



Module 4

Unit 8

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Module 4

Unit 8: Descriptive tours

Task 1: Multiple choice¹

Question 1

Compared to stand-alone ADs, descriptive tours...

- a) ...also emphasise the history and background information of the object being described.
- b) ...include reference to the tactile exploration of the objects.
- c) ...help persons with sight loss (PSL) to orient through the picture or the sculpture being described.
- d) ...link objects together in a coherent itinerary.

Question 2

Planning an effective descriptive tour is a complex process, which comprises....

- a) ...team work.
- b) ...translation work.
- c) ...recording the narration.
- d) ...the description of most items in a museum.

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¹ The responses are based on the ADLAB PRO core videos. Only one answer is correct.

Question 3

In a museum space, what is considered the “source text” of an AD?

- a) Each object described in the AD text.
- b) The whole selection of interconnected objects and the museum experience.
- c) The AD text itself, which can then be translated into other languages.
- d) The museum brochures and all the information about the objects to be described.

Question 4

What objects should you choose for a descriptive tour?

- a) Objects that are rare and intricate, and need to be made accessible to PSL.
- b) Objects that are meaningful and mirror the exhibition’s narrative.
- c) Entertaining objects that are difficult to imagine.
- d) The most common objects in the museum, that are easy to describe and to imagine.

Question 5

During a live descriptive tour, the guide should...

- a) ...keep a tight schedule and encourage visitors to move on, if enough time has passed.
- b) ...ask the feedback of the visitors at every exhibit to ameliorate the following tour.
- c) ...provide clear orientation instructions to the visitor to make them independent.
- d) ...limit the interaction with visitors in order to maintain the descriptions structured and linear.



Module 4

Unit 8: Descriptive tours

Task 2

Aim(s):

- Learners can analyse a descriptive tour of an exhibition.
- Learners can identify the main textual and content elements of a descriptive tour.

Grouping: individual, pairs of groups.

Approximate timing: 3 hours.

Material and preparation needed:

- The AD script of a descriptive tour (e.g. handout).

Development:

1. Learners read the AD script thoroughly.
2. Learners identify and underline elements that contribute to the organization of the text, and produce a checklist.
3. Learners identify and label the type of information that is delivered in different sections of the script, and produce a checklist.
4. Learners compare their checklists and discuss.
5. Does your final checklist provide enough information to enable you to structure a new AD tour?
6. Is there anything missing in this AD tour? Specify and discuss, and reformulate your checklist accordingly.

Additional comments:

1. The handout comprises 2 descriptive tours to work with.
2. This task can be performed with groups of learners working on different descriptive tour scripts, eventually comparing different checklists.



Task 2: Handout

Descriptive tour 1

AD script for the audioguide to The Guardians to the King exhibition, Colchester Castle Museum, Essex (courtesy of Tom Hodges).

Guardians to the King

Welcome to Colchester Museum and this audio guide for Guardians to the King – an exhibition that has been specially organised to mark twenty years of friendship between Essex and Jiangsu province in China. To begin we're going to give you some background information about the exhibits and how they're displayed, so you might want to find a quiet place to listen.

Introduction

In ancient China people believed when they died they entered another world that mirrored this world. In the afterlife the dead required all the possessions they had when they were alive. At first this was interpreted literally - royal tombs were filled with fine objects and the bodies of sacrificed servants and wives.

Following the death of the First Emperor of China in 210BC, there was a period of civil war. A man named Liu Bang emerged victorious

in 206BC. He declared himself emperor and founded the Han Dynasty which, with one short break, lasted for over 400 years. It was seen as a golden age by later generations.

When Liu Bang became Emperor he rewarded family members and others who had helped him to seize power, making his half brother, Liu Jiao, King of Chu. The kings of Chu governed on behalf of the Han emperors from the ancient city of Pengcheng, near modern Xuzhou. It lies in Jiangsu Province on the North China Plain, almost halfway between Beijing and Shanghai. There were twelve kings of Chu in a period that lasted some 200 years. When they died, the kings were buried in tombs cut into the rocky hillsides close to the city. The tombs were named for the hills in which they were located— including Beidongshan, Shizishan and Tuolanshan. Although the tombs and their contents were made for the dead, they reveal details of what it was like to live in ancient China.

All the figures in this Exhibition date from the first part of the Han Dynasty, known as the Western Han Dynasty, from 206BC to 8AD – a period when human sacrifice almost disappeared and instead various lifelike figures, made of wood or terracotta, were placed in the tombs. This exhibition contains 43 terracotta figurines of dancers, musicians, soldiers and officials which are examples of this custom. The figurines are all between 30cms and 45 cms tall - that's between 12 and 18 inches. Some retain traces of their original paintwork, though most are the natural colour of the material from which they

are made, their surface rough and pitted. While the figures themselves have survived, their accessories including weapons and instruments were made of materials such as wood and leather, which have perished.

