

## CRAFTY ROMANS

### EAGLE BROOCHES ACTIVITY



*Image: Eagle brooches*

The Latin name for an eagle is Aquila. Few symbols represent the power of the Roman empire like the Eagle! The eagle is a terrifying hunting bird. The bird's wide wing span represents the wide span of this great empire.

There is a legend behind the Romans adopting the eagle as their insignia and it goes like this:

One day, teenage Gaius Marius found an eagle's nest that had seven eggs. This was unusual because eagles usually lay two to three eggs. Surprised to see this, Marius visited some seers (people who tell the future) and asked them what this meant. Romans were very superstitious. The seers told him that this was a good omen for him and foretold that he would hold consulship (the highest elected Roman official) seven times.

Years later, after Marius held the consulship seven times, he decreed that the eagle would be the symbol of the republic.

The Romans adopted this symbol as their own because Jupiter, the king of Gods and the sky had the eagle symbol alongside his thunderbolt to represent power and courage. They considered the eagle a good representation of who they were, ferocious, courageous, and powerful.

These are two examples of enamelled brooches in the shape of an eagle. Although the Romans made brooches in the form of many different animals, examples like this are quite rare, so it is of interest that we have two examples from the site, found in different parts of the fort. The one on the right still has the loop at the bottom for attaching a decorative chain.

## ACTIVITIES

### TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT BOTH PINS

What do you see, notice and wonder about them? Did a soldier wear these bravely into battle? Can you pretend to be an eagle, spread your arms out wide, flap and soar proudly and boldly. Do you feel strong, courageous and powerful?

### NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

What animal would you chose to represent who you are? Using materials you have in school or around the house and from nature, try and make a collage picture or model of your animal. You could use Lego, building blocks, stones, magazine clippings, card, buttons, pasta, leaves, flower petals, grass, shells, etc.

### LEARNING EXTENSION

A story is a great way to describe events, people, ideas, and history, just like the story of how the Romans adopted the eagle as their symbol of power. Write a story that explains why you chose the animal you did and how it represents you. Now imagine you are living during Roman times, would you choose the same animal for the same reasons? Would you choose a different animal and Why?