Introduction to the Exhibition

The history of the Roman civilization spans nearly 2000 years beginning with its legendary founding on the banks of the Tiber River in 753 BCE. It reached its social and artistic peak in the second and third centuries but its influence is still felt today in almost every aspect of modern life. The Dayton Art Institute's special exhibition, The Roman World: Religion and Everyday Life featuring the Brooklyn Museum exhibition Tree of Paradise: Jewish Mosaics from the Roman Empire, presents an extraordinary look at this ancient culture.

Although the art is not exhibited in chronological order, the numerous examples of sculpture, mosaics, textiles, glass and bronze objects, jewelry and coins provide insight into everyday life as well as the many religious beliefs of these interesting people. The visitor will experience a Roman culture that was extremely tolerant of religious diversity and flexible, for the most part, in its willingness to incorporate these foreign religions into its society.

The art represents archeological finds from three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa demonstrating Rome's far reaching impact on history and culture. The exhibition is on view September 21, 2007 through January 6, 2008.

A Note to Educators

This educator resource is designed as a supplement to the exhibition and will assist educators by:

1. providing basic information about the historical and geographical aspects of ancient Roman life and culture between the 5th century BCE and the 6th century CE through a timeline and maps.
2. exploring the social context of Roman culture as found in the four themes:
   - the Roman world
   - polytheistic religions
   - Judaism
   - early Christianity
3. examining key works from the exhibition.
4. charting common symbols and their meanings as shared by the various religions.
5. suggesting pre- and post-visit activities.
6. aligning the exhibition's thematic content and the connecting curriculum suggestions to the Ohio Academic Content Standards.
7. providing additional resources to assist in preparing students to better understand this exhibition.

Important vocabulary terms are highlighted and defined within the text.

BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era) are used in place of BC and AD throughout this resource.
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   • This packet can be printed on standard 8½ x 11 paper in portrait orientation. The timeline is a separate pdf file and can be printed on 8½ x 14 paper in landscape orientation.
The content of this exhibition and the suggested curriculum connections in this educator resource are in alignment with specific benchmarks as outlined in the Ohio Academic Content Standards for Visual Arts, Social Studies, and Language Arts.

Content connecting to benchmarks for Visual Arts and Language Arts is applicable to many grade levels. However, because ancient Rome and world religions are addressed primarily in grades six and seven Social Studies curriculum, only benchmarks for those grade levels are included.

Below is a list of the specific benchmarks that can be addressed by using the information and curriculum suggestions in this packet when developing lesson plans for your specific discipline. For your convenience, you will notice that many sections of the packet end with an abbreviated list of specific benchmarks applicable to that section.

**Visual Arts:**

**Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts Standard**

**Grades K–4 Benchmarks**
A. Recognize and describe visual arts forms and artworks from various times and places
B. Identify art forms, visual ideas, and images and describe how they are influenced by time and culture
C. Identify and describe the different purposes people have for creating works of art

**Grades 5–8 Benchmarks**
A. Compare and contrast the distinctive characteristics of art forms from various cultural, historical, and social contexts
B. Create a work of art which incorporates the style or characteristics of artwork from a culture other than their own
D. Research culturally or historically significant works of art and discuss their roles in society, history, culture, or politics

**Grades 9–12 Benchmarks**
A. Explain how and why visual art forms develop in the contexts in which they were made
B. Compare works of art to one another in terms of historical, cultural, social, and political influences evident in the works
D. Select a culture and create an original work of art that demonstrates understanding of a historical, social, or political issue of the culture

**Language Arts:**

**Acquisition of Vocabulary Standard**

**Grades 4–7 Benchmark**
E. Use knowledge of roots and affixes to determine the meaning of complex words

**Grades 8–10 Benchmark**
E. Apply knowledge of roots and affixes to determine the meaning of complex words and subject area vocabulary

**Grades 11–12 Benchmark**
D. Apply knowledge of roots, affixes, and phrases to aid understanding of content area vocabulary
Writing Applications Standard

Grades K–2 Benchmark
A. Compose writings that convey a clear message and include well-chosen details

Grades 3–4 Benchmark
A. Write narrative accounts that develop character, setting, and plot

Grades 5–7 Benchmark
A. Use narrative strategies to develop characters, plot, and setting and to maintain a consistent point of view

Grades 8–10 Benchmark
A. Compose narratives that establish a specific setting, plot, and a consistent point of view, and develop characters by using sensory details and concrete language

Social Studies:

History Standard

Grade 7 Benchmark
2. Describe the enduring impact of early civilizations in India, China, Egypt, Greece, and Rome after 1000 BCE including:
   a. The development of concepts of government and citizenship
   b. Scientific and cultural advancements
   c. The spread of religions
   d. Slavery and systems of labor

People in Societies Standard

Grade 6 Benchmarks
2. Compare world religions and belief systems focusing on geographic origins, founding leaders, and teachings including:
   a. Buddhism
   b. Christianity
   c. Judaism
   d. Hinduism
   e. Islam

3. Explain factors that foster conflict or cooperation among countries:
   a. Language
   b. Religion
   c. Types of government
   d. Historic relationships
   e. Economic interests

Grade 7 Benchmark
4. Describe the cultural and scientific legacies of African, Greek, Roman, Chinese, Arab, and European civilizations

Geography Standard

Grade 6 Benchmark
4. Identify and describe a variety of physical and human regions by analyzing maps, charts, and graphs that show patterns of characteristics that define regions

Grade 7 Benchmarks
1. For each of the societies studied, identify the location of significant physical and human characteristics on a map of the relevant region
2. On a map, identify places related to the historical events being studied and explain their significance

Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities Standard

Grade 6 Benchmark
2. Compare the rights and responsibilities of citizens under various systems of government

Grade 7 Benchmark
1. Explain how the participation of citizens differs under monarchy, direct democracy, and representative democracy
The Roman World

Because this exhibition encompasses a large segment of Roman history, a basic appreciation of the historical, geographical, and social context of the times is essential to understanding the objects included in the exhibition. A timeline that includes images of selected objects from the exhibition has been used in order to provide the most pertinent information about historical events related to the exhibition. It is followed by two maps that show the growth of the Roman Empire during its artistic and social peak.