All the figurines have been generously loaned by Xuzhou Museum. They're displayed in glass cases mounted on grey plinths at hip-height. There are 6 cases in all – some contain just one or two figures, others containing larger groups. The figures are either standing or kneeling and are fixed in position by discreet perspex supports. Around the walls are panels containing written information as well as images and photographs. We've incorporated the information into this audioguide. There is also a short video of a Chinese dancer performing a long-sleeve dance. It's projected onto the ceiling in the exhibition space. If you'd like to, you can watch an audio described version of this dance on a separate DVD player. Simply ask the invigilator who handed you this audio guide. There are also two replica models of terracotta soldiers which can be touched. Again, the invigilator can help you locate them. We hope you enjoy this display of treasures from Ancient China. Do remember you can press pause at any time.

If you're ready, make your way to the first display case. It straddles an ornate ironwork vent that's set into the floor and runs the length of the exhibition space. Please take care as you cross it.

Display Case 1

The single terracotta figure in this first case is of a Cavalry scout. He sits on a horse, whose body, legs and head have all come from different moulds. The horse's body is lumpy, rather crudely shaped and grey in colour. A tail hangs straight down behind, ending in an elaborate knot. The four legs are more delicately moulded than the body and slightly paler in colour. The neck and head of the horse are upright, and the mouth drawn back where it once held a bit. A pronounced forelock tops the head, but the ears are now missing.

The scout is dressed in a tunic with boots that would have been made of hessian. His body emerges from the horse's back, and his lower legs - simplified shapes that taper into a point at the foot - stick out at an angle from the horse's belly. Damage has rendered many of the details of the scout's body indistinct and the hands are missing. However, the facial features of this figurine suggest that he is one of the many non-ethnic Chinese soldiers who were recruited into the cavalry from the horse-riding tribes bordering the Chinese empire in Central Asia. The figure was excavated in 1984 from the warrior pit at Shizishan Hill.

Immediately beyond this case, is case 2 – the largest in the exhibition. It contains...

Display Case 2

... a total of 24 pieces - four horses, one official and, ranked in rows behind them, 19 soldiers. All of the figures were excavated from either the warrior pit or the tomb at Shizishan Hill.

Over 2000 years ago the Romans first became aware of silk. It was produced in China and then traded across Asia along what became known as the Silk Route. Chinese silk became so popular with fashionable Romans that laws were passed to restrict its use and stop vast sums of money leaving the Roman Empire to pay for it.

As the emperors of the Han Dynasty expanded their empire west along the silk route into Central Asia, they needed to strengthen their northern frontier by extending and guarding the Great Wall. They raised a huge army and all men between the ages of 23 and 56 were required to serve for two years.

Four cavalry horses stand abreast at the front of the case. From hooves to ears, they measure over two feet tall. The horses are almost identical - although like the scout's horse they have been assembled from parts made in a number of separate moulds. The body is quite chunky, the tail hanging straight down and knotted at the end. The legs are straight as though each horse is standing still, and the detailing of the hooves is quite fine. The neck and head are expressive - alert - with wide, round eyes and open nostrils, their slender ears pointed up and forward. The horse's mouth is drawn

back to accommodate the bit - now absent so each horse is left with a curiously benign smile. The slight variations in the way the various elements are assembled means that each horse has a character of its own.

As we move around this large case anti-clockwise - standing behind the row of horses is an official - his status is indicated by the figurine's increased scale and height of some 60cms – about two feet. He has fine facial features and his hair parted in the centre and pulled into a small bun on the top of his head. He wears a long gown with a deep ribbed collar that crosses over at the front. The collar of an under-robe is visible beneath. His hands are clasped together in front of him, but concealed within the voluminous sleeves of his gown. In case 3 we'll encounter another official who retains his original paintwork, which will allow us to go into more detail.

The next row of four figures are all kneeling and resting back on their heels. Two of them are charioteers and the other two soldiers who would have ridden on the chariot.

Nearest to us - to the right of the row - are the charioteers. Each is dressed in short-sleeved armour over a long gown. Their hair is centrally parted but mostly covered by a flat helmet which ties under the chin. The men sit upright, both arms reaching out from the elbow, clenching their fists as if grasping the reins of their chariot horses.

Furthest from us - to the left of the row - kneel the two soldiers. Each wears a large bell-like helmet which covers his neck and flares over the top of his narrow shoulders. His face appears through a shield-shaped opening which comes to just below his lips, leaving his chin covered. Like the charioteers, the soldiers wear short sleeved armour over long gowns. Each man hunches forwards, clasping his right hand around a now absent weapon, the deep sleeves falling open.

