



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

PART 2 TEACHERS' NOTES

GO ROMAN

THEME 2: THE SYRIAN ARCHER

LET'S
INVESTIGATE
NOTES AND
OBJECT
CHECKLIST





GO ROMAN THEME 2: THE SYRIAN ARCHER



The legions of professional soldiers were supported by auxiliary troops, men drawn into the army from across the Roman Empire. Sometimes these men joined the army voluntarily; at other times they were forced to join. At least eight different auxiliary units served in Scotland, from countries as far off as Syria and Belgium (modern names). Auxiliary units were typically composed of troops with a shared ethnic identity, commanded by Roman citizen officers. Over time, native Britons might be co-opted to serve alongside soldiers from far across the Roman Empire.

One auxiliary unit which served on the Antonine Wall was the First Cohort of Hamians. This was a unit of 500 archers from Hama in the north of the country we know today as Syria. They were famed for their

archery skills, and this is the only known unit of bowmen in Roman Britain. They were stationed on Hadrian's Wall for a while, then later at Bar Hill fort on the Antonine Wall and finally they returned to Hadrian's Wall and were based at Housesteads and Carvoran forts.

The Go Roman virtual reality game features an archer based at Bar Hill fort on the Antonine Wall. Pupils can help him find his misplaced arrows before the kit inspection.

Pupils may be interested in making comparisons between the experiences of Syrians in Scotland nearly 2000 years ago and Syrians arriving in Scotland today.

The box contains the following replica objects on this theme:

- Chain mail tunic
- Archer's helmet
- Arrows
- Bow
- Quiver

TEACHER SUPERVISION REQUIRED

FURTHER RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

<http://www.antoninewall.org/about-wall/building-wall/legions-auxillary-units>

This website has information about the three legions based on the Antonine wall, and the various auxiliary units.

There are numerous videos on YouTube of actors recreating Roman military operations: archery, armour demonstrations, tortoise formation etc. One video called *Roman Military Technology and Tactics* is better than most – try searching using these terms to see a demonstration of Roman archery.



ACTIVITIES



ACTIVITY 1: MAKE AN AUXILIARY ARCHER

Research images of archers and create 'paper dolls' of an archer, and make a set of clothes, armour and weapons for them to wear. Add lollipop sticks and turn them into puppets. Pupils could use different materials (e.g. cloth, foil etc.) to make the clothes more real. Or you could dress Action Man-type dolls.

ACTIVITY 2: MAKE WEAPONS

Using the real items as inspiration, pupils make life-size cardboard bows, arrows quivers and helmets.



HANDLING BOX
OBJECT CHECKLIST
RECEIVED AND
RETURNED



THE SYRIAN ARCHER

Object	Quantity	Notes	Tick received	Tick returned
1. Chain mail tunic	1	Extremely heavy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Archer's helmet	1		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Arrows	3	CHILDREN TO HANDLE UNDER SUPERVISION.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Bow	1		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Quiver	1		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Received

Returned

LET'S INVESTIGATE!



GO ROMAN THEME 2: THE SYRIAN ARCHER

All of these objects are replicas (copies) of things worn or carried by archers in the Roman army when they invaded Scotland. The archers were back up troops called auxiliaries, who helped the main legionary forces. One of the archer units in Scotland was from modern-day Syria. They were famous for their archery skills.

1

Look at the objects.
Were they for protecting the soldier,
or for attacking
enemies - or both?

2

Talk about the
questions on the
cards for each
object.

3

Dress up in
the objects.

4

Strike a pose - are
you attacking,
defending, injured, or
resting? Take a
photograph as a
record.

5

Finally, sketch
one of the
objects.



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CHAIN MAIL TUNIC



TAKE A LOOK

- Look at how it is made.
- Look closely at how each part is joined to the next
- Think about how it would feel next to your skin
- Try to lift it up and see how it feels, and how heavy it is

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What is this tunic made of?
- Would the soldier have worn anything underneath, do you think?
- What would this tunic protect him from?
- How easy would it be to move around?
- Compare it with the armour worn by a legionary. Which would you prefer to wear in battle? Why?
- Why do you think it had short sleeves?

Write notes and ideas from your discussions in the notes section below

NOTES



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THE
ANTONINE WALL
FRONTIERS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

GO ROMAN THEME 2:
THE SYRIAN ARCHER

CHAIN MAIL TUNIC



INFORMATION

This is called chain mail, and would have been worn by an archer living on the Wall.

He would have worn a tunic underneath it to protect his skin.

The short sleeves made it easier to move his arms to fire arrows.

It is very heavy to lift in one go, but when it is worn, the weight is spread across the body.

The close rings would stop any arrows that were fired at him from injuring him.