Maps

Rome reached its artistic and social peak during the second and third centuries. These two maps demonstrate the change in the size of the empire just prior to and during that time.

Rome acquired vast amounts of territory as a result of many years of warfare. By 100 BCE, the empire included not only all of Italy and much of the Mediterranean coast, but also reached into present day France, Spain, and parts of Asia Minor.
The Roman Empire, under the emperor Trajan, reached its greatest size and power by 117 CE, stretching 2,500 miles from east to west. Rome governed all areas along the Mediterranean coast including northern Africa. Eventually, every part of the empire was linked to Rome by land, river or sea routes; hence the famous phrase “all roads lead to Rome”.

Social Studies:
Geography Standard
Grade 6 Benchmark 4
Grade 7 Benchmarks 1 and 2
The Exhibition: Four Themes in Context

The story of Rome began with a cluster of villages that became a city, and that city grew into the most powerful and influential empire of its time. This exhibition examines that story during the height of its expansion. It looks at the culture and everyday life of Rome, while examining Rome’s tolerance of diverse religions including polytheism, Judaism, and Christianity.

The focal point of the exhibition is the mosaic floor, the Tree of Paradise, from the Brooklyn Museum in New York. The floor, along with other key works in the exhibition will give students a rich picture of Roman life and will demonstrate how these diverse belief systems came to co-exist peacefully, for the most part, throughout the Roman Empire.

Theme 1: Roman Everyday Life

The Republic and the Empire

After the Romans overthrew the last of the Etruscans (the people in northern Italy who preceded the Romans) about 507 BCE, a republic was formed which means Rome was governed by elected officials. Some of these officials had the power to declare war and to make and enforce the laws. By 27 BCE, the Roman Republic was finished, and the period of history known as the empire began with Julius Caesar Octavius who took the name Augustus and became the first emperor of the Roman Empire. Emperors would rule Rome until its demise in 476 CE.

Roman Citizenship

There were three separate classes of Roman citizens:

1. Patricians (from the Latin word patres, which meant “fathers”) were generally from wealthy families and were considered the leaders of Rome. They considered themselves superior to the other classes, and for many years were the only class of citizens who could serve in the government.

2. The equites, sometimes called equestrians (from the Latin equus for “horse”), were the bankers and merchants, much like our middle class today. Many were descendants of the first Roman cavalry. In order to belong to this class you needed to have enough money to buy a horse, hence the name.

3. The plebian class was designated the lowest group of citizens. This class worked hard but had very little money. They may have sold items in a small shop if they lived in the city. In a rural setting they probably lived on a small farm, growing enough food to feed their families.

Being a Roman citizen was important because it insured certain rights under the law. As a citizen you were expected to pay taxes and serve in the army. In return you could vote, be protected by the courts, hold an office, and form contracts.

Women

In the early years, women, although Roman citizens by birth, were not treated as equals under the law. Regardless of their class, they could not participate in politics and were under the control of the male head of the household in which they were living. Women were expected to manage the house and stay out of public affairs. As time went on, this gradually began to change, especially in times of war or extensive military campaigns. If a husband died or was gone for long periods of time, the wife became the head of the household and took control of all financial affairs. Business affairs took her into the public realm where she could exert her influence and power. In time, this public exposure resulted in more rights and freedoms for women throughout the empire. This point is demonstrated by the fact that the Tree of Paradise mosaic floor in this exhibition was commissioned and paid for by a wealthy and influential Jewish woman named Julia.
Slaves

There was a fourth group of Romans who were not citizens. They were the slaves. This population was made up of Romans who didn’t pay their debts, descendants of slaves, orphaned or abandoned children, and prisoners of war. In many ways they were better off than some plebians because they had a roof over their heads and food to eat. But because they were not citizens, they were not protected from abusive masters by Roman law. In fact, they were not considered people, but property to be bought and sold. Slaves were in high demand during most of Roman history which resulted in the development of a very profitable slave trade throughout the empire. At one time during Roman rule, it is believed that \( \frac{1}{3} \) of the population was made up of slaves.

Communication and Trade

Much of the development and spread of Roman civilization was based on its ability to communicate information and to conduct business. Language and a number system for making calculations became two elements important to the unification of the expanding empire.

When the Romans acquired new territories, they made the people learn their language, Latin, and use it for international communication, government business, and trade, particularly in the western provinces. After a while, many people stopped using their local dialects and used Latin instead.

Although most ordinary people were illiterate because of lack of education, millions of texts were written, from stone inscriptions (the first dates to 600 BCE) to letters scratched on wax tablets. Few original Latin texts have survived. Fortunately, many important writings were copied during the Middle Ages by monks, preserving a wealth of Roman ideas and beliefs.

The Roman alphabet is still used today in many parts of the world, but originally there were only 22 letters (U and V, I and J were not distinguished, W and Y did not exist). Many present day languages, including English have words with Latin roots.

Successful business and trade also depended on a system of numbers for making calculations. Today we use an Indo-Arabic number system, but before that people used Roman numerals. This system was developed around 500 BCE. It used seven letters to stand for certain values:

\[
\begin{align*}
I &= 1 \\
V &= 5 \\
X &= 10 \\
L &= 50 \\
C &= 100 \\
D &= 500 \\
M &= 1000
\end{align*}
\]

By combining letter symbols, through addition and subtraction, different values could be shown. For example, the year 2007 would be written: MMVII (M+M+V+I+I which is the same as 1000+1000+5+1+1).