The row behind them consists of 5 standing soldiers, just over a foot tall, whose dress is identical to the kneeling charioteers - but as they are standing more detail is visible. Short-sleeved armour is worn over a gown which falls to just below the knee. Underneath, the hem of an under gown is visible, then baggy trousers which are tucked into calf-length boots. Either side the gown hangs down to a point. Their hair is combed back and covered by a flat helmet that, like the rest of their armour, would have been made of leather. The men would have carried a quiver of arrows on their backs and they stand with their hands together in front of them at waist height - the right hand on top of the left which would have clasped an upright spear or halberd.

Behind them are 5 slightly taller soldiers. Their short armour is clearly defined - covering the torso from chest to just below the waist. On their heads are flat helmets which tie under the chin. Under the armour each man wears a long gown, the deep collar of which reveals an under-layer. The knee length hem of the gown is

curved up at the front, so that it hangs longer at either side. It exposes the bottoms of trousers tucked into square-toed boots. The soldiers hold both their arms to the side.

The back row contains 5 more soldiers, these dressed in ankle-length gowns which cross over at the neck with a high collar. The gowns are slim fitting and tied with a belt or cord below the waist. On their feet are square-toed boots. Each man's right arm is held down by his side. His left arm is raised up from the elbow, allowing the wide sleeve with its deep fold-back cuff to bell open. A hole in the left hand shows where he would have held a weapon. Each man's hair is parted centrally, combed back and gathered into a bun at the back of their head. Although identical, the heads are positioned slightly differently on each soldier giving a sense of individuality.

An image on the text panel nearby shows a battle in full swing. It's a stylised depiction, with black and white, two dimensional figures of opposing armies clashing by a river. On the bank to left archers with cross-bows try to fight off the attackers, who are surging over a simple wooden bridge. Infantrymen are in the vanguard, piling down the steps, a chariot is on the bridgehead, and cavalry bring up the rear.

As you walk round towards the front of the case the next display case is to your right, just a couple of paces away. Walk around to the left hand side of the case.

Display Case 3

Ranged in front of you are 5 figures standing in a row – 4 guards and one official. All the figurines were excavated in 1986 from the tomb at Beidongshan Hill, and retain much of their original paintwork. They shed light on the clothing worn during the Han Dynasty.

At the right hand end of the row stands the tallest figure. He measures 55cms, that's nearly 2 foot tall. He's an official who wears a close-fitting black hat that ties under his chin - the ties are painted on in black. There's a hole in the top his hat where he would have kept his pen. His face is mostly smooth, covered with slip that's painted white - although across his forehead the thin layer of slip has flaked off. It leaves only traces of his eyebrows, but his almond shaped eyes remain complete, outlined with a fine black line. His pupils are also black and he gazes ahead with a thoughtful expression. He has a long narrow nose and his small lips are reddened. The official wears three layers of gown that end at the shin, below which baggy trousers reach to the floor. The gown is mostly the colour of stone but has a red border where it crosses over at the neck, and there's a dotted black line running from the man's right shoulder to his waist that was once a painted sword. The official stands with his hands held together in front of him, though the hands themselves are hidden within the deep cuffs of his gown. The cuffs are painted red and there's a slot in them that once held the Official's notebook. Officials were crucial to the imperial system

of government developed by the Han Dynasty. The system was embedded in Chinese society and lasted for over 2000 years. The Han emperors adopted the teachings of the philosopher Confucius who taught that an enlightened government was important for the good of the state. Academies were founded and examinations established to select the best candidates to work for the government. It was a system of merit and the most able officials could, with a little luck, rise through the many official grades to become a senior minister.

Standing to the left of the Official are four royal bodyguards. Their bodies have come from the same mould, but the men can be distinguished by their head-gear and their facial features, and their gowns differ in the details of their painted decoration. The gowns reach to mid-calf with baggy trousers beneath. As with the official, the guards' shoes are not attached to the figures, but take the form of small squares of terracotta, that rest on the ground in front of them. The shoes curve inwards at the front, so they look like plump little pillows of clay. The gowns the guards wear are tied at the waist and from the belt would have hung a cord inscribed with their rank: "Lang Zhong" which means Royal Bodyguard. The suggestion of one such cord is just visible as a fine red line painted on the gown of the guard that's 3rd from the left.

