

# Strigil

MU4201



## What is a strigil?

The strigil was an important piece of Roman personal toiletry equipment. A key part of the Roman bathing routine involved cleaning the body with oil. As a way to maintain personal hygiene oil was rubbed into the body and a strigil was then used to scrape away any excess oil, and any associated dead skin, dirt and grime.

Strigils originated from Greece where they were commonly used by Athletes to remove dirt, dust and oil from their bodies after exercising. Oil was commonly applied to the bodies of athletes so as to lubricate the muscles and to protect the skin. This practice was adopted by the Romans and was incorporated into both their exercise and personal bathing routines.

Strigils illustrate the level of importance that was placed on health and personal hygiene in Roman society, whilst also serve to highlight the significance of bathing and exercise as social and leisure activities. The public baths, although primarily being places to bathe, were also places to meet, conduct business, exercise and socialise and as such would have been incredibly lively places. Regardless of their social class, all Romans would have used the public baths and thus they can be viewed as a great social equaliser.