Art and Technology

Although known for their remarkable buildings, roads, aqueducts, and military innovations that contributed to the expansion and unification of the empire, the Romans were equally adept at perfecting lesser known technologies and art techniques. Those are discussed in detail in the section, The Art: Selected Objects.
Theme 2: Polytheism

Rome was a melting pot of ethnic groups and cultures and most of these cultures had unique religious beliefs but Rome’s official religion was polytheistic, meaning that the Romans believed in many gods. Early in Rome’s history, a Roman state religion was established that encouraged the worship of spirits or life forces that came to be called numina (singular: numen). Since these forces resided everywhere, Roman worship was everywhere, including the home where each family paid homage to the lares (household gods) and the penates (the gods of the food cupboard) by leaving special offerings at the family shrine located inside the house. Romans believed that the gods would protect and provide for them if they were properly worshipped.

Romans also believed that praying to the gods and goddesses was the same as believing in Rome. As Rome became a republic, it also became a religious center where Jupiter became the divine god and father of the Roman people, the protector and conveyor of victory. His wife, Juno, became the goddess protector of women and the mother of all Romans. There is a long list of Roman gods and goddesses. Many have Greek counterparts since most Roman leaders idealized all things Greek. The Romans believed deeply in the power of their gods and took their religion seriously, but as the Romans conquered other peoples, they added these new religions to their own. Because the state religion offered little hope of an afterlife, many Romans were also followers of eastern religions that promised an afterlife. These religions included cults devoted to Serapis, Mithras, Isis, and Cybele. (Their attributes are described on page 9.) They were also referred to as mystery religions because little is known about them. But they seem to have common elements including a divine figure with whom believers could have personal contact, secret rituals, and initiations.

Gods and Goddesses—Who’s Who

Traditional Roman numina and gods:

Flora: spirit of plants
Fons: spirit of flowing water
Fortuna: goddess of good luck
Janus: god of doorways and gates, also the god of beginnings and endings
Lares: ancestral spirits and household gods
Penates: spirits of the food cupboards
Roma: goddess of the Roman state

Roman gods borrowed from the Greeks:

Jupiter: supreme god of the Roman state symbolized by an eagle (Greek – Zeus)
Juno: wife and sister of Jupiter, supreme goddess of the Roman state (Greek – Hera)
Minerva: virgin goddess of wisdom and war (Greek – Athena)
Mars: god of war (Greek – Aries)
Bacchus: son of Jupiter and god of wine and drama (Greek – Dionysus)
Venus: goddess of love (Greek – Aphrodite)
Vesta: goddess of the hearth (Greek – Hestia)
Vulcan: god of fire (Greek – Hephaestus)
Diana: goddess of the hunt (Greek – Artemis)
Ceres: goddess of agriculture (Greek – Demeter)
Cupid: son of Venus, the archer of love (Greek – Eros)
Mercury: son of Jupiter and messenger of the gods (Greek – Hermes)
Neptune: god of the sea (Greek – Poseidon)
Cult gods and goddesses of the mystery religions:

**Serapis:** Invented in Alexandria during Greek Hellenistic times, Serapis was a combination of the Egyptian god Osiris with the Apis bulls (Egyptians believed these bulls to be the earthly incarnation of a god). When introduced to Roman culture, Serapis became identified with the supreme god, Jupiter. He is most often portrayed as a bearded man with horns. Serapis is a good example of the blending of two forms of religion, Egyptian and Roman. The cult of Serapis is often associated with the cult of Isis.

**Mithras:** This cult, strictly for men, originated in Persia and was popular among soldiers. As the god of truth and light, Mithras had accomplished many heroic feats, including the slaying of a great bull, resulting in the promise of eternal salvation. Mithraic rites included baptism, confirmation, and communion and were held in secret.

**Isis:** Originally an Egyptian fertility goddess who became popular during the time of the emperors, Isis was the mother of all and granted believers happiness on earth and eternal life after death. This cult initially appealed to slaves, freed slaves, and women. Worship was based on a person’s hopes and prayers and followers formed their own communities, where women were treated equally with men. Worship was usually led by a priestess, though male priests were allowed. Eventually Isis became the patron of sailors who started the sailing season with a festival in her honor. Ceremonies celebrating Isis were emotionally charged and filled with excessive eating, drinking, and wild dance.

**Cybele:** After this cult was introduced to Rome from Asia Minor, it became one of the most important cults in the empire. Cybele was the great mother goddess who embodied all the concerns of womanhood. She was worshipped underground and on mountaintops. The cult was eventually outlawed in the 4th century because its extravagant and wild rituals required some self-mutilation.
**Theme 3: Judaism**

Historical Judaism was in existence long before the Roman Empire. It traces its roots to Abraham, who migrated from northern Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq) to the region of Canaan (modern day Israel and Lebanon). Abraham’s descendants, known as Hebrews or Israelites, saw themselves as a people defined by a covenant with God, resulting in a monotheistic religion, worshiping one God, Yahweh, and following a Law or Torah considered to be revealed by God. This covenant story was connected to the dramatic exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses around the middle of the 13th century BCE.

Under Saul and David, around 1000 BCE, the Israelites became a powerful kingdom. After Solomon’s reign the nation split into two kingdoms (c. 939 BCE), Israel in the north and Judah in the south. A series of invasions by the Assyrians, then the Babylonians, eventually destroyed both kingdoms with an almost total deportation of the people to Mesopotamia. Under the Persian Empire in the 6th century BCE, the Israelites were allowed to return to the land of Judah, which then became known as Judea, and its inhabitants became known as Judeans or Jews. In the 2nd century BCE, the Jews successfully overthrew their foreign dominators, by then the Greek kings following Alexander the Great. Eventually the Jews formed a relatively independent Jewish kingdom in the south known as the Hasmonaean Dynasty (also known as the Maccabees). By 63 BCE, this dynasty disintegrated as a result of a civil war, which ended by an appeal to the Roman authorities, and a campaign of annexation by Pompey soon followed.