Moving from left to right along the row, the first guard has a brown helmet with broad side pieces that cover his ears and extend to his jaw. Thinner ties fasten under his chin. His face is pale, his features

faded but he has a narrow line of a moustache and the hint of a beard. His gown is white, the high collar of his undergown is painted red and bunches up around his neck. The gown worn by the 2nd figure is more faded. This guard wears a black hat with thin ties that are pulled over his ears and fasten under the chin. He has a broad forehead and his eyebrows are painted on in black. The 3rd guard is the best preserved. He wears a brown helmet. His face is white and picked out above his red lips is a narrow moustache that curls at the tips. The border of his gown is patterned in black and red and running from his left shoulder to his knee is a long narrow black rectangle - an elongated sword. A white circle towards the top, by the hilt of the sword, represents jade decoration. Traces of similar swords are visible on all the guards' gowns. As well as their painted weapons, all the guards stand with their hands held by their right hip, their left hand above their right, and the fingers curled as originally they would have also held a replica spear or halberd. The paintwork on the 4th guard is more faded than the others, though his eyebrows are quite clearly defined.

From the other side of the case, the backs of the figures are fairly plain. Several have a belt, painted in black, around their waists, and also a band of red that suggests some kind of ceremonial sash. The men all bend slightly at the knee, as if they were trained to stand with their knees relaxed rather than locked in position.

As you face the backs of the figures, the next case is located to your right a pace or 2 away. Turning towards this case, the figures it contains are facing you.



Display Case 4

After the formal poses of the figures we've met so far, the ones in this case are strikingly different. Music and dance had an important role in Chinese ritual. Here 3 dancers are accompanied by 4 musicians kneeling in a row behind them. Each of the dancers is around 44cms – that's 18 inches – tall. The kneeling height of the musicians is just over 30cms, about a foot high. All the figures are female.

The 3 dancers at the front of the case are not stiffly posed, but are frozen mid-dance, their bodies forming graceful, almost abstract shapes, arranged in sinuous curves. They are performing a long sleeved dance – a dance designed to imitate the movement of water and air. Each dancer is swathed in a close-fitting tubular gown that trails to the floor. The tight sleeves widen from the elbow and completely cover the hands, with a long inner sleeve protruding from the cuff, so the arms appear half as long again. The dresses would once have been brilliantly coloured. All that remains now are a few patches of red and bands of black. The dancer to the right leans to one side, her hands held up and away from her body, elbows soft so her arms arc like the graceful branches of a tree. The central dancer rounds her back, pulling in her stomach. She lets her left arm hang by her side, her right arm held up in front of her, her wrist limp so the sleeve extension droops vertically down towards her knees. The dancer to the left twists at the waist, sweeping her left arm across in

front of her, the sleeve exaggerating the movement. She dips to that side, her eyes following the line of her arm, her head cradled against her shoulder. Her right elbow is lifted high, the arm curving down, echoing the curving line of her body. This type of dance is still popular today and there's a short video of the long-sleeve dance continuously playing overhead. If you'd like to watch an audio-described DVD of this dance, please ask the invigilator when you hand back this audio guide.

Kneeling in a row behind the dancers are 4 musicians. The musicians in this case would have been playing a silk stringed zither, a bamboo flute and sets of stone chimes. All the musicians are women, their hair combed up from their foreheads, parted in the centre and coiled in a heavy bun at the back. They are dressed in long wrap-over gowns with a v-neck, the high collars of their undergowns visible beneath. The gowns have wide, ribbed cuffs. Though the women are dressed almost identically, each has an individually characterised face. The figure to the right sits back on her heels, her hands raised over a low rectangular block of stone on the floor in front of her. It's a "se" an ancient form of zither: 5 cms thick, 15 cms wide and 54cms from one end to the other –that's 2 inches thick, 6 inches wide and two foot across. It has 4 mushroom-shaped knobs at the right hand end – the tuning pegs – and immediately to the left of each peg is a ridge and a row of tiny holes across which the silk was strung. The instrument is still played in China and other countries today. To the left of the zither-player, a woman kneels up, her chin lowered towards her



chest, her wrists close together. Her hands are broken off, but the position of the stumps indicate she originally played a flute. Examples of bamboo flutes were found in the tomb at Tuolanshan Hill from which all these figures were excavated in 1989/90. The remaining two musicians are also sitting back on their heels, their arms held out in front of them. Again their instruments are missing, but their fists are clenched as they would have gripped hammers to play stone chimes, that would have been suspended from a wooden frame. The musicians purse their lips with concentration and their hands – one raised slightly higher than the other – give a sense of movement.



Display case 5

To your right, Case 5 stands within its own small alcove and contains 4 soldiers standing in a row – the soldiers facing in alternate directions. We'll start by describing the figure nearest to the centre of the room.

