

REFUGEE FESTIVAL SCOTLAND 2022

BLESSINGS FOR TRAVELLERS

The Romans in Scotland worshipped many gods and goddesses. These are recorded on the **altars** that they put up along the Antonine Wall. We can still make sense of these altars if we look closely at them. Let's look at the altar Marcus is making an offering at. The altar says "To Mars, Minerva, the Goddesses of the Parade-ground, Hercules, Epona, and Victory, Marcus Cocceius Firmus, centurion of the Second Legion Augusta, (put this up)." Archaeologists have found 5 altars dedicated by Marcus Cocceius Firmus to lots of different gods, which all seem to be for good luck.

'Focus'.

The focus is the small bowl on the top of the altar. This is where the Romans poured offerings for the gods, like wine.

'Capital'

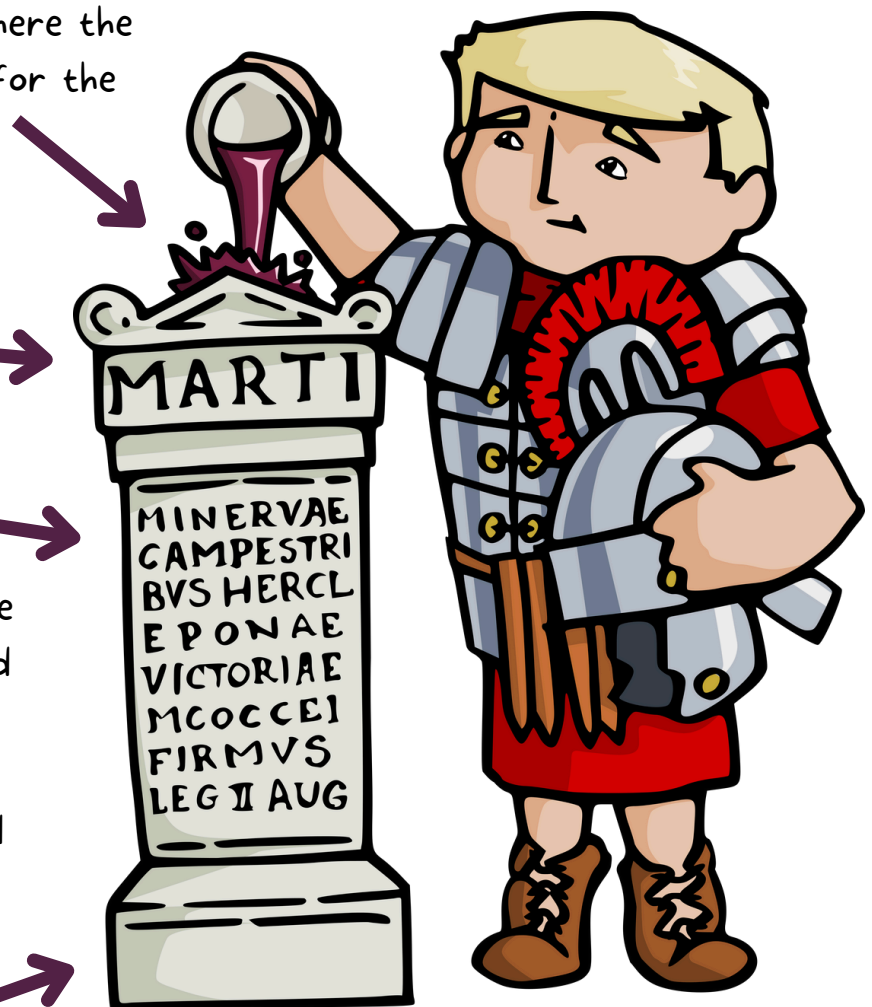
The capital is the top of the altar. It was usually decorated.

'Die'

The die is the main section of the altar. It was where they would write which god or goddess it was for and who was putting it up. The Romans used abbreviated Latin and had no spaces between words so they could fit lots of words on a small space.

'Base'

The base is the platform the altar stood on. Sometimes these were also decorated.

