Votive offerings

In Roman times, a votive offering would be given to a god or goddess if you required help or advice from them or to say thank you for help you had already received.



There were many reasons you might leave an offering to the gods but a popular one was if you were ill or injured and you wanted help to heal fast. It was common therefore to find votive offerings made in the shape of different parts of the body that needed healing, to remind the gods of your request.

This example from Vindolanda is great. You can see it is clearly a foot and it has only got four toes! It also has a hole at the top where it might have been strung on a cord. So this person with four toes was either asking for healing or thanking the gods for healing them.

Roman Gods of good health



Salus

Roman goddess of hygiene (from the greek goddess hygia).



Asclepius

Roman god of medicine and son of Apollo



Fortuna

Roman goddess of fortune and the personification of luck.

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Make your own votive offering

You will need:

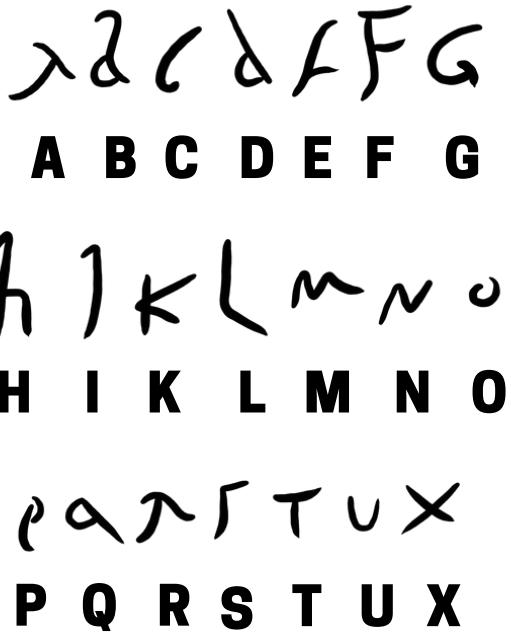
- Plasticine/ air dry clay
- Paper
- Pen

Tip: If you haven't got any plasticine or clay at home you can make homemade plasticine using flour - look up the recipes online.

Method:

Shape your plasticine or clay into the shape of the body part you need healing and then write a prayer to the Roman god of your choice explaining the problem and asking for help. You can try using the Roman cursive alphabet like the Romans living at Vindolanda used.

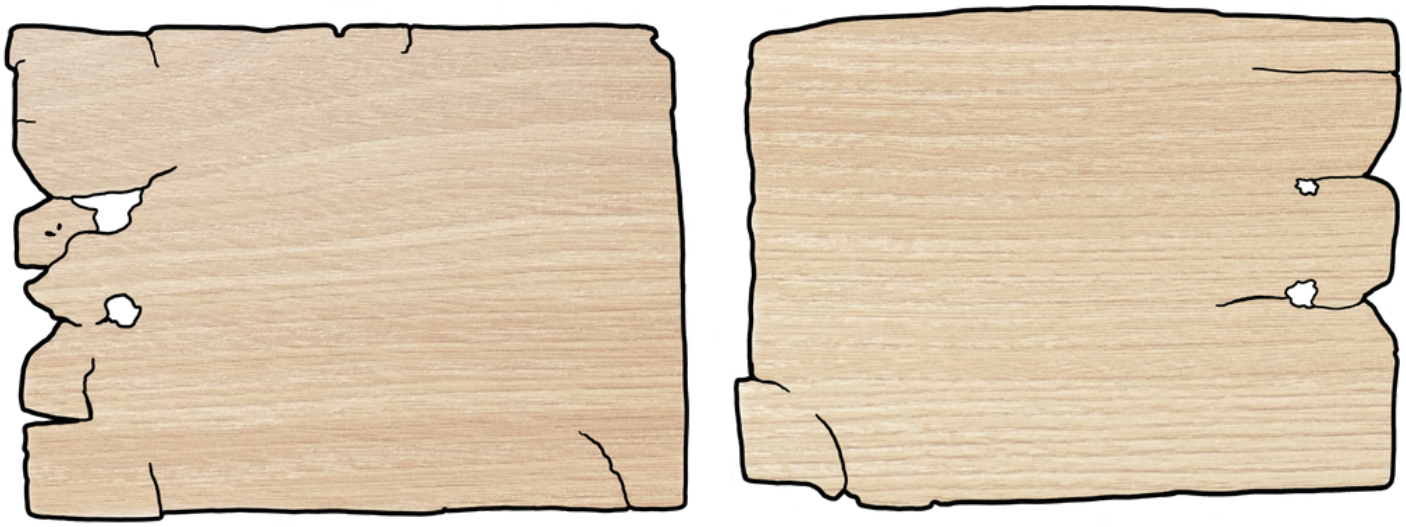
Roman Cursive Alphabet



Some ideas for votives from Roman Vindolanda might be:

- I twisted my ankle on the training march two days ago and it's still sore!
- I hurt my hand doing sword drills with my *gladius* - it's painful and swollen.
- My eyes have been red and puffy since I went to the baths last week.

What might your prayer be write it below!



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