

# You can *decode* Roman tombstones at the Roman Baths, Bath

Most Tombstones follow a set pattern, but there are many variations, omissions and additions.

Many words are abbreviated, have letters squashed together (ligatures), or spill over from one line to the next, so the Romans often separated them with dots.

## Typical pattern

P.T.O. for fictitious example

**D M** (Dis Manibus) to the spirits of the departed

**NAME** – **praenomen**, **nomen**, *father's name* (*patronymic*) (- F or - FIL), voting tribe, birthplace  
**cognomen** (3rd name)

**VIXIT ANN** (os) he/she lived for ... years

**STIP** (endiorum): how many years in the army

**H F C** (Heres Faciendum Curavit) the heir had the stone made *the heir often adds his/her name and relationship*

**H S E** (Hic Situs/a Est) here he/she lies

## List A – Names

- A name ending in “i” followed by F or FIL means the person’s son or daughter: it is a *patronymic*.
- Slaves had one name, freedmen had two, and citizens three.
- Freedmen added their ex-master’s name to their slave name.

### MEN

Antigonus  
Gaius Calpurnius Receptus  
Gaius Tiberinus  
Julius Vitalis  
Lucius Ulpius Sestius  
Lucius Vitellius Tancinus  
Magnus

(Magni = *of Magnus*, or Magnus’s)

### WOMEN

**Calpurnia** = female version of Calpurnius. *Freedmen and Freedwomen would be given the name of their ex-master when they were freed.*

**Trifosa** – this Greek name means ‘Delicious’ or ‘Gorgeous’ – her only name when she was a slave.

**Mercatilla** – she is described as ‘Liberta’ and ‘Alumna’

**Rusonia Aventina** – Rusoniae Aventinae – ‘TO ..’

## List B – Birthplace

**C / Cives** = citizen or tribesman/woman

**C R** = Roman citizens

**Hispanus Cauriensis** = of Caurium in Spain

**Natione Belga** = from the Belgic tribe of Hampshire or possibly northern France

**Mediomatrica** = of Metz

**Nicopoli** = from Nicopolis

**Sergia Tribu** = from the Sergian voting-tribe  
*membership of a voting-tribe meant a person was a Roman citizen with the right to vote in Rome regardless of where they came from*

## List C – Status, job or army rank

**ALUMNA** = foster-daughter

**CONIUNX** = wife

**F, FIL, FILIA** = daughter

**F, FIL, FILIUS** = son

**HERES** = heir (but often the heir’s name is given)

**L, LIB, LIBERTUS / A** = freedman / woman (ex-slave)

**SACERDOS DEAE SULIS** = priest of the goddess Sulis

**EMERITUS** = veteran, retired soldier

**EQ, EQVES** = cavalryman

**EX COLEGIO FABRICENSIVM ELATUS** = funeral organised by the Guild of Armourers

**FABRICIENSIS** = armourer

## List D – Legion or squadron

**LEGIO** = Legion     **ALA** = Cavalry squadron

Several legions were given honorary names :

**LEG II AVGusta** = 2nd Augustan *The Emperor’s*

**LEG XX Valeria Victrix** = 20th Courageous and Victorious – *given this name after the Boudican rebellion of 60-61 A.D.*

**ALA VETTONUM** = squadron of Vettones, *all members granted Roman citizenship (C.R.) by the Emperor Vespasian, presumably for their part in the invasion of Britain in 43 A.D.*

## List E – Roman numerals

<b>V</b> = 5	<b>VI</b> = 6	<b>X</b> = 10
<b>XI</b> = 11	<b>XV</b> = 15	<b>XVI</b> = 16
<b>XX</b> = 20	<b>XL</b> = 40	<b>L</b> = 50
<b>LX</b> = 60		

**Annus** = year

**Mensis** = month

**Dies** = day

