

Role-Playing game in VRoma

Instructions for Teachers

Learning Objectives:

- understanding and appreciation of the lives of lower-class Romans;
- imaginative immersion in the personality of one lower-class male or female known to us through an inscription;
- increased knowledge and understanding of at least one aspect of Roman culture and daily life in the context of the places in the city of Rome with which it was associated.

This is a game for a small group of relatively advanced students (high-school or college-level students); they do not have to know Latin, although they will get even more out of the game if they have studied some Latin. The role-playing scenario will require at least two sessions in VRoma (if all 8 characters are used; proportionately less if fewer characters are used) where all participants are together online to lead a tour through Rome for Coelia Mascellina (played by you, the teacher). Each student will also need several preparatory visits to his/her locations in VRoma to prepare for his/her tasks during the tour.

We strongly recommend that you orient your students to VRoma before they begin the game. You can print out the Quick Start Guide at <http://www.vroma.org/help/quickstart_print.pdf> and give them copies to consult. Take them to VRoma, encourage them to practice navigating and conversing, show them how to copy and paste information into their Notebooks and save their thoughts there.

The role-playing characters currently available are the following:

- Coelia Mascellina**, free-born exporter of wine and oil from Baetica (Emporium)--to be played by teacher
- Aurelia Nais**, freedwoman fish seller (Pisces Ubique, her shop next to Horrea Galbana)
- Callistus**, imperial freedman in charge of the armory at the Ludus Magnus (Armamentarium)
- Cantinea Procla**, free-born priestess of Isis (Temple of Isis in Sanctuary of Isis and Serapis)
- Claudia Olympias**, free-born proprietor of a silversmith's shop (Faber Argentarius, her shop on the Sacra Via Summa)
- Doctus**, freedman mime actor and leader of mime troupe (Orchestra of the Theater of Marcellus)
- Fuscus**, slave charioteer for the Greens (Circus Maximus)
- Glyconis**, fun-loving and wine-loving freedwoman wife (Thermopolium of Scintilla)
- Mus**, freedman confidential secretary of the Praetorian Prefect (Commander's Quarters in the Praetorian Camp)

Assign one student to each character (the student need not be the same sex as the character); if you will not be using all 8 characters, select those associated with cultural activities about which you wish your students to learn more and/or characters who you think will be most appealing for your students. To obtain the necessary background materials for the game, connect to VRoma with your Teacher account and go to the game room for Teachers (**Ludi VRomani**, off the Officina--type **@go Ludi**); only Teacher characters are able to enter this room, so the materials in it are secure. Click on the Role-Playing Game Bookshelf, where you will find URLs with printable Acrobat file instructions for each character; click on the instructions for each character you plan to use and print them out. We recommend that you read the instructions for all the characters before deciding which to use, since this will give you a comprehensive picture of the whole game, including the personalities of the characters and the tasks they are asked to perform. In the Bookshelf, you will also see a scroll with login and password information for all the role-playing characters, including yours. This is not available in a printable Acrobat file since it is confidential information which should not be posted on the web. However, you may email yourself the contents of the scroll by clicking on the bird icon at the top of the scroll window (be sure to check "Use outgoing internet email instead of internal mail where possible" at the bottom of the message screen). Before giving each student the printed instructions for his/her character, carefully write on the top the connection information for VRoma: User ID and Password, specifying that the password must be entered exactly as you have written it (including the capital M and the lower-case letters and numbers). Then disconnect your Teacher character and use the login information for Coelia Mascellina to connect as this character (you will enter VRoma at the Emporium). Click on your icon and read the information about Coelia, including the links to her two inscriptions, so you will know what personality to assume yourself when you and the students are enacting the role-playing scenario.

The instructions for each character include several clearly defined tasks, so your students should know what to do when leading their own part of the tour. However, we recommend that you tell them in advance what order to follow on the tour. The instructions for most of the characters state that everybody should meet at Rome (use Quick Jump bookmark for Rome or type **@go Rome**), then click on the appropriate region and monument or exit; the rationale is that the map of Rome's 14 regions and the more detailed regional maps will give them a spatial perspective of the city. A few characters are instructed to tell the others to teleport directly to their locations by using the **@go** command instead of navigating through the maps. Since all the characters belong to a group ("Role-Playing Characters"), if some wander off or the group gets confused you may send a quick SMS to all of them at once by clicking on **Who** in the menu and then on the link "Send SMS to Role-Playing Characters."

You may arrange the tour in any order you like, but this suggested itinerary works well:

- 1) tell everyone to meet in Rome and let Aurelia Nais begin the tour
- 2) let Mus take over and tell everyone how to get to the Praetorian Camp
- 3) Cantinea Procla can then bring everyone to the Sanctuary of Isis and Serapis
- 4) Doctus brings the group to the Theater of Marcellus
- 5) Claudia Olympias shows everyone her shop and the Sacra Via Summa
- 6) Fuscus shows off the Circus Maximus for the group
- 7) Callistus brings everyone to the Armamentarium and Colosseum
- 8) since everyone is now tired and thirsty, Glyconis throws a party for the group in the Thermopolium of Scintilla

Other Types of Role-Playing: This game is deigned to increase knowledge of the city of Rome and various aspects of Roman culture, but these characters can be used by students for other types of role-playing, designed by teachers for their own purposes.

Before and After the Game: **Please notify Barbara McManus (bmcmanus@cnr.edu)** when you wish to begin and end this game so she can make sure no one else wants to use it at the same time; after you have finished, I would appreciate hearing how things worked and any suggestions for improvement.

Feel free to email me if you have further questions: **Barbara F. McManus <bmcmanus@cnr.edu>**