The Romans were often brutal in their treatment of the Jews, and in 66 CE, Jews began to revolt against the Roman rulers. The revolt was defeated and the Romans destroyed much of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE. The Temple was a place of animal and food sacrifice in worship of Yahweh. It also included a sanctuary that housed the Ark of the Covenant and the tablets of the Ten Commandments. According to some accounts, when it was destroyed, the Romans stole artifacts, including the Menorah (seven branched candelabra).

Jews continued to live in their land and were allowed, for the most part, to practice their religion despite various restrictions placed on them by the Romans. Without a Temple in which to worship, Jews focused on the Torah and celebrated in gathering houses known as synagogues. Eventually other books were added to the Torah to form the Jewish Bible, known by Christians as the Old Testament.

Jews also migrated to many parts of the Roman Empire, including northern Africa. Although Jews of the 2nd and 3rd centuries were not allowed to build new synagogues, archaeology has demonstrated that the law was rarely enforced. Remains of ancient synagogues, such as the mosaic floor included in this exhibition, have been found throughout the Roman Empire showing that Jews were able to practice their religion in a relatively tolerant atmosphere.
Christianity which developed in Egypt following the Council of Chalcedon (452) as an independent church.

The Roman Church maintained unity more or less through most of the Roman Empire, despite the division of the empire into the Western Empire centered in Rome and the Eastern or Byzantine Empire centered in Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey).

Social Studies:
History Standard
Grade 7 Benchmark 2

People in Societies Standard
Grade 6 Benchmarks 2 and 3

Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities Standard
Grade 6 Benchmark 2
Grade 7 Benchmark 1

Theme 4: Early Christianity

Christianity developed from Palestinian Judaism in the first century CE, based on the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Paul of Tarsus, along with the other original disciples of Jesus, spread this religion through much of the Roman Empire. Like Judaism, Christianity was also a monotheistic religion in that the people worshipped one God. However, in a complicated theology of Trinity, Christians saw God the Father, Jesus and the Spirit of God as divine persons.

From its beginnings, Christians struggled with their own understanding of Trinity, redemption, and church with the result that many groups emerged within Christianity stressing one aspect over another. One example is Coptic Christianity.

Egyptian, TEXTILE OF VINE GROWING IN URN, 4th – 5th century CE, Wool and linen, Brooklyn Museum, Gift, 42.438.1.
The Art: Selected Objects

Because art was highly valued in Roman society, beautiful art in the form of paintings, sculpture, functional objects, and items of adornment could be found throughout the homes of the wealthy as well as in public buildings and religious temples. In addition to providing a look at Roman life and religions, this exhibition demonstrates the technical and creative expertise behind the Roman desire for beautiful objects.

There are over 140 objects in the exhibition each a significant work of art, with a story to tell about how it was made and its place in Roman life and religion. Selected examples representing an overview of materials and techniques are discussed below.

About Mosaics

Mosaic was a popular decorative method learned from the Greeks. Mosaics were assembled from small pieces of colored stone called tesserae, which were pressed into a bed of soft mortar, although glazed pieces of terracotta were also used. Some mosaics featured geometric patterns of simple lines and shapes, others contained images inside a patterned border. Picture mosaics often showed gods and goddesses or animals—real and mythical. Mosaics were usually applied to the floors in wealthy homes, temples and places of religious worship, as well as the Roman baths. Sometimes mosaics were applied to the walls and ceiling.

The Art

The featured work in the exhibition is the Tree of Paradise mosaic floor. It was discovered in 1883 when a French army captain, Ernest de Prudhomme, was digging up his backyard to make a garden. This discovery in Hamman Lif, Tunisia was to become the first ancient synagogue floor to be unearthed and the beginning of synagogue archaeology.
Today, this floor provides insight into Jewish religion and its relationship to the Roman world in which it existed in the late 5th century.

Prudhomme was well aware that he had found an ancient floor from late Roman times so he removed the floor in sections. Eventually they were sold at auction when he returned to France. Parts of the floor came to the Brooklyn Museum, some remained in Tunisia, others are unaccounted for. However, we know what the missing fragments look like because of a detailed watercolor that was made of the floor at the time of its discovery.

Although Roman law forbade the building of synagogues at this time, the law seems not to have been enforced, especially in the outlying regions of the empire where several synagogues from late Roman times have been found. This synagogue itself was quite large with 16 rooms.

The Tree of Paradise mosaic constituted the floor of the main sanctuary where the scroll of the Torah (containing the law and the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) was read. The floor divides into three large areas. On the left is a carpet-like area called an inhabited scroll with flowers and vines that surrounds baskets of bread and fruit, a variety of birds, and a hare. The center portion contains two scenes, Creation and Paradise, along with a donor’s inscription flanked by two menorahs.

The inscription reads: Your servant, Julia Nap., at her own expense, paved the holy synagogue of Naro with mosaic for her salvation. (Hamman Lif was called Naro at this time.)

A narrow carpet on the right depicts a bird and a lion surrounded by the same vine work found on the left.
The fact that the floor was commissioned and paid for by a woman was not so unusual at this time. Wealthy Roman women, particularly widows, were often powerful and influential in the political/social arena as well as in their respective religions. Many Christian women, for example, held positions of leadership in the early Christian church. It appears that Julia was a woman of wealth and influence in the Jewish community. And it is possible that the images on the floor of Creation and Paradise represent a vision of her salvation. Both images would have represented the stories in the Hebrew text of Genesis but they also would have referenced the world and paradise at the end of time, when the saved would live after death. Therefore, it also heralded the coming of the Jewish Messiah.

Originally, the Creation panel probably represented the land, sea, and air, areas recognized in the creation story from Genesis. At the time of the excavation, only the animals of the sea (a large fish, dolphins, and ducks and geese) and the birds of the air were visible. What appears to be the head of a bull probably represented the land animals. In the sky, a four pronged shape could be interpreted as the hand of God. There is also a round wheel shape, a common symbol for eternity.