The first soldier stands some 12 inches high, and has a solid stance and a purposeful expression - like a man on guard. His feet are planted apart, and he wears short armour over his long gown. His hair is combed back and covered with a flat helmet. Both arms bend up at the elbows where they would have held a spear or halberd in front of him.

The second soldier faces the other way. Slightly taller, he wears a bell-like helmet like the ones we met in Case 2. It covers his neck and flares over the top of his narrow shoulders. His face appears through a shield-shaped opening which comes to just below his lips, leaving his chin covered. His robe falls to just above knee length, where three under layers are visible. Beneath these robes, he wears knee-length boots. This figurine is unique - the only soldier like this found on the site. His hands are held out at waist height as though carrying a cross bow.

The third man faces the same way as the first. His armour is clearly defined - coming up to his chest and covering the tops of his arms. A

flat helmet covers his ears. Under the armour is a cross over robe which reaches his knees, where baggy trousers are tucked into boots. He looks slightly up, with his arms by his sides. The hands and wide sleeves are damaged.

The last soldier has his hair brushed back and gathered into a large bun at the back of his neck. He wears a cross-over gown with a deep collar which fits slimly against his body, falling to just above his ankles. Beneath, baggy trousers are tucked into square-toed boots. He holds his right arm against his side, his left arm crooked up at the elbow to hold a weapon - making the large cuff of his gown hang open. The slimness of this figure, and his stance - leaning slightly forward from the waist - make him appear delicate in comparison to the others.

Like most of the figurines on exhibition here, these soldiers were found in a tomb on Shizishan Hill. Despite centuries of tomb raiding many of the burials survived for archaeologists to discover. In 1984 a series of pits containing thousands of figurines of warriors and horses was discovered. Ten years later the tomb itself was excavated. Some of the text panels on the walls include photographs of the archaeological excavations. The tomb was a palace for the afterlife with a long passage and vaulted ceilings, sometimes as high as a five-story building. There were many rooms including a coffin chamber, a stable, an armoury, several kitchens, a living chamber, a bathroom and a treasury. The tomb contained many fine objects of gold, bronze

and jade including a burial suit made from more than 4,000 pieces of jade plaques sewn together with gold thread. It is the largest tomb to be discovered so far and almost certainly belonged to Liu Wu who was the third King of Chu and great-nephew of the first Han Emperor.



Display case 6

If you emerge from the alcove and turn to your left, the final display case is at the end of the exhibition space. It's a small case containing 2 more modest figures - soldiers that would have been placed in the tomb of a nobleman rather than a royal grave. They are less well preserved than most of the figures we've encountered so far and no trace of their paintwork remains. The taller of the two soldiers stands to the left. He's 45 cms high and was excavated in 1986 from the tomb at Wanzhai. He has a wide, low forehead, deep-set eyes, a broad flattened nose and his lips are set in a determined expression. He's dressed in armour, a tunic with a short upright collar. The tunic falls to mid-thigh, with two longer gowns beneath. The hem of the undergown dips down to ankle length at the back – but it's higher at the front, just brushing the tops of the soldier's boots. In his left hand, he carries a shield, that covers his body from waist to knee. The shield is rectangular, with notched edges. The hand that once gripped the shield has broken off – so the shield is simply attached by string to the soldier's left arm. His right arm is bent at the elbow, the hand raised to chest level, the fingers curled as he originally held a weapon.

The 2nd figurine is the oldest in the Exhibition. It is thought to have been made some half a century earlier than the others and is much more crudely fashioned, with little detail. The hair melds into the face and the only distinguishable feature is the tip of the soldier's

nose. His arms are fused to his body. He wears a long gown that flares out where it meets his square-toed boots. He would originally have held a weapon. This figure was excavated from the tomb at Liwo.

And that concludes your tour. We hope you've enjoyed it. Don't forget, if you'd like to handle a replica soldier, or listen to the audio description of the long-sleeved dance, please ask the invigilator when you hand back your guide. And please feel free to pass on any feedback. Thank you.

That is the end of this audio guide which has been written and read by Louise Fryer and Andrew Holland. Colchester Museum would like to acknowledge the following organisations for making this exhibition possible: Xuzhou Museum;
Jiangsu provincial government; Essex County Council; Momart Limited; The British Museum; Wu Yanmei; Signals Media.



Descriptive tour 2

AD script for the audioguide to the ground floor of the National Archeological Museum of Aquileia, Italy.

Beacon 1 – Ticket office

Welcome to the National Archeological Museum of Aquileia. This short descriptive tour will accompany you while you visit the rooms. If you are at the ticket office, go past it and leave it on your right. The first room you will go through is the introductory room of the museum, which gives information about the city of Aquileia. The ground floor is composed of five rooms where you will find four exhibits which you can explore with your hands.

