

GCSE LATIN

(1942)

SOURCE MATERIAL: ROMAN LIFE TOPICS 7

7 Topic 7 – Roman Religion

- 7.1 The picture shows an emperor as *Pontifex Maximus* leading a procession before a sacrifice.



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- 7.2 The official positions held by the emperor Augustus included religious duties.

I have been *Pontifex Maximus*, *augur*, a member of the College of fifteen for performing sacrifices, a member of the College of seven for conducting religious banquets and a member of the Arval brotherhood.

(The Achievements of the Deified Augustus: 7)

7.3 Emperor worship

7.3.1 The peoples in the eastern Roman empire had always thought of their rulers as divine, and so it seemed natural to worship the Roman emperor as a god.

Augustus allowed sacred sites to be dedicated to Rome and to his father Julius Caesar in Ephesus and Nicaea (places in modern Turkey). He instructed Romans living there to worship them. But he allowed the local inhabitants of the cities to dedicate sacred sites to himself.

(Dio Cassius: *Roman History* 51.20)

7.3.2 This picture shows a model of the temple at Colchester.

Candidates should consult a **photograph of a model of the temple at Colchester**, similar to that printed in Cambridge Latin Course: Book 2, Stage 14, p. 38.

7.3.3 The significance of the destruction of this temple by Boudica in the rebellion of A.D. 60 against Rome.

The temple dedicated to the deified emperor Claudius appeared to the Britons to be a symbol of eternal oppression, and the priests that were chosen used the religion as an excuse to waste British money.

(Tacitus: *Annals* XIV.31)

7.4 A sacrifice has just been made to Apollo and Diana.

And when the sacrifice was completed, twenty seven boys selected previously, and the same number of girls, who (all) had both parents living, sang a hymn (on the Palatine hill) and in the same way on the Capitoline hill. The hymn was composed by Q. Horatius Flaccus.

(from the official records of the College of 15 for performing sacrifices)

7.5 This picture is part of a sculpture of a sacrifice, showing the pipe-player, whose job it was to drown the noise, and the two slaves holding the decorated victim.



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- 7.6 A bronze liver used as a model by *haruspices* when interpreting the omens. It has forty different sections, mostly inscribed with the names of gods. The blemishes are like those found on a real liver**

Candidates should consult a **photograph of a model of a bronze liver** similar to that printed in Cambridge Latin Course: Book 3, Stage 23, p. 49.

- 7.7 A thin silver plaque dedicated to Mars Alator (the British god of hunting combined with Mars the Roman god of war) by Censorinus in order to fulfil his promise to give something to the god if he answered his prayer.**

**D MARTI ALATORI
DUM. CENSORINUS
GEMELLI FIL
V S L M**
(votum solvit libens merito)

To the god Mars Alator,
Dumnonius Censorinus son of Gemellus
paid his vow willingly to the god who deserved it.

7.8 This picture shows the tombs of the wealthy outside the Nucerian Gate, Pompeii.



© M. Thorpe

7.9 Two inscriptions from Roman tombstones.

7.9.1 While you are alive, man, drink,
for after death there is nothing.

7.9.2 I was a young girl
and my family loved me.
Here I am dead. I am ash
and the ash is earth but if
the earth is a goddess then
I am a goddess too
and
I am not dead.
Stranger please do not
disturb my bones
MUS
aged XIII

7.10 Curse tablets.

7.10.1 This is a picture of a curse tablet or *defixio*, showing a bearded demon carrying an urn and a torch, both symbols of death. The boat on which he stands may represent the boat of the ferryman Charon who took the souls of the dead across the river Styx to the underworld.

Candidates should consult a **drawing of a Roman curse tablet (defixio) showing Charon**, similar to that printed in Cambridge Latin Course: Book 3, Stage 22, p.35.

7.10.2 The inscription on this tablet, found at Bath, is written backwards to increase the mystery. The inscription begins:

IUQ IHIM MAIBLIV
TIVALOVNI CIS TAVQIL
[ODO]MOC AUQA

May he who stole Vibia from me dissolve like water.

7.10.3 Another tablet found in the sacred spring at Bath.

Docilianus, son of Brucerus, to the most holy goddess Sulis. I curse the person who has stolen my hooded cloak, whether man or woman, slave or free, that... the goddess Sulis may inflict death upon (him)... and not allow him to sleep, or his children, now or in the future, until he has brought back my cloak to the temple of the goddess.

7.11 The worship of the goddess Isis.

7.11.1 This picture shows a statue of the goddess Isis nursing her child Horus.



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7.11.2 A description of the procession in Alexandria in honour of Isis.