The Paradise panel below the donor’s inscription contains a number of Jewish and Christian symbols. In the center is an urn flowing with water, a decorative seashell on the ornamental band at its base. A palm tree stands on each side. Near the urn two peacocks face each other, while two partridges face away from each other. Each of the elements in the scene symbolically represents a vision of Paradise at the end of time.

Clearly, motifs and symbols that were commonly found in the Roman world were shared by the religions and cults of the time. These religions may have differed in terms of their core beliefs, but they borrowed freely from one another when it came to visually expressing those beliefs. Many of the motifs found on this synagogue floor are found throughout the exhibition on objects used by the other religions and cults. The following chart lists the symbols found in the floor and compares their meaning to the same symbol as used in polytheism and early Christianity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Judaism</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Polytheism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>fertility, birth, hope for rebirth, the faithful or ordinary believers</td>
<td>the faithful, sacrament of the Eucharist (communion), the Messianic age, Jesus</td>
<td>fertility, birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolphin</td>
<td>kindly attitude of God toward humankind, rebirth after death</td>
<td>kindly attitude of God toward humankind</td>
<td>kindly attitude of the gods toward humankind, erotic love, reproduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goose / duck</td>
<td>creation and rebirth</td>
<td></td>
<td>creation and erotic forces, sacred to the Egyptian god Geb and the Greek god Zeus (Jupiter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bull</td>
<td>the Messiah</td>
<td>victory and atonement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheel</td>
<td>chariot wheels of Elijah, hope for eternal life</td>
<td>hope for eternal life</td>
<td>chariot wheels of the god Helios, hope for eternal life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand</td>
<td>God</td>
<td>God the Father, protection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm trees</td>
<td>tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life from the book of Genesis, a righteous people, rebirth</td>
<td>victory over death, resurrection</td>
<td>triumph over death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacock</td>
<td>hope of immortality</td>
<td>hope of immortality</td>
<td>hope of immortality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partridge / quail</td>
<td>passion controlled by divine order, life-giving love</td>
<td>life-giving love</td>
<td>death, erotic passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seashell</td>
<td>sanctification</td>
<td>John the Baptist, baptism, new life</td>
<td>birth of goddess Aphrodite (Venus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urn spouting liquid</td>
<td>life-giving cup (when flanked by peacocks)</td>
<td>paradise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vines</td>
<td>divine order, God's control over creation</td>
<td>Jesus, Christian life</td>
<td>fertility, god of wine, Dionysus (Bacchus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>Polytheism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basket of bread</td>
<td>unleavened bread from the book of Exodus, restoration of the temple</td>
<td>Eucharist (communion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>sacrificing of first fruits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hare</td>
<td>considered an unclean animal, its use here probably demonstrates Jewish comfort with pagan symbols</td>
<td>Christian haste to receive grace</td>
<td>object of the hunt associated with the god Eros (Cupid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lion in a vine</td>
<td>God’s saving power</td>
<td>strength and power</td>
<td>connected with god of wine, Dionysus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menorah</td>
<td>7 branched lamps associated only with the Jews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lulav (closed frond of the date palm tree) and ethrog (citrus fruit)</td>
<td>hope for the restoration of the Second Temple in Jerusalem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About Jewelry

Roman jewelry has been described as a combination of styles, derived from its cultural predecessors, the Etruscans and Greeks, that favored the use of colored stones in combination with metal settings. Because of its adaptability and potential for imitating precious stones, glass offered an affordable alternative to the expensive stones preferred by the Roman elite without losing its visual appeal. Although gold and silver were used in the jewelry of the aristocracy, bronze was common as well, especially among the rising middle classes.

Personal adornment was important to both men and women. Men wore rings varying in size and style. Gold rings were a badge of rank for equites, the second class of citizens who served in the army or administration. Women also wore rings, sometimes as a charm to ward off bad luck. Necklaces, bracelets, and earrings were also popular among women, as were decorated pins and brooches used to hold clothing in place. Young boys wore a bulla, a small pouch of protective amulets suspended from a chain around the neck.

The Art

The Tree of Paradise mosaic floor featured in the exhibition was commissioned and paid for by a woman named Julia, at a time when many Roman women were in positions of considerable power and wealth. As a wealthy and influential person she probably dressed the part and may very well have adorned herself with jewelry and earrings much like this pair below.

Although these earrings are from the 6th century, they are examples of a distinctive style and demonstrate exceptional technical skill in their intricate open work design. In many ways, today’s modern designs reflect those of ancient times.
The Coins

Around 300 BCE, the Romans copied the Greek idea of using and producing their own coins. Prior to this time, Romans stored their wealth in the form of copper ingots (small metal bars). But ingots were cumbersome. The introduction of recognizable coins both inside and outside the republic made buying and selling objects, collecting taxes, and paying soldiers’ wages much easier with everyone using the same coinage. Coins were usually made from gold (rare) (FIG. 2 & 3), silver and bronze (common). The first distinctly Roman coins were created about 211 BCE, the denarius being the most common, although other coins existed of varying denominations. During the time of the emperors, coins often had a picture of the emperor or his wife on one side and a commemoration of a great victory on the other.

Common coins included:

- **Quadrans** = the lowest denomination, made of copper
- **As** = 4 quadrans
- **Dupondius** = 2 asses, made of brass
- **Sestertius** = 4 asses or $\frac{1}{4}$ of a denarius, made of bronze washed in silver
- **Denarius** = 16 asses
- **Quinarius** = half the weight of a denarius, made of silver
- **Aureus** = about 100 asses or 20-25 denarii, made of gold

The Art

In 27 BCE, Julius Caesar Octavius, the nephew and successor of the infamous Julius Caesar, transformed himself into Emperor, taking the name of Augustus. The Roman Republic was finished and the period of history known as the empire had begun. Emperors would rule Rome for the next 500 years.