Four items will be shown on this tour: the relief of the foundation ritual of Aquileia, the statue of Augustus, the bronze head of Boreas, the god of wind, and the cinerary urn which depicts a funeral banquet. During your visit you will discover the items through their description. You can also touch and explore with your hands all the artefacts described, their level of tridimensionality, the geometry of their composition. You can use just one or both your hands and employ the palms, the fingers and the fingertips. Take as long as you want – seeing with your hands is an emotional and complex experience.

To reach the first room, take about ten steps along the corridor.

Beacon 2 – 1st room

Now you are in the first room of the museum. This room gives information about the city of Aquileia, its area and its rich history. In order to trace the history of Aquileia, one of the most important items is the limestone bas relief which depicts the foundation ritual of the Roman colony. It is located opposite the entrance on the other side of the room: go forward about five steps to reach the bas-relief. It dates back to the 1st century AD. Originally it was probably placed in one of the city gates. The relief was discovered while doing farm work in a garden close to the museum. The stone slab, which you can touch starting from its edges, is over one meter wide and about 44 centimeters high; it's 9 centimeters deep and it is hung on the wall. The bottom corners on the right and on the left are splintered and there's a wide frame on the whole lower edge.

Let's start exploring the relief from the left. The first character is a man at a three-quarter angle with his head turned to the right; he wears a short robe, his knees are exposed. The man is holding the reins of two large bovine animals, on his immediate right. The animals are depicted in profile with their heads slightly turned to the audience. They are adorned with triangular decorations placed on their horns and they are drawing a plough, which is depicted behind them and partly wedged into the soil. Behind the animals there's a second man who is also wearing a robe. His right hand is lifted and it looks like the man is showing the group where to go. Moving on with the exploration, on his right there are four men wearing long robes, which are called *togas*. The first one is holding the arm of the man who is guiding the plough, he seems to be showing the man how to



plough. Then we find two other characters who are talking to each other, and a fourth whose back is turned, a bit separate from the others.

If you wish, you can begin to identify at least some parts of the composition by touching the relief. Otherwise simply touch the stone with both hands or try to recognize the shapes and sizes of the artefacts.

This representation shows the foundation ritual of Aquileia, which dates back to 181 BC. Just like Rome and the Etrurian cities earlier, during the ceremony of foundation of a new colony, a plough drawn by a bull and a cow, both white, had to cover the whole city perimeter. By doing this, the *sulcus primigenius* was formed, and it would separate the space of the living from that of the dead. Priests and magistrates who would witness the ritual had to follow the will of gods by making sure the ceremony took place according to its strict rules and by observing the flight of the birds, in order for all to turn out for the best.

Now we are ready to continue our visit within the ancient metropolis of Aquileia. Go past the stairs and the lift, then you will arrive to the third room, which is dedicated to statuary. Here you can find the best items of statuary art from the surroundings.

Beacon 3 – Statuary room

The most important piece in this room is the **statue of Augustus**, which dates back to the first half of the first century AD, and is located on the wall opposite the entrance slightly to the left of your present position. This statue depicts Augustus, the first emperor, adoptive child of Julius Caesar which you can start to touch by sliding your fingers along its surface. The statue is represented on a larger scale than natural, it is 2,20 meters high. The character wears a toga, a long piece of cloth draped around the body, which was the typical dress of Roman citizens. This statue is made of cream-colored marble. It sits on a small rectangular plinth and it is sustained by iron supports which are visible only at foot level. Augustus is upright and composed. The toga covers his head, but some of his locks fall slightly forward on the forehead. Augustus is wrinkling his eyebrows, in a typical frown. His eyes are looking forward in a serious and solemn expression. The outer, more delicate parts of the statue, like the nose and some folds of the toga, have been chipped over the years. If you wish, you can try to identify them by touching the chipped surface which seem rougher to the touch.

His mouth is characterized by full lips, the face has two dimples on the cheeks. The chin, like the cheeks, is also dimpled. The neck has a marked carotid.

The rest of the body is completely covered by the wide, draped toga. Now you can explore the central and lower parts of the statue with your hands. The light drapes along the whole body contribute to conveying a wider sense of movement. The folds cover the whole silhouette of Augustus' body, creating a pocket on his chest. It is the

typical vest of the *pontifex maximus*, the highest priestly office at the time, whose head had to be covered to show respect to the gods during sacred celebrations.

Not only has the statue chipped parts on the face, the body is damaged as well: the left arm is broken at the wrist and the hand, together with the right forearm and the feet, are missing. Originally Augustus held a patera (a sort of bowl used to make offers during religious ceremonies) in his right hand, and a cornucopia (a horn filled with fruits and flowers which symbolizes abundance and wealth) in his left hand.

