LIVE BORDERS
MUSEUMS GALLERIES & ARCHIVES

Ancient Romans

Loan Box

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Introduction to Loan Boxes

LIVE Borders Loan Boxes have been designed to expand people's experience and knowledge of history through object handling. All the objects in this Loan Box are designed to be handled. Fragile and heavy objects are marked accordingly on the Risks/Hazards, page 15 of this Loan Box booklet.

People viewing the Loan Box objects will be very curious about them and where they came from, what they were used for and how were they made. What we do know about the objects contained in this Loan Box is in the Content Information section of this booklet, Pages 4-10. We have also provided prompts for Questions and Activities to aid further learning and understanding of the objects in this guide - pages 11-13.

What to do during a Loan Box session

- All the objects in this Loan Box have been checked and packed securely before being dispatched. Please inform us immediately if objects have been damaged in transit.

- All the objects should be handled with care - the most fragile/heavy have been marked on the Hazards/Risks, page 15 of this booklet.

- Make sure the objects are in a safe, clean environment. Be especially careful of heavy, awkward, and/or fragile objects and supervise/display them accordingly.

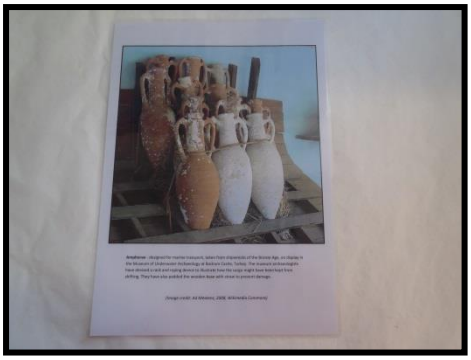
- Handle objects with clean, dry hands, and keep away from potential damage hazards such as water, paint, and pens.

- Encourage handling of the objects for a better understanding of what they are.

Ancient Romans-Content Information

Amphora Fragments





Amphora (plural: Amphorae) were huge jars with pointed ends, usually made of pinkish-cream pottery. They were made to carry wine and had to be placed on a tripod or stacked along a wall to stand upright.

Roman amphorae were wheel-thrown terracotta containers. During the production process, the body was made first and then left to partially dry. Coils of clay were then added to form the neck, rim and handles. Once the amphora was complete, the maker then sealed the interior with resin to stop leakage.

Amphorae often were marked with a variety of stamps and inscriptions. They provided information on the production and content. A stamp usually was applied to the amphora at a partially dry stage showing the name of the *figlina* (workshop) and/or the name of the owner of the workshop. Painted stamps recorded the weight of the container and the contents, and were applied after the amphora was filled.

Samian Ware Fragments



Samian ware was the most common type of good-quality Roman pottery. It would have been used only in rich households or on special occasions. It was made in France and exported all over the Empire. Unlike other pottery, it was given a red colouring and glossy finish. It was often decorated with animals and people or given a repeating design to create a decorative border.

Potters began to mass-produce their designs by using a template as the mold for future bowls.

Tile Fragments



Tiles were used for building and are common at most Roman sites. They were used to make roofs, pillars, and even underfloor central heating. Sometimes they were patterned or marked with an insignia of a Roman legion.

Original tiles were carved from stone but were soon replaced by forming clay and then baking it in a kiln.

Coarse Pottery Fragments



Coarse pottery was used for everyday essential pieces. Although bronze and metal utensils were used in the Roman Empire, coarse pottery was the most inexpensive option.

Home cooks used a variety of earthenware pans, pots, and bowls in their homes. While some bowls and pots were used for general purposes, there were many specialty pieces of cooking pottery in Roman kitchens, such as *mortarium*, shallow bowls that were used in conjunction with a pestle to crush and grind herbs and spices for cooking.

Indented Beaker



This indented beaker is the typical shape of a Roman beaker. It is hand thrown with six indentations in its side, which were pressed in whilst the clay was still soft. The indentations made it easier to grip, especially if it was full of wine. There are six ridges in between the indentations. These were created by rolling and pressing pieces of clay between the finger and thumb until they were flat. They were then stuck onto the beaker after it had been thrown, using slip (a mixture of clay and water) as glue. The ridges added an extra layer of clay between the fingers and the wall of the beaker, enabling it to be carried when it was hot.

