were paid to go to rich people's funerals and act very sad. They would wail and tear at their hair and clothes.

Which god might help Romans who worked in funerals? (Pluto)



This altar was made for a merchant who traded in Delos. He spoke both Latin and Greek. He needed to travel for his work.

Which god would Romans have prayed to for help with travel? (Mercury or perhaps Neptune if it was by sea)



Lots of Romans had jobs making things. This is a piece of brick for building houses. The stamp tells us who made it.

This brick is a bit unusual because both the person who owned the factory and the person contracted to run the factory were both women. The owner was Plotina Augusta – the widow of the emperor Trajan. The manager was called Valeria Nice. Neither made the brick themselves. They were successful businesswomen.

Who might Roman women have prayed to for help with leadership? (Juno)



This set of pan pipes were found in Oxfordshire. Would have been played by a Roman musician.

Which was the god of music? (Apollo)