The statue is almost flat at the back. This suggests that in the past the statue was meant to be seen frontally and it used to be in a recess. The statue was discovered in 1879 in the north-western part of the Aquileian area, close to the circus. It was maybe part of the decorations of a villa or of a public monumental building.

You can stay in this room to listen in more detail to the tactile reading of the statue. Or continue straight into the next room, reserved for architecture.

Beacon 4 – Architecture room

The next piece is the **applique of the head of Boreas, the god of wind**. This exhibit is housed in a glass case by the entrance, on the left hand side of the room. It is a bas relief which you can begin to touch by starting from the sides. It is 36,5 centimeters high and 28,5 centimeters wide; it is only 7 centimeters thick. The applique portrays the head of one of the gods of wind, Boreas. It is larger than life-size. It is of an uneven green color, due to the oxidation of bronze. Now you can touch the reproduction of the applique, starting from the top and then moving down.

You are facing a profile; the applique depicts the left part of the face. Starting from the top, the forehead has a wrinkle which cuts across between the hairline and the eyebrows. The smooth parts, in which the skin is tense over the muscles and the veins, stop at eye level. The eye is looking straight ahead and the eyebrow is arched in an S shape and decorated with carved parallel lines. The eyelids are sharply outlined. Moving down, the contour of the nose does not exactly follow a straight line, instead it protrudes and has a widened nostril. The lips, which are made from a different metal, have been carved carefully, and they are depicted in the act of blowing, an appropriate activity for a god of wind. The hair takes up the right side of the applique, and it is meant to convey the idea of movement, almost like a wind blowing from east to west. The thick, flaming hair consists of irregular locks. They are straight and trimmed at certain points, while in others they are wavy. Those sprouting from the

forehead are shorter and rise up, but as they move further from the face, they become longer and longer. Behind the neck, at the nape, the ends of the hair are curly. Part of the pointed ear can be seen between the thick locks. Behind it there's a leaden piece with a groove, which indicates that an element of the applique is missing, maybe a little wing. The moustache and the beard are thick and curly as well, but are a different shape from the hair.

The applique was part of a larger bronze group which used to decorate a public monument in the roman forum, where it was discovered in 1988 in a well, at a depth of 75 centimeters. It is thought that this applique was hidden there during a siege or other dangerous situation. The piece has an extraordinary historic and artistic value because it is a Hellenistic-style piece created during the Roman period.

You can stay in this room to listen in more detail to the tactile reading of the bas-relief. Or continue directly into the last room of the ground floor, reserved for funerary art. Here you can find items from various necropolises in Aquileia.

Beacon 5 – Funerary art room

The large **cinerary urn which depicts a funeral banquet** is the last stop of our visit on the ground floor. It has a cylindrical shape and it is hollow on the inside, it is 67 centimeters high and has a diameter of 34 centimeters. This urn is made of limestone from Aurisina and its color is white, tending at times to grey. The urn sits on a column, which acts as a pivot and raises it to shoulder height. This support enables us to turn it and enjoy it in the round. You can put your hands over the urn and start exploring it with your fingers. It is not easy to identify the single elements that we describe but if you wish, you can attempt to recognize a few. Alternatively, you can simply try to appreciate the material the urn is made of, or recognize the stone, the geometric shapes, the proportions and the arrangement of the numerous decorations.

There are decorations in relief which cover the entire circumference of the urn, which doesn't have a lid. It has been worked in the form of a wicker basket, especially at the top and at the bottom. Starting from the upper part there are five ornamental strips. The first strip is higher than the others and is composed of little arch-shaped figures in a row, while the others just look like woven threads or cords. In the lower part, the decorations are not as visible, because the urn is slightly damaged. These strips contain a continuous scene in relief which depicts the typical Roman funeral banquet. Funeral banquets usually took place near the tombs; friends and family of the deceased would take part. Here as well the scene takes place in an open area,

as we can tell from the wooden trellis behind the guests. In the main representation the guests, two men and two women, are lying down and they surround the triclinium bed, adorned with carpets and pillows.

