

Instructions for Claudia Olympias

As an introduction to conversing and navigating in the VRoma online virtual environment and to "living as a Roman in VRoma," we are going to enact a role-playing scenario. Instead of connecting with your own VRoma character, you are going to connect as a lower-class Roman based on a real person who once lived in the city of Rome, a person known to us now only through one or more inscriptions but once a living, breathing Roman.

The characters have been assigned at random to the members of the class. Your character will be **Claudia Olympias**, a wealthy woman who is the patron of a talented silversmith. Connect with the special username and password that your teacher will give to you.

You will enter VRoma in your special location (in this case **Faber Argentarius**, your silversmith's shop on the Sacra Via Summa, which is your character's "home"). Click on the icon for Claudia Olympias and read the description carefully, including all the links, one of which will show you the actual inscription on which your character is based. Below the description, you will see that you are carrying a Scroll for Claudia Olympias. Click this and read your specific instructions for the game. Others will be able to see and read your description, but not this scroll. Before your class acts out the scenario, you should become familiar with all the silver merchandise in your shop, carefully reading all the links so that you will be able to convince each of your visitors why he/she needs a particular piece. Also step outside your shop on to the Sacra Via Summa, view the statue of Cloelia, and read about her story and her statue. This will prepare you to carry out your tasks (described in your scroll, the text of which is also included below).

Scenario:

The *praefectus annonae* has invited you to be part of a group of Romans who will accompany a young woman from the province of Baetica, Coelia Mascellina, on a tour of various locations in Rome. She has recently taken over her mother's business of exporting olive oil and wine from Baetica, and the prefect wants to make sure she enjoys this tour so that he can negotiate a favorable contract with her to supply olive oil for the troops. He is counting on you to introduce her to the part of Rome you know best.

Your Tasks:

- 1) Reveal your personality to Coelia and the others in the group as you converse and move about the city. You, Claudia Olympias, are proud of your freeborn status (even though your father was a freedman, he had been a high-ranking slave of the emperor) and your wealth. You are a little bit domineering and arrogant but think that is perfectly justified by your excellent business sense and success. Beauty, lovely clothes, jewelry, and a fashionable hairstyle--the marks of female status--are all very important to you.
- 2) Take the group to your freedman's silversmith's shop, Faber Argentarius, on the Sacra Via Summa. Ask everyone to start at Rome by using the Quick Jump bookmark or typing **@go Rome**, then ask them to click on **Region 4** in the map and then the exit for **Sacra Via Summa**. Show each of the people the piece of silver most appropriate for him or her and ask for his/her reactions (everyone should click on the icon of the piece in order to see it in the web frame). These are the available pieces:

- fish platter -- perfect for Aurelia Nais, *piscatrix*
- ladle with religious scenes -- how could Cantinea Procla, priestess of Isis, do without this?
- bowl with portrait -- the spitting image of Doctus, the famous mime
- plate with Mercury -- as the patron of merchants, he will bring good luck to Coelia Mascellina

- Bacchic wine cup -- Glyconis, lover of wine, really needs this
- libation bowl with chariots -- the charioteer Fuscus should make offerings with this
- cup with triumphal scene -- Mus, secretary of the Praetorian Prefect, will love this
- bowl with Hercules and snakes -- a strongman hero for Callistus, keeper of weapons for gladiators

Ask everyone to follow you outside your shop to show them the statue of Cloelia. Briefly tell them her story--you are proud your shop is located near such an admirable woman, and you identify with her feisty personality and her accomplishments. Ask them why her statue is unusual (see if they notice her toga and the fact that a woman has been given an equestrian statue). Then activate her and encourage them to converse with her in Latin (if they are shy, prepare a few things you can say to her yourself).