



Ovid, *Tristia* 3.1: The Text as Guide Through the Textual City

Goals:

1. Practice methods of navigation and conversation in the MOO
2. Explore some of the educational resources in *VRoma*
3. Use virtual space to come to a better understanding of the city of Rome and its role in forming and validating Roman identity
4. Gain insight into the dynamic interrelationship between Roman literature and the monuments and physical structures of the city of Rome
5. Increase enjoyment and appreciation of the poetry of Ovid while improving translation skills (for those doing #6)

General Instructions: If you do this assignment in a small group, save your HTML Chat Log and email it to your teacher; otherwise write down your answers to these questions as you go along and hand them in to your teacher. Before you begin, print out a copy of the [Quick Start Guide to the VRoma Learning Environment](#) from the online Help files so you will have basic information about navigation and communication, plus features such as the VRoma Notebook and HTML Chat Log.

Assignment: Begin at the **Prima Porta VRomana**. Meet Tristia Tresunus by clicking on his icon and reading what he has to say. Make sure that you click on the [itinerary](#) link so you will have a sense of where you will be going. When you are ready to begin the journey, click on Tristia.

T.T. You will find a new map and directions at each stop, but you will also see “signposts” telling you what exits to take as you walk along. When you reach each stop, be sure to “look around,” read the descriptions, and view the images there before clicking on the Tristia icon so that you will understand the import and references in the poem.

1. What do you find most interesting about Tristia’s description of himself? How does Ovid present Tristia simultaneously as a physical scroll, a literary work, and a traveler on his first trip to Rome?
2. After following Tristia to his fifth stop, think about where you have been. What do the Sacra Via, Temple of Vesta, Regia, and Temple of Jupiter Stator have in common (hint: when were they built and what does Tristia/Ovid emphasize about them)? Notice that you had to walk through the Temple of the Deified Caesar and the Arch of Augustus to get to the Temple of Vesta, but Tristia doesn’t mention them at all. Why?
3. What do the next two stops, Domus Augusti and Temple of Palatine Apollo, have in common, and how do they differ from the previous stops? How does Tristia/Ovid cleverly shift from description to appeal (think of the specific decorations of the Domus Augusti that he emphasizes)?
4. What happens when Tristia tries to enter the Library in the Temple of Palatine Apollo? What do his last two stops have in common with this one? Do you see any subtle criticism of Augustus’s policy in these incidents?
5. What is Tristia/Ovid’s final plea, and how does this bring us back to his opening words? How do you, the reader he is addressing, react to the conclusion of the poem? Explain what you feel you have learned from exploring the city with Tristia/Ovid.
6. If you know Latin, go into the Library and read the actual poem. Did you find it easier to translate and understand because you saw it in the context of the city? Was the experience more enjoyable?