Fine Ware Pottery Pot



Roman pottery combined functional and decorative qualities. This pot has some decoration around the rim which would have been influenced by local tastes and therefore a good indicator of where it came from. The Romans were more inclined to score the surface of the clay to make a pattern than paint one using glazes.

Stamps, if present, are the most reliable source of information on the origin of Roman pottery. The stamp would normally be placed on the underside of the pot and give the name of the makers of the pottery.

What Romans Wore - Sandals

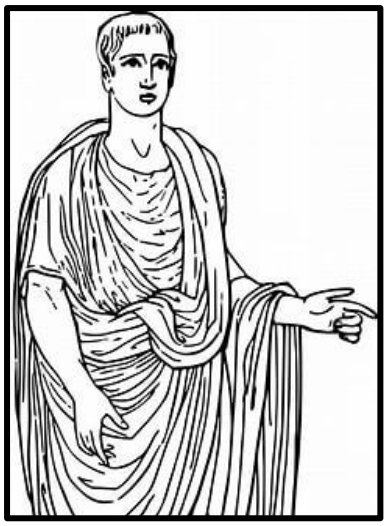


Romans paid special attention to their clothing and wealthy Romans followed the fashion trends of the time. Male citizens of Rome usually wore a distinctive garment called a Toga. Married women wore a different garment called a Stole, although they once wore togas as well before the practice was abandoned. Unmarried girls wore tunics only.

The most commonly used fabric was wool. It provided them with protection against cold weather. Almost all Roman families spun their own woolen fabric in their houses and it was seen as a woman's job. While ordinary women spun themselves, rich women used their slaves for the job.
Romans also imported silk from China and cotton from India for making clothes. It was used by wealthy Romans as it was expensive and rare.

Romans mostly wore footwear made of leather. The colour and style showed the social standing of a person. Senators wore red-coloured shoes.

Toga





Men and boys wore togas and then later tunics, which were slightly larger than a shirt typically worn today. Women and girls also wore tunics; however, these reached their ankles and were tied near the waist.

Togas were roughly semicircular cloth, between 3.7 and 6.1 m in length, which was draped over the shoulders and around the body. It was usually woven from white wool and was worn over a tunic. The type of toga worn reflected a citizen's rank in society.

From a simple, practical garment, togas became more complex and costly, unsuited to anything but ceremonial use as certain laws required togas to be worn by citizens for events like weddings, feasts, or gladiatorial games. Togas were heavy and hard to move in, and so cumbersome that slaves were trained specifically in toga construction.

Togas gradually decreased in popularity until they were worn only by the highest classes for ceremonial occasions, and were generally out of use by 5AD.

Roman Soldier Illustration



All Roman soldiers wore tunics. The exact style of the tunics worn by the Roman army varied according to the century in which the soldiers lived. Generally, the tunic was knee length and depending on the era may have been long or short-sleeved. In the first centuries of the Roman empire, there was a social perception that long sleeves were for women only, so soldiers would have worn short-sleeved garments. Most tunics were made of wool, which could be dyed red or left an off-white colour.

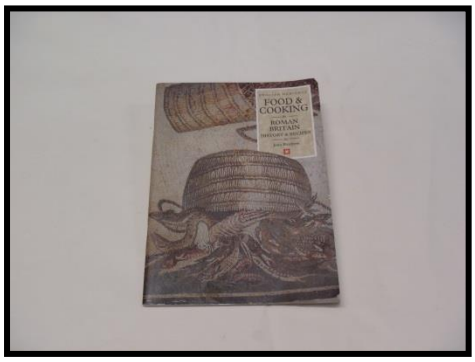
Helmet



Roman helmets were known as *galea* and were an essential part of a soldier's equipment. Early helmets were plain designs made of brass that covered the head. Over time, helmet design changed to protect more of the head and face, with covers for the cheeks and neck being incorporated into the design. The helmets also became more detailed and decorative, with plumes and crests added to display rank or legion.

This example is typical of an Imperial helmet type worn by Roman legionaries.

Everyday life – Eating & Drinking



Traditionally, breakfast was served at dawn. This meal usually consisted of wheat meal porridge, bread, or pancakes eaten with dates and honey.

From mid-day to early afternoon, Romans ate *cena*, the main meal of the day, and at nightfall, a light supper called *Vesperna*. With the increased importation of foreign foods, the *cena* grew larger in size. It gradually shifted to the evening, while the *Vesperna* was abandoned completely. The mid-day meal *prandium* became a light meal to hold them over until *cena*.