It is made of hundreds of tiny metal rings, each handmade then joined together so that they can bend and move.



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ARCHER'S HELMET



TAKE A LOOK

- Think about the style and design of the helmet
- Look at the different materials this helmet is made of
- Explore how it fastens to stay in place

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What is it made of?
- Why do you think it is lined with leather?
- Which parts of the head would this helmet protect?
- Compare it with the legionary helmet. Which offers more protection? Why do you think this is?

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ARCHER'S HELMET



The padding inside would help it to fit, and stop it being uncomfortable.

The helmet is made of metal that would protect the head.

The archers were not often involved in hand to hand fighting. They stood further away from the enemy to fire arrows, so didn't need so much protection around their faces.



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ARROWS



HANDLE UNDER ADULT
SUPERVISION ONLY!

TAKE A LOOK

- Look at the different materials the arrows are made of
- Look closely at how the arrowheads are attached to the wooden shafts
- Look closely at how the feathers are attached to the wooden shafts
- Pick up the arrows very carefully and feel the weight and balance

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What materials have been used to make the arrows?
- What is the arrowhead made of?
- Why do you think the arrow had feathers on the end?
- How could the arrow fit on to the bow string?

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ARROWS



HANDLE UNDER ADULT
SUPERVISION ONLY!

The arrowheads are made of solid metal, and the shafts are made of wood.

The feathers at the end helped the arrow fly through the air.

The little groove (line) in the shaft behind the feathers fits into the bow string, allowing the archer to fire the arrow.

Archers had to train so that they could hit targets over very long distances, and not waste their arrows when they fired them.



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BOW



TAKE A LOOK

- Look at the different materials the bow is made of
- Look closely at the shape
- Pick it up carefully and feel the weight
- Work out how it should be held

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What is the bow made of?
- Where do you think the bow string would go? Look for a groove which would have guided the string.
- Which way round would you hold the bow?
- Which hand would you hold it in?

Write notes and ideas from your discussions in the notes section below

NOTES



INFORMATION

BOW

The bow is made of layers of wood, animal sinew and horn glued together.

The archer would grip it in the centre and it would be held lengthways up and down his body

It could be held in either hand

It is light and springy, rather than stiff, to help the arrows fly faster and further.

The string would run between the two grooves at each end of the bow.

The groove at the back of the arrow would fit into the string, he would pull it back, and the arrowhead would rest against the handle





QUIVER



TAKE A LOOK

- Look at the materials the quiver is made of
- Look at how it opens
- Think about how it could be carried

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What do you think the archer kept in it?
- What is it made of?
- How do you think the archer would have worn the quiver? Try it on.

Write notes and ideas from your discussions in the notes section below

NOTES



INFORMATION

QUIVER

This bag is called a quiver, and was used to carry the arrows that the archer needed.

It is made of leather with a strap that he could put across his body, with the arrows in the quiver on his back.

The quiver kept the arrows safe from damage, but more importantly meant that he could easily reach more arrows when he needed them.

The archer needed to be able to reach his arrows quickly to keep on firing. He would have trained so that he could reach for them over his shoulder without looking, then quickly fit them to his bow and fire.



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OBJECT INFORMATION

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- This is called chain mail, and would have been worn by an archer living on the Wall.
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- It is made of hundreds of tiny metal rings, each handmade then joined together so that they can bend and move.
- The short sleeves made it easier to move his arms to fire arrows.
- The close rings would stop any arrows that were fired at him from injuring him.
- It is very heavy to lift in one go, but when it is worn, the weight is spread across the body.

3. ARROWS

- The arrowheads are made of solid metal, and the shafts are made of wood.
- The feathers at the end helped the arrow fly through the air.
- The little groove (line) in the shaft behind the feathers fits into the bow string, allowing the archer to fire the arrow.
- Archers had to train so that they could hit targets over very long distances, and not waste their arrows when they fired them.

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2. ARCHER'S HELMET

- The helmet is made of metal that would protect the head.
- The padding inside would help it to fit, and stop it being uncomfortable.
- The archers were not often involved in hand to hand fighting. They stood further away from the enemy to fire arrows, so didn't need so much protection around their faces.

4. BOW

- The bow is made of layers of wood, animal sinew and horn glued together.
- It is light and springy, rather than stiff, to help the arrows fly faster and further.
- The string would run between the two grooves at each end of the bow.
- It could be held in either hand
- The archer would grip it in the centre and it would be held lengthways up and down his body
- The groove at the back of the arrow would fit into the string, he would pull it back, and the arrowhead would rest against the handle

WHAT'S IN THE BOX



1. Chain mail tunic
2. Archer's helmet
3. Arrows
4. Bow
5. Quiver



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