



## VERGIL IN VROMA: Exploring the Theater of Marcellus

### 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 Roman culture and civilization through group discussion of issues surrounding a selected site.
4. Enhance understanding and appreciation of the *Aeneid* through exploring the epic's connections with the city of Rome.

**Worksheets:** 1. Quick Start Guide to the VRoma Learning Environment  
2. Group Site Assignment

### General Instructions:

Explore your assigned site completely, visiting all its rooms and examining its varied contents, including texts, objects, bots, and links

Read your Site Assignment through carefully to be clear about the topics you are asked to discuss.

When you have completed the assignment, save your HTML Chat Log and email a copy of it to your professor.

**Site Assignment:** Teleport to the site by typing **@go Theater of Marcellus**

1. Read about the theaters in Rome and Augustus' role in supporting them. Why does Augustus consider it so important that he had turned the brick city of Rome into marble? How does his *Res Gestae* follow Anchises' injunction to Aeneas at the end of Book 6?
2. Click on the **Statue of Marcellus** at the bottom of the page to learn about the man to whom the theater was dedicated. Study the statue of Marcellus sculpted by Cleomenes the Athenian. Does this statue in any way resemble the Marcellus-figure that Aeneas and Anchises see in the Underworld? Why do you think that Augustus chose a Greek sculptor to create the statue of his nephew (remembering Anchises' words to Aeneas about statuary). Do you think that this statue reflects the symbolic role that Marcellus plays in the epic, as representative of the tragic loss of other young men of great potential such as Nisus and Euryalus, Lausus, and especially Pallas?
3. Read the poem of Propertius quoted here (3.18) and compare his treatment of Marcellus with that of Vergil.
4. Continue walking through the theater by clicking on the new exits at the bottom of each page until you reach the Scaena. From here, visit the Latin Dressing Room, where you will be entertained by the bots Mercurius and Sosia, rehearsing their lines from Plautus' *Amphitryo*. This type of literature differs greatly from the *Aeneid*, though comedy and mime were more popular in Roman theaters than tragedy. Why do you think there was so little place for the comic in the *Aeneid*, certainly less than in Homeric epics?