Augustus was a wise and capable leader who put the Roman state on a solid foundation. His army achieved remarkable conquests including Egypt, Spain, and parts of Germany, significantly expanding the empire. Under his rule, he rebuilt Rome and peace and prosperity returned.

The image of Augustus was everywhere—a sign of his consummate power. His image was on many coins, but the denarius was a common denomination, distributed all over the empire (FIG. 1).
About Sculpture

Romans admired Greek statues, especially those depicting gods and goddesses. They wanted them for their homes and public buildings so Roman art studios began to make copies. But they also carved original statues including portrait busts (head and shoulders only) of important people and leaders as well as statues of gods from the Roman religions and cults. The Romans gave their sculptures realistic true-to-life features and proportions. This use of realism was in direct contrast to the Greek canon of perfect proportions and youthfulness.

Portrait sculptures of the emperors were a powerful means of propaganda used throughout the empire. Friezes, bands of relief sculpture, meant to be viewed from the front only, were popular on sarcophagi (stone coffins), public buildings, and monuments. They often showed mythological stories, victorious battle scenes, or religious processions providing a glimpse into Roman life.

Marble was plentiful, especially on the Italian peninsula, and was the primary material for carving sculptures.

The Art

Serapis is one of the many gods that belonged to the Roman polytheistic tradition. Originally an Egyptian god, he was probably invented during the reign of the first Ptolemy in Egypt, in the late 4th century BCE as a way to unite two separate cultures living in Alexandria at that time, the Hellenistic Greeks and the native Egyptians.

The main components of Serapis were Apis, a bull-god, and Osiris, god of the underworld. The names of these deities were combined to make a new deity: Osiris-Apis became Serapis. Since both of these component deities were Egyptian, Serapis was personified as a Hellenistic figure to give him more credibility with the Greeks. As seen in this bust, he is most often portrayed as a bearded man (Greek personification) with horns (Egyptian personification).

This combination turned out to have great appeal and was later taken up by the Romans, who identified Serapis with their supreme god, Jupiter. They eventually built a temple to Serapis in Rome where cult members associated this god with healing and fertility and sought cures from Serapis through divine dreams.
About Glass

Glass is an artificial material, made from silica sand, with the addition of alkaline fluxes such as soda, potash and lime, or lead. According to the Roman historian Pliny the Elder, glass was accidentally discovered by a group of Phonecian merchants along the Palestinian coast. Whether his story is true or not, we do know that the Romans learned the process from enslaved or displaced craftsmen from the east, producing significant amounts of soda glass and lead glass. They made glass vessels by either pouring molten glass into a mold or later, by gathering hot glass on the end of a long hollow rod and blowing a bubble of glass into a mold. Mold blown glass allowed the mass production of bottles and highly decorated flasks.

Glass is not naturally colorless. The silica sand used by the Romans contained particles of iron oxide, so much of Roman glass ranged from light yellows to aqua blue-greens. In time, the Romans produced colored glass with the addition of minerals like copper and cobalt.

By 14 CE, a glasshouse existed in the city of Rome and the glassmaking technique was carried to other parts of the empire. By the end of the 1st century, every glassmaking technique used today had been fully developed by the Romans. Glass was no longer a luxury item but came into general use by the populous.

The eventual decline of the Roman Empire forced glassmakers to relocate to the north where a heavy style of glass developed because soda was not available as a flux. By 800, the art of glassmaking all but disappeared in the West.

The Art

The neck and rim of this 3rd century flask were free blown but the lower portion was blown into a mold. The seams are hidden in the knobby hair which was characteristic of flasks from this time period. The two child-like faces on this flask may represent Dionysus, the Greek god of wine. He was often depicted as a child, particularly in the region where this flask originated, because traditionally, it was believed that Dionysus was raised in the eastern Mediterranean. Flasks of this kind were used to carry sacred water or oil from a shrine. Such flasks were common not only to Roman pagans but also to the Jews and Christians who used them for similar purposes.
About Claywork

Low-fire earthenware and terracotta clays were commonly used to produce primarily utilitarian objects during Roman times. Objects ranged from tableware and large-scale vessels for holding olive oil and dry grains, to oil lamps and figurines. Nearly all Roman pottery was made on a throwing wheel, although some objects were made by pressing clay into a frame or mold.

Decoration on lamps, tableware and pots, if any, was simple and usually done in relief. Many vessels had some kind of surface finish such as slip or glaze. Painting was also a common means of decoration, imitating the Greek method of painting images with a fine slip before firing the vessel.

Small figurines of gods and goddesses were also produced from clay, most often for votive use at the temples or in household shrines. Other figurines depicting animals or gladiators and charioteers were used as toys, ornaments, or souvenirs. Many small figurines are included in the exhibition.

The Art

The lamps used in ancient civilizations were simple: a chamber to hold fuel, usually olive oil with salt added, and a nozzle to hold a wick. Terracotta (unglazed browish-red earthenware) lamps were generally used in ancient Rome although lamps made from other materials including gold, bronze, and glass were produced for the wealthy upper classes. Terracotta lamps were produced in many places throughout the empire. Most were mold-made with circular or oval oil-chambers, blunt nozzles, and sometimes raised decorative motifs and pictures. Early lamps were made without handles, which were eventually added to later styles. And according to the historian Pliny the Elder, wicks were often made from the fibers of the castor plant.

This lamp from the 4th-5th century is decorated on the discus (the upper body of the lamp) with a relief (raised) image of a palm tree, a common decorative element found in many types of Roman art.
About Textiles

Men, women, and children usually wore a simple undyed tunic, a sleeveless garment made from two pieces of cloth sewn together at the sides and shoulders that slipped over the head and was usually gathered around the waist with a belt. The length of the tunic depended on gender and age, knee length for men and children, ankle length for women and old men. In cold weather a cloak was worn over the tunic for warmth. For formal events, men wore a special woolen robe called a toga over their tunic.