The first man on the right is muscular, he has short, curly hair and is slumped down. His robe only covers his legs. His face, in profile, is facing the other three people. Moving to the left, two women with their hair tied up and their arms in front of them are looking ahead with a serious expression. One of them raises a glass to her lips. This, and the half-open mouths of the men, tell us that the guests are drinking and chatting. The lower part of the bodies of the women cannot be seen because they are covered by a square, hollowed out space bordered by a frame. This is called the “tabula”, which was meant to contain the inscription of the urn. It seems that the final guest to the left, also slumped down, with short, curly hair, wearing a robe covering only the lower part of the body, is holding out a glass towards the others. Continuing counter-clock wise, we find the other guests. The maidservant is preparing the beverages and the napkins. She is holding a piece of cloth and beside her, on the ground, there is an amphora. On her left there is a musician who is playing the double flute: he is standing up with his foot on another pedal instrument. After moving round the entire circumference of the urn, the last character, the servant, closes the circle. Indeed he is close to the guests, from where the description started. The servant is gesturing with his right hand doing the devil horns and is carrying the basket with fruit in the left. He is wearing a similar robe to the musician,



which falls gently and is held up at the waist. One of the two women reacts to his gesture with her right hand. It is likely that the first character, depicted naked and from behind, is the deceased himself, ideally joining his own funeral banquet.

In the Roman era this type of urn was used for the preservation of the ashes of the defunct, but in this case the space reserved for the inscription, on the banquet table, was never carved. This suggests that it was never actually used. As regards typology, taste and style, it looks like this piece was made between the first century BC and the first century AD by Aquileian craftsmen.

Our small tour of the rooms of the first floor ends here. If you wish, you can stay in this room to listen in more detail to the tactile reading of the urn. If you wish to continue your visit towards the second floor, reserved for private life, you can find the stairs on your left. The exit is on your right. It was a pleasure having you here with us today. The National Archaeological Museum of Aquileia thanks you and looks forward to your next visit.

DISCLAIMER

Thank you for your use of this guide. The audio descriptions were written by Chiara Petracci and Elisa Perego of the Department of Legal, Language, Interpreting and Translation Studies of the University of Trieste, as part of the project 'La traduzione al servizio dell'accessibilità: il caso di audio descrizione per i musei' (University Research Project Financing FRA 2015 , University of Trieste) coordinated by Prof. Elisa Perego in collaboration with the curators

of the Archeological Museum in Aquileia. Translation into English by Chiara Petracchi and Christopher Taylor.



Module 4

Unit 8: Descriptive tours

Task 3

Aim(s):

- Learners can construct a coherent descriptive tour of a museum or other environment such as a heritage site.

Grouping: individual, pairs or groups.

Approximate timing: 3 hours.

Material and preparation needed:

- Museum maps and catalogues.
- Recommended reading: Giansante, L. (2013). Writing verbal description audio tours. Retrieved from <http://www.artbeyondsight.org/mei/wpcontent/uploads/Writing-forAudio-Guides-short.pdf>

Development:

1. Learners study the map and catalogue of a given museum, exhibition or heritage site.
2. Each group prepares a list of bullet points illustrating their chosen tour and justifying the artworks for description.
3. Groups compare their bullet point lists and discuss the similarities and differences in their choices.
4. (Optional) A single descriptive tour is produced as a result of the discussion.

Additional comments:

Working with a real museum interested in expanding its accessibility facilities would be a perfect option. Choose a small local museum. If you manage to collaborate with a museum, consider offering it a full package: tour and recorded AD of the artworks (cf. Task 3). This will enable you to exercise several skills at the same time.



Module 4

Unit 8: Descriptive tours

Task 4

Aim(s):

- Learners can produce a full descriptive package (tour and ADs of selected artworks).

Grouping: individual, pairs or groups.

Approximate timing: 6-8 hours.

Material and preparation needed:

- Task 2 has to be completed before moving to this task.
- You will need a coherent descriptive tour of a museum or other environment such as a heritage site.

Development:

1. Decide on the approximate length of each AD: their length should be consistent.
2. Decide on the type and order of information you will be providing in the AD (e.g., type of artwork, author, dimension, general details, specific details, background history) and provide a scheme: the textual organization of the ADs should be consistent.
3. Provide an AD of the artworks that have been selected for the tour: each individual, pair or group working on ADs should describe an artwork.

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4. ADs should be then revised by an individual, pair or group in order to make the necessary changes to create a linguistically and stylistically consistent set of texts.
5. The revisions should be illustrated to the class and justified in a PPT presentation by the responsible individual, pair or group.
6. Liaise each AD and provide the necessary orientation details along with a short introduction to the museum, a welcome and a goodbye message: each individual, pair or group can produce their script, and the best script can be used at the end. Alternatively, one group will be assigned this task.
7. Once you have the final script, you can record it following the procedures illustrated in Unit 5.

Additional comments:

1. To make your descriptive tour more comprehensive and to exercise your skills, you can consider adding reference to a tactile experience, or creating an "enriched" description (cf. Neves 2016, and Eardley et al. 2017 in the Reading list).
2. Working with a real museum interested in expanding its accessibility facilities would be a perfect option. You will then be able to offer them a fully accessible tour!

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