

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

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

Annus = year

Mensis = month

Dies = day