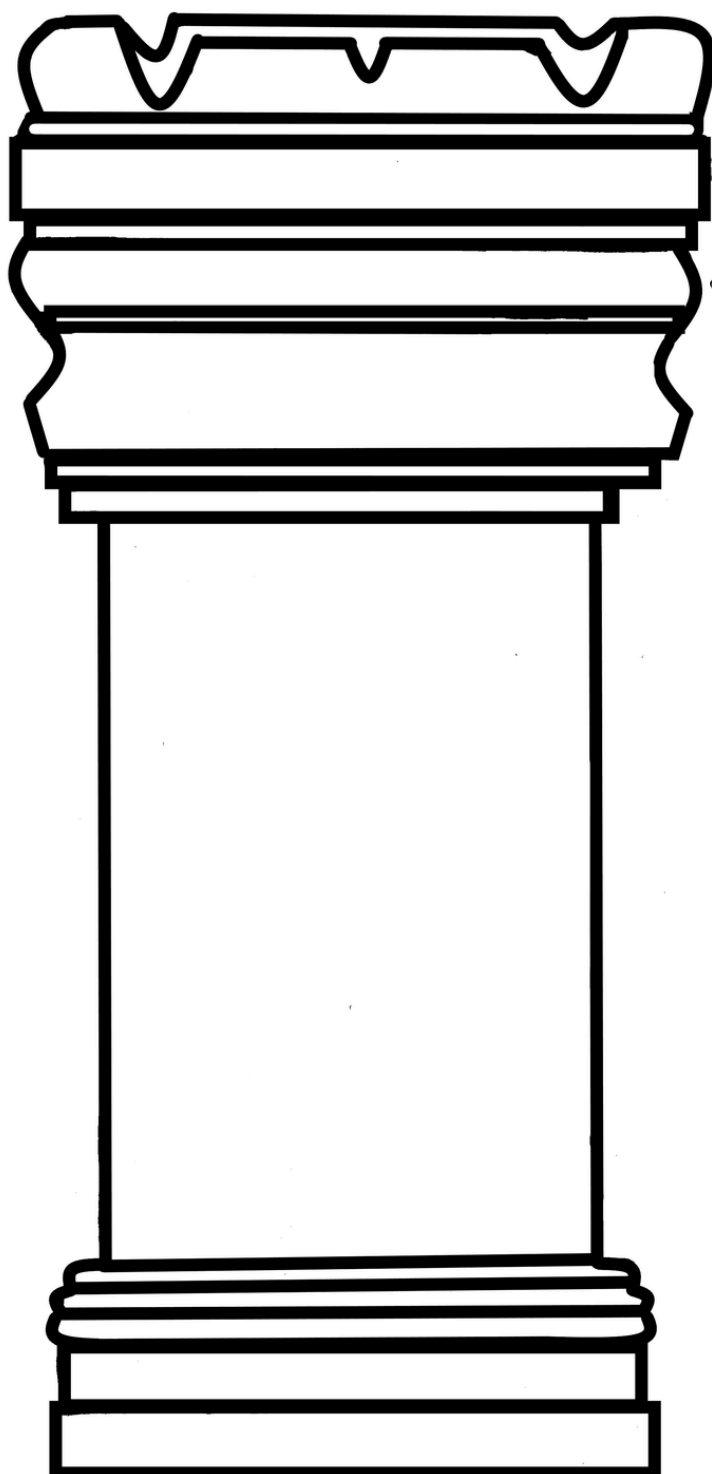


Hi! My name is Vibia. I put up this altar at Westerwood Fort, where my husband is the Commanding Officer. It's dedicated to the gods of the woodlands and crossroads, to keep us safe when we travel.

One famous altar found on the Antonine Wall was put up by a woman called Vibia Pacata. We think she was asking the gods for help on a journey she was taking with her family.



© Historic Environment Scotland



Can you think of a blessing for travellers? You might want to think of words that make you think of travelling, hopes you have, or the names of people you want to travel safely. Take a moment to think and then write your blessing on this altar.

While the Roman altars we see today have no colour, when they were first put up, many of them were painted bright colours and highly decorated. Why not colour in your blessing once you are done, and draw some decorations?