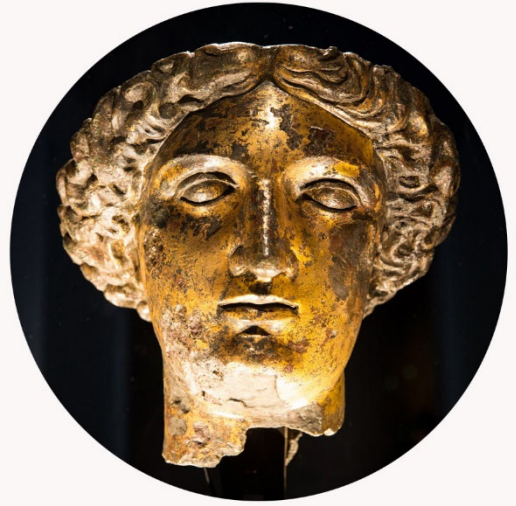


CURSE LIKE A ROMAN!



Statue of the goddess Sulis

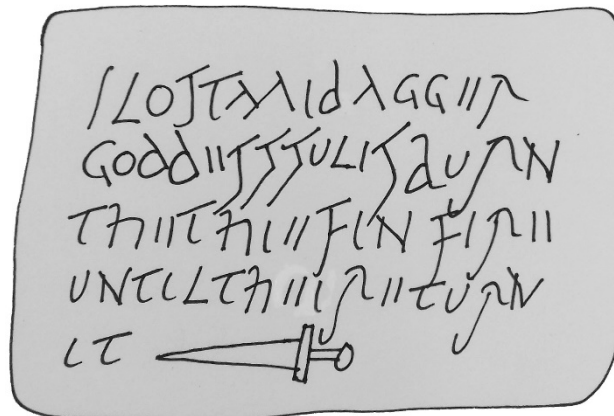
Imagine you were a Roman. What could you do if someone had stolen something from you? There was no police force to help you get back your property.

One way that people could find help was to use a *curse tablet*. This was usually a thin metal sheet on which you could write a message, asking a god/goddess for help in punishing the thief and making sure your property was returned.

When you had finished your curse, you could roll it up and bury it or, even better, throw it into a sacred spring, river or temple where the god or goddess living there could read it. The spring sanctuary at Bath in Somerset, home of the goddess Sulis, was a very popular place to leave curse tablets. The temple of Isis and Magna Mater at Mainz was another.

CAN YOU CRACK THIS CURSE?

Using the key below to help you, try to read this curse, dedicated to Sulis at Bath. It is written in a type of ancient handwriting which we call *Old Roman Cursive*. It's not easy!



λ α ς ϰ ϩ || f g h i l m n o r q ρ ϣ τ υ x
 a b c d e f g h i l m n o p q r s t u x

TRY IT YOURSELF!

Using the curse you've already seen as a guide, try writing your own curse tablet, in any language, using the type of handwriting called *Old Roman Cursive*. You might like to include:

- A description of what you have lost
- The name of the god/goddess you are contacting
- What you would like him/her to do to the thief

If you can't find the letter you want in Old Roman Cursive, don't worry – just choose a letter, or combination of letters, which makes a similar sound. That's what the Romans did, for example when they had to write names from languages such as Gaulish or Iberian!

x	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	x
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	x