An Ancient Roman diet would not be so different from a modern Mediterranean one, consisting of fish, vegetables, fruits, meat, oils, herbs, and spices. For dessert, they ate fruit and honey-sweetened cakes. When hosting a dinner party or celebrating a special occasion, a Roman dinner could consist of as many as six or seven courses.

Romans ate most of their food with their fingers. Sometimes they would use a spoon for a dish like soup, and occasionally a knife to cut their food into smaller pieces.

The Romans did not drink beer, and rarely drank milk. Wine was the main drink of the Roman Empire and was enjoyed by most Romans.
The wine was always watered down and Romans would drink wine mixed with other ingredients as well.

Cooking Pot & Tripod



Portable stoves and ovens were used by the Romans, and some had water pots and grills laid onto them.
They cooked over an open hearth with hanging kettles or in a preheated oven that baked foods as it cooled.

In the country or in wealthy homes, Roman kitchens were an attached room on the back edge of the home. In the cities, Roman commoners usually shared a public kitchen, purchasing bread from bakeries and cooking simple meals over common hearths for later consumption at home.

Game and meat were either boiled in pots or suspended over the fire or on spits.

Cooking Pan



A variety of cooking equipment was available to the serious cook. The frying pan or *Fretale* was made of bronze and usually round or oval in shape. It would have had a small lip for pouring.

These would commonly have been found in rich households with most people using pots made from clay.

Roman Coins



The Romans introduced a uniform currency throughout their empire, meaning that coins that were accepted at Hadrian's Wall would also have been accepted in Rome. Coins were made of three different metals; gold, silver, and brass.
Coins were not just used to buy things. They also carried news such as the building of a great temple in Rome. Most carried a portrait of the emperor to show the people throughout the Empire what their ruler looked like.

Oil Lamp



Oil lamps were one of the most common household items of ancient times. Ceramic lamps like this one were used all over the Mediterranean area from 2000 BC. Candles were also used in Roman times. Archaeologists find fewer lamps in areas like Britain, as the oil required to use them was scarce and expensive to import.

Lamps were used by filling the central hole with oil, and then burning a wick which was placed in the nozzle. The wick was usually made from linen or papyrus. Lamps were designed to be set on flat surfaces or carried by hand using the handle.

Pottery lamps were mass-produced using molds, and although there are some known areas in Roman Britain where lamps were made, many of the lamps would have been imported from areas such as Italy, Gaul (Ancient France), Germany and North Africa.

As well as their everyday use, lamps were often buried in tombs and graves along with pottery, jewellery, and other symbolic gifts. They could also be dedicated as offerings to gods and goddesses in temples and sanctuaries.

Wax Tablets & Styli



Paper was very expensive in the Roman world. Before the technique of making paper from pulp arrived from China, paper was made from papyrus, which is made from reeds, or parchment, which is made from thin layers of animal skin.
For common writing tasks such as making lists, leaving instructions, and education, the Romans used wax tablets. These were pieces of wood, tied together so that they could open and shut. Each piece of wood had a shallow recess that was filled with wax and formed the writing surface. A stylus was used to write on the wax surface. The stylus was usually made of iron but sometimes bronze or bone. One end was pointed for writing and the other end was flattened for erasing so that the wax could be used again.

What questions should I ask during a loan Box session?

The question prompts below can help you to get the most out of using the objects for learning.

Questions about the physical characteristics of an object		
What does it **look**, **feel**, **sound**, **smell** like?	How **big** is it?	What **shape** is it?
What is it made of?	What **colour** is it?	How **heavy** is it?
Is it **mass produced** or **unique**?	Does it have any **marks**, which show us how it was made, used or cared for?	Is it **complete** or part of an object?
Is it in good **condition** or worn/used?	Has it been **altered**, **adapted**, **repaired** or **changed**?	Does it **look like** anything modern?

Questions about the functions of an object		
Why was it made?	What is it **used** for?	What would it have **been like** to use it?
How might it have been used?	**Who** might have used it?	**Where** might it have been used?
What **skills** were needed to use it?	Might it have been used with **other objects**?	Has its use **changed**?