Generally, housewives or slaves made articles of clothing woven from wool or linen, but wealthy aristocrats could buy imported silk for their clothing. Vegetable dyes were used to color the cloth (Roman soldiers wore red tunics beneath their armor), but the most expensive dye was purple, which was made from the murex seashell. This color was used to make the stripes on togas and the clothing of the emperors. Eventually, though still done in the domestic setting, weaving was also done professionally in workshops scattered throughout the empire. In addition to clothing, domestic furnishings and ornamented cloth wrappings for the dead were also produced.

The Art

Several textile remnants have survived from Roman times, most from northern Africa, particularly Egypt, where the hot dry climate was conducive to the preservation of cloth. Most of these are distinguished as Coptic textiles, so called because they were made during the Coptic period of Roman domination when Christian Egyptians (Copts) inhabited parts of northern Africa. This was prior to Arab conquest and the introduction of Islam which forbid the use of figurative images in art. Some textiles from this period have distinct Christian themes or symbols but the textiles probably were not produced solely for the Christians in Egypt, but also for the Greeks, Jews, and Arabs, as well as for trade throughout the Mediterranean. Also, not all Coptic textiles were made by the Christian Egyptians, but by other, non-Christian weavers of the time.

It is rare to find a complete tunic like this one that has survived the ravages of time. It is made of wool which was much more durable than the more commonly used linen. If decorative elements were desired on a garment, they were usually woven as separate tapestries (decorative bands of wool) and attached as you see here. When a garment wore out, the wool tapestry was removed and attached to another garment. The images seen on the tapestry of this garment depict a variety of mythological figures.
About Metalwork

Gold and silver were used to produce luxury items for the wealthy Roman elite, everything from tableware to figurines and statuary. Bronze, a more readily available metal, was used for military items such as helmets and armor as well as everyday tableware and household items. Bronze-manufacturing centers were scattered throughout the empire and often produced objects comparable in quality to those made of more precious metals.

The Art

This incense burner dates from the Coptic period. Its design incorporates elements from both Christian and Jewish traditions. The Christian cross is the main component of the post that supports the boat shaped bowl that holds the incense, yet scratched into the base are Greek words for the Jewish prayer that ends the Sabbath.

Social Studies:
People in Societies Standard
Grade 7 Benchmark 4

Visual Arts:
Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts Standard
Grades K–4 Benchmarks A, B, and C
Grades 5–8 Benchmark A
Grades 9–12 Benchmarks A and B
Curriculum Connections

Pre-Visit Activities:
ONE
Print out the maps in this packet showing the extent of the Roman Empire. Discuss methods for keeping such an empire united, including government, military, trade, and business issues.

Social Studies:
Geography Standard
Grade 6 Benchmark 4
Grade 7 Benchmark 1 and 2

TWO
View a film on ancient Rome to provide additional background information on Roman life and culture. Suggested videos from the Educator Resource Center of The Dayton Art Institute: Ancient Civilizations for Children: Ancient Rome (grades 3-7), Roman City (grades 3–7) and Ancient Rome: The Glorious Empire (grades 7-12)

Social Studies:
History Standard
Grade 7 Benchmark 2

THREE
Discuss the three classes of Roman citizenship and the role of women and slaves in Roman society (see Roman Everyday Life). Make a list of rights and privileges for each group. Make a similar list for each group using American standards and compare.

Social Studies:
Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities Standard
Grade 6 Benchmark 2
Grade 7 Benchmark 1

FOUR
Discover your students’ current knowledge about gods and goddesses.
• Divide students into teams. Print out the lists of gods and goddesses from this packet (see Polytheism page 8) How many names do they already recognize? Which names are more familiar, the Roman or the Greek? Why?
• Make a checklist of the various polytheistic gods for your students to find when they visit the exhibition including the numina and the gods of the mystery religions. (See Polytheism page 8 and 9 for a list.) How many can they find? Were any of them found on objects considered Jewish or early Christian? What does this say about cultural and religious influences within a society?

Social Studies:
People in Societies Standard
Grade 6 Benchmark 2

FIVE
Discuss the basic elements of polytheism, Judaism, and Christianity and Rome’s tolerance of these religions. Are world cultures tolerant of different religions today? Give examples.

Social Studies:
People in Societies Standard
Grade 6 Benchmark 3

SIX
Discuss the techniques and materials used to make the various objects in this exhibition. (See The Art: Selected Objects) Which materials are still used by artists today? How have techniques changed since Roman times?

Visual Arts:
Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts Standard
Grades K–4 Benchmarks A and B
Grades 5–8 Benchmark A
Grades 9–12 Benchmarks A and B
Post-Visit Activities: with a Visual Arts Connection

ONE

The Tree of Paradise mosaic featured in the exhibition was the sanctuary floor of a Jewish synagogue but mosaic floors were also installed in Roman temples and early Christian churches. They all shared common motifs and symbols. Divide students into small groups and assign the task of designing a small-scale mosaic floor for an ancient temple or church. What symbols and design elements from the synagogue floor (see chart in the section Mosaics page 15 and 16) can be used in the new design? Sketch the design on paper, divide it into sections and assign a portion to each student. Make simple paper and glue mosaics or expand the materials to include colored pebbles and stones, found objects of similar size and color, or small pieces of ceramic tile. Assemble the finished mosaic panels to make the completed floor.

Visual Arts: Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts Standard
Grades 5–8 Benchmark B
Grades 9–12 Benchmark D

TWO

Use terracotta or earthenware clay to make an oil lamp. (Air dry clay will also work.) Form a large ball of clay into an egg shape. Flatten one side a little to make the bottom. Pull out one end to make a spout. Push your thumb into the top center to make a hole. Use a spoon to carefully scoop out some of the clay. In an actual lamp this cavity would hold the oil for the lamp. Use a pencil or wooden dowel to make a hole in the tip of the spout. Use the point of the pencil to incise the discus, the top of the lamp, with a creative design. Dry for several days, glaze and fire (or paint if using air dry clay).