Women in white dresses wore garlands of spring flowers and threw blossoms along the road where the procession was passing. Then came others carrying sacred emblems, followed by the sounds of flutes and pipes... Next came a chorus of noble young men, chanting a beautiful song... There came too trumpeters of Serapis, playing his hymn. Then came the followers of Isis, men and women of all social classes and ages, shining in their pure white dress.

(Apuleius: *Metamorphoses*)

7.11.3 Isis was also worshipped outside Egypt, and this inscription was found in London, in what was probably an inn.

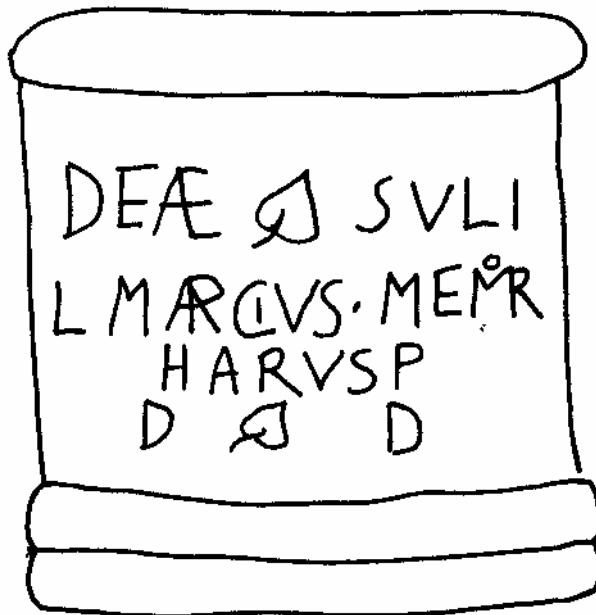
LONDINI AD FANUM ISIDIS

In London next door to the temple of Isis

7.12 The worship of the god Mithras.

Candidates could consult **pictures of the god Mithras** at the following website:
<http://museums.ncl.ac.uk/archive/mithras/text.htm>.

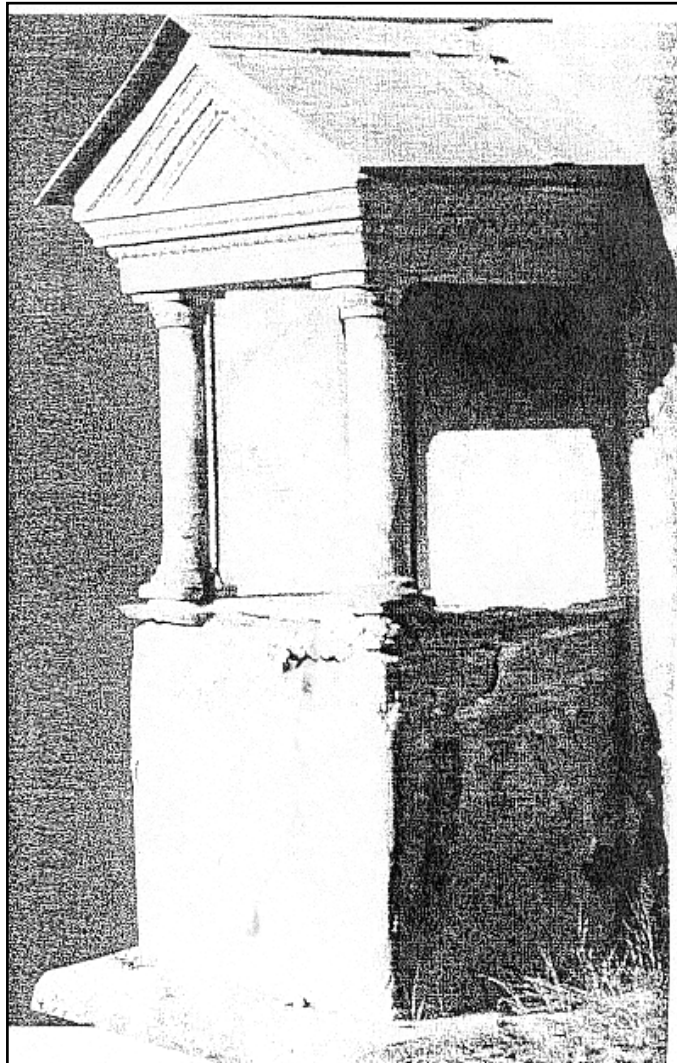
7.13 This is a drawing of the inscription on the base of a statue, put up in honour of the goddess Sulis at Bath by Memor, a *haruspex*.



To the goddess Sulis, Lucius Marcius Memor *haruspex* (soothsayer) gave this as a gift.

Drawing and translation: M Thorpe

- 7.14 The picture shows a household shrine or lararium. Small statues of gods and offerings of food were placed on this.



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