Questions about the design and construction of an object		
What **material** is it made of?	Why were the **materials** it was made of chosen?	**Could** different materials have been used to make it?
Is it **attractive** to look at?	**When** and **where** might it have been made?	Is it **hand-made** or **machine-made**?
Who might have made it?	**How** was this object made?	How might this object **work**?
Can it be **taken apart**?	If it can be taken apart, then how is it **put together**?	What do these tell us about the **people** who made and/or owned the object?
Is it **decorated** or **plain**?	Are there any **marks or images** on the object?	What does this object tell us about the **period** we are studying?

Questions about the value and importance of an object	
What **difference** did the object make to people's lives?	What does the object tell us about the **people** who owned it?
How **important** was the object to the people who made it and/or the people who used/owned it compared to today?	Is it **mass-produced**, **rare** or **unique**?
In what way is the object important **today**?	Is the object financially, sentimentally, culturally or historically **valuable**?
How much do you the object **cost** when it was made?	How much do you think the object is **worth** now?

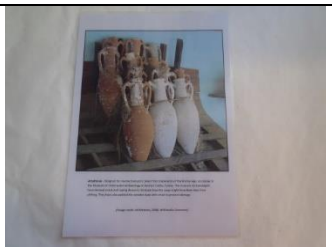
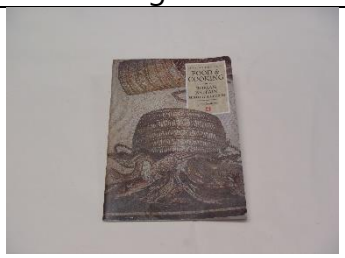
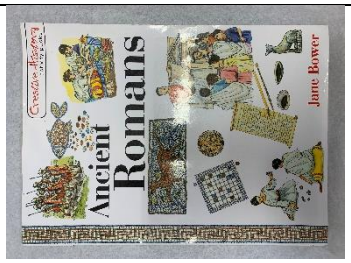
Activity Ideas

Below are some ideas for activities that will help your students get the most out of learning from the objects in the Loan Box and the period they came from.

Before & After	
At the start of a Loan Box session, place the objects either on general display or divide a few objects amongst smaller groups of students. Set a timer for 2-5 minutes, and get them to spend the time quickly looking at the objects and writing down guesses as to what they are. A rule can be set that objects are not to be handled to make guessing more difficult. Once the time is up, reveal the answers either in one go, or spread throughout the session as part of the introduction to that object. At the very end of a Loan Box session, return to the original answers to review what the students have learned about the objects since their initial guesses.	**Skills developed:** • Descriptive • Observational • Questioning • Thinking Skills

Asking and Answering Questions about Objects	
Get students to write down all the words they can think of that would be used to describe an object that they have with them (e.g. their school bag), then get them to write down the questions they would need to ask in order to identify the object. They could also prioritise the questions into categories (i.e. physical characteristics/descriptive, design and construction, function and value) and importance (i.e. pick five questions that are essential to understanding this object).	**Skills developed:** • Descriptive • Questioning • Thinking skills • Categorising

Object images at a glance - to check off

 2x Amphora Fragments	 1x Photo Amphora Pots	 6x Samian Fragments
 Tile Fragment	 7x Coarse Pottery Fragments	 Indented Beaker
 Fine Ware Pottery Pot	 sandals	 Toga
 Illustration Roman Soldier	 Helmet	 Food & Cooking book
 Cooking Pot & Tripod	 Cooking pan	 4x Roman Coins
 Oil Lamp	 Wax Tablets & Styli	 Ancient Roman Activity Pack

HAZARDS/RISKS

FRAGILE OBJECTS

Pottery Fragments

HEAVY OBJECTS

Metal Helmet

What to do before returning the Loan Box

- Check the objects against the Object Images at a glance page, above. You can print this page out to help you ensure all pieces are present.

- Pack the objects securely into the box, making sure that fragile objects are protected and in original packaging.

- Please let us know if any items are damaged or lost by phone or email.

- Pack any damaged items separately with a note inside the box.

- Boxes can either be returned directly to St Mary's Mill in Selkirk, or left at your nearest library. You will already have arranged which library this is when you booked the loan box. For any queries please get in touch at libstock@liveborders1.org.uk

Feedback Form

Before returning the Loan Box, please fill in the feedback form with this pack.

This will help us to try and improve our services. Please send the completed feedback form to libstock@liveborders1.org.uk

We hope that you have enjoyed your Loan Box experience. We have more in our collection! Please get in touch or see the live Borders website for more details. www.liveborders.org.uk