Visual Arts: Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts Standard
Grades 5–8 Benchmark B
Grades 9–12 Benchmark D

THREE

Provide students with several examples of Roman jewelry. You will find many printable examples at www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk and www.metmuseum.org. After studying a variety of pieces, direct students to make line drawings of creative, contemporary jewelry designs based on Roman ideas. Use lightweight wire (14 gauge aluminum wire is easy to manipulate), needle-nosed pliers and a variety of craft beads to transform drawings into wearable art.

Visual Arts: Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts Standard
Grades 5–8 Benchmark B
Grades 9–12 Benchmark D

Roman, Attributed to Hammam Lif, Tunisia, GAZELLE IN A MEDALLION, 1st century – 2nd century CE, Stone and mortar, Brooklyn Museum, Museum Collection Fund, 05.30
Post-Visit Activities: with a Social Studies Connection

ONE
Symbols that were common to Judaism, early Christianity, and the polytheistic religions are found throughout the exhibition. These commonly used symbols demonstrate the important connection of the religions to each other and to the Roman culture. Refer to the chart in the Mosaics section, page 15 and 16 for a list of shared symbols. Direct students to find a contemporary visual example of each symbol. For example: how many businesses, athletic teams, and consumer products use the lion as their logo or mascot? Has the meaning of the symbol changed? Why are symbols important to a society? What do shared symbols tell us about our own culture? How are symbols used by religious groups today?

Social Studies:
People in Societies Standard
Grade 6 Benchmark 2

TWO
Divide students into teams of 2. Each team is assigned a Roman god to research. They must find the Roman god’s Greek counterpart, the symbols attributed to each, and a modern day connection such as Valentine’s Day (Cupid), a brand name car (Mercury), etc. Students then combine all their research in one large chart demonstrating connections between Roman and Greek cultures and their continuing influence today. (See Polytheism for a list of gods and goddesses or go on-line. Try these sources: www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0197622.html or www.unrv.com/culture/major-roman-god-list.php.)

Social Studies:
History Standard
Grade 7 Benchmark 2
People in Societies Standard
Grade 6 Benchmarks 2 and 3

THREE
As a follow-up to your museum visit, discuss key social issues related to the exhibition: the role of women in Roman society, Rome’s tolerance of diverse religious groups, everyday life in Rome, etc. Tell students they are going to select one issue and “illustrate” it on the outside surface of a small box. Four-inch square chipboard boxes work well or students can draw and construct their own boxes from heavy poster board. Students can work directly on the surface of the box or on squares of paper that are later attached. Symbols and words that convey their ideas can be drawn, painted, or collaged with a variety of papers. Small objects could also be attached. Students may also want to fill the inside of the box with small items that reference their topic.

Social Studies:
History Standard
Grade 7 Benchmark 2

Visual Arts:
Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts Standard
Grades K–4 Benchmarks B and C
Grades 5–8 Benchmark D
Grades 9–12 Benchmark A
Post-Visit Activities: with a Language Arts Connection

ONE
Write a short story about a day in the life of a young Roman boy or girl based on research. This website contains some interesting and kid-friendly information: http://members.aol.com/donnclass/Romelife.html.

Language Arts:
Writing Applications Standard
Grades K–2 Benchmark A
Grades 3–4 Benchmark A
Grades 5–7 Benchmark A
Grades 8–10 Benchmark A

TWO
Make an illustrated Latin/English dictionary that also includes additional English words based on the Latin root. Assign three or four Latin words to each student who makes a page that includes the Latin term, its English translation, a picture illustrating the word, and a list of English words based on the Latin root. Assemble the pages into one large book.
For example:
Latin: aqua
English: water
Drawing of water
Words with Latin root: aquarium, aqueduct, aquaplane

Here’s a list of starter words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>annum</td>
<td>year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>canis</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caput</td>
<td>head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circus</td>
<td>circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collegia</td>
<td>assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corpus</td>
<td>body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equus</td>
<td>horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hortus</td>
<td>garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>librarium</td>
<td>library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>magnus</td>
<td>great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mater</td>
<td>mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>musica</td>
<td>music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pater</td>
<td>father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orbus</td>
<td>world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terra</td>
<td>land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language Arts:
Acquisition of Vocabulary Standard
Grades 4–7 Benchmark E
Grades 8–10 Benchmark A
Grades 11–12 Benchmark D

Egyptian, TEXTILE OF HALOED HEAD OF A WOMAN, 6th century CE, Wool and linen, Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Pratt Institute, 42.438.4.
Resources

Books


Videos
*Ancient Civilizations for Children: Ancient Rome* (grades 3–7)

*Ancient Rome: The Glorious Empire* (grades 7–12)

*Art of the Western World, vol. 1* (grades 7–12)

*Roman City* (grades 3–7)

*Secrets of the Lost Empires: Colosseum* (grades 5–12)

Listed books and videos are available in the Educator Resource Center of The Dayton Art Institute.

* available in the Lott Memorial Library of The Dayton Art Institute

** also available for purchase in The Museum Store
**Websites**

[http://members.aol.com/donnclass/Romelife.html](http://members.aol.com/donnclass/Romelife.html)
Child-friendly source with lots of information on everyday life

Gods and goddesses

Contains numerous links to everything Roman

Detailed information about the various gods

Kid friendly information about the gods

[http://masca.museum.upenn.edu/roman_glass/index.html](http://masca.museum.upenn.edu/roman_glass/index.html)
Roman glass

Roman lamps

[www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)
On-line access to the museum's Roman art collection

[www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk](http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk)
On-line access to the museum's Roman art collection

This educator packet and packets from previous exhibitions can be downloaded in pdf format from The Dayton Art Institute's website