

Latin Inscriptions at the Ashmolean

- Roman objects with Latin Inscriptions are on display in Gallery 13: Rome, Gallery 6: Reading and Writing and Gallery 21: Greek and Roman Sculpture.
- These objects give us glimpses into the lives of Romans people throughout the empire and show how the Romans commemorated their dead.
- Most of these objects are made from carved marble and other stones.
- Gallery displays cover the following themes; moving around the Roman Empire; Roman Religion; gods and goddesses; decorating a Roman home; drinking and dining; Roman Oxfordshire ; countryside, farming; the Roman army; Roman sculpture; Italy before Rome and Roman coins.

Other galleries containing Roman objects

Gallery 21: Greek and Roman sculpture

Gallery 14: Cast Gallery

Gallery 7: Money

Gallery 6: Reading and Writing

Gallery 15: Italy before Rome

Gallery 21: Greek and Roman Sculpture

1. Funerary altar for Quintus Avilius from Delos, 1st Century BC



This altar was found on the Greek Island of Delos. It commemorates a merchant, Quintus Avilius, son of Gaius, and is written on in both ancient Greek and Latin. He probably worked and socialised in both languages.

ANChandler.3.7

Gallery 21: Greek and Roman Sculpture

2. Tomb stone for a household from Rome (?), 1st century AD



This tomb stone is for a Roman freedman along with his wife, a friend and their household, including their descendants. The names decrease in size, with the leader of the household (Sestius Sotericus) largest. It praises his wife for never causing him sadness. ANChandler.3.21

Gallery 21: Greek and Roman Sculpture

3. Epitaph of Valerius Paternus from Rome, AD c.100-150



Valerius Paternus was a soldier in the Roman army in Britain. He was a 'speculator', which involved delivering messages and enforcing the law. He was also a "frumentarius" which was a role associated with finding food for the army, but was more like an intelligence officer by the second century AD. ANChandler.3.34

Gallery 21: Greek and Roman Sculpture

4. Ash chest for a freedwoman Phlegusa, from Rome, 2nd-3rd century AD

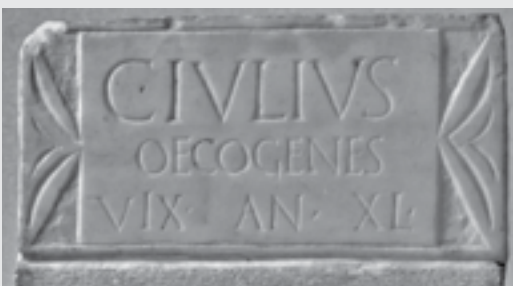


This decorated marble container would have held the cremated remains of Phlegusa. She had been a slave owned by the emperor but was freed by the time she died.

ANChandler.3.78

Gallery 6: Reading and Writing

5. Plaque for Iulius Oecogenes

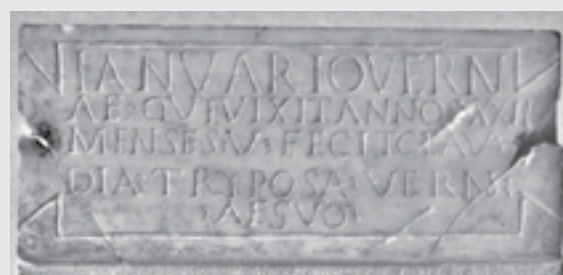


Iulius Oecogenes lived for 40 years, according to this columbarium plaque. Older Romans do not seem to have kept count of their ages very carefully. Most older people's grave stones, like this one, give the age in round numbers.

ANChandler.3.109

Gallery 6: Reading and Writing

6. Columbarium plaque for Lanuarius



This would have been a label for a niche in a shared tomb called a "Columbarium". It commemorates a slave called Lanuarius. It was rare for masters to set up memorials for dead slaves. Lanuarius grew up as a slave and his owner may have known him since he was a child.

ANChandler.3.122

Gallery 6: Reading and Writing

7. Ash chest of Tiberius Claudius Abascantianus



This ash chest was for a 22-year-old man who died in Narbo (modern Narbonne in the South of France) but was buried in Rome. Both the eagles and the men's heads with ram's horns are symbols associated with the god Jupiter.

ANLoan.88

Gallery 6: Reading and Writing

8. "Mensa Sepulchralis" for Livia Casta



This stone would have been placed over a burial of ashes. The shape of a cup is carved into it and could have been filled with offerings of liquid which would have drained into the burial through the holes. ANChandler.3.45

Gallery 13: Rome

9. Altar of Marcius Patacus from Rome, 2nd century AD



This carved stone altar was set up by a mother to commemorate her son who died at the age of 15 years, 9 months, 9 days. There is an indentation on the top where offerings could be made. It shows the myth of Hercules as he matures from a baby to a man through the scenes on the altar.

ANMichaelis 202

Gallery 13: Rome

10. Funeral relief for Macrinus Maximus, unknown provenance, 3rd century AD



A grave stone for a child described as 'sweetest son who lived for one year and (?) months'. The inscription states that Macrinus Maximinus organised (and as) prefect of the camp constructed this'. AN.1947-285

Lines of enquiry: Classics

- Death and burial in the Roman Empire
- Family relationships including the roles of men, women and children.
- Home and domestic life; eating and drinking, recreation and leisure.
- God and goddesses; sanctuaries, temples, sacrifice and worship in the home.
- The archaeology of Roman Britain.
- Roman countryside and farming.
- The continuing influence of Roman Britain: similarities and differences between Roman Britain and Britain today.
- Citizenship: freedmen and slaves.



Urn of Cornelia Thalia, Rome, about AD50-70. The urn is decorated as a miniature shrine. The Latin text is dedicated to the departed spirits of the deceased women, whose cremated remains were kept in it. No image or personal details are given. AN2007.63

Working with objects: key questions

- Who made it?
- Where and when was it made?
- What materials is it made from?
- How was it made?
- What was it used for? How was it used?
- Who used / owned it?
- How might it be interpreted by different people? at different times?

Further resources

The Ashmolean Latin Inscriptions Project:
<http://latininscriptions.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/resources/>

Ashmolean learning resources
www.ashmolean.org/learning-resources

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Cross curricular links

- History: the rise and expansion of the Roman empire and reasons for its decline
- English: Roman literature, key authors, their works and and their legacy today
- Explore Roman art and design: materials, stone carving techniques and decorative designs.

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