Citing Primary Sources in Classics

In Classics, primary sources can be literature, inscriptions, coins, papyri, statues, pottery, paintings, mosaics, and other such objects. Like citation styles for secondary sources, there are multiple formats you will see when reading scholarship. The key point is to make sure all of the reference data is included and to be consistent.

**For literary sources**
Each citation will include the author, title of the work, book number, chapter number, and section/line number. The author and title of the work may be abbreviated. A list of these abbreviations can be found in several dictionaries and encyclopedias that can be accessed in the library or online through the CLA233 course guide. I would recommend using:


Some additional notes: the title of a work can often be given in Latin or translated into English. For example, Pliny the Elder’s encompassing work on the natural world is titled (in Latin) “*Naturalis historia*” and is translated into English as “*Natural History*”. Pliny’s work may be cited either way. When using primary sources in Shelton, you may convert them to abbreviations OR you may keep them in their full version as listed in Shelton.

Since you are using a translation of the literary source in English from the original language (either Greek or Latin), you should also cite the translation. For this class, your primary sources are found in J.-A. Shelton’s *As the Romans Did*, so you should cite her translation as well. For example, if you cite Martial’s description of the division of days into hours in your paper, the footnote would be:


That is: cite the primary source include “trans” for “translation” and then include the citation for Shelton with the page numbers included.

**For material remains**
Citations for objects should include the following: Artist name. Title of work. Date of composition BCE/CE. Original findspot, Current museum location or collection, City of collection or museum. Inventory or Accession number. Source of the citation (database, website, or book).

In practice, not all of that information is known. It is very rare that we know who produced certain classical works. Additionally, since many objects were looted from their original context, many artifacts in museums do not have a known findspot.

An example of the proper citation for the figurine that we discussed in class would be:

Bronze Male Figurine in Toga. ca 25-50 CE. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. 956.7. www.rom.on.ca

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1 The online list of ancient authors titles of their works can be found under: All Contents >> Front Matter >> Abbreviations used in the present work

2 In the Chicago Manual of Style, this material is addressed in sections 14.256-265. However, the Chicago Manual does not include passage numbers (chapter, book, sections/lines) in their examples. You MUST include this in your footnote citation.