

Rome, the eternal city, in the year 1157 after the foundation of the city (AD 404)

Facts

The Roman Empire has its largest extension the first centuries AD. Around AD 400 the empire reaches from Scotland in the north to Sahara and North Africa in the south. But the Roman Empire is threatened. Germanic tribes are on the move, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Vandals, Huns, Alemanni... Far up in the north there are more Germanic tribes, tribes that the Romans know very little about. They think that these tribes live on an island called Scandia. Now and then people from those Nordic tribes come to Rome to be part of the emperor's lifeguard. They are reliable people.



There are many contacts between the empire and the Germanic tribes, both peaceful and hostile. Roman legions are at war in many parts of the empire. Around AD 400 there is a war against the Visigoths and their leader Alaric. In 402 the Visigoths try to invade the northern part of Italy, but are defeated by the roman general Stilicho. In 404 there are negotiations between the Visigoths and the Romans.

There is a distinct influence in the empire from the Germanic tribes. In Rome you can see this in clothes, in weapons etc. The emperor's lifeguard consists mainly of Germanic people. There is a culture exchange between the Germanic peoples and the Romans. The roman influence also reaches far beyond its borders.



In AD 400 Rome is the centre of the world with one million inhabitants and a glorious history. Forum Romanum is the centre of the city and hasn't changed much the last centuries. Christianity is the favoured religion since the days of the emperor Constantine. The most important man in the city is the bishop of Rome. Many churches are built on the outskirts of the city. The church of Saint Peter is in use. But many aristocratic people are still adherents of the old religion.

The emperor's palace is situated, since centuries, on the Palatine Hill. Here Augustus built a palace and other emperors have rebuilt and extended it. Honorius became emperor in 395. His brother is the emperor in Constantinople. Honorius is mostly in Ravenna but some-

times he visits Rome and his palace there. In the year AD 404 (1157 according to the Roman way of counting) Honorius comes to Rome. He is about to rebuild and extend the palace on the Palatine. The inhabitants of Rome want him to stay at the palace and not go back to Ravenna.

There are a lot of people working at the court of the emperor with many different professions. The chief of the emperor's court is called *praepositus sacri cubiculi* (the chief of the holy household). In 404

the name of the *praepositus* is Olympius. The empress also has her court, lead by a *praeposita*. In 404 the *praeposita* is called Serena, wife of the general Stilicho.



Scenario, Rome in the year 1157 after the foundation of the city, a historical drama

The emperor Honorius is back in Rome at his palace on the Palatine. He has appointed himself consul for the sixth time. He also celebrates the victory over the Visigoths two years ago. He is about to rebuild and extend the palace and make it more elegant and modern.



There is a need for more assistants, pages, at the court. The emperor will approve those pages at his palace. Many young Romans from upper and middle class families are interested to be pages at the emperor's and the empress's court. They come to the Palatine to show their abilities and skills. The

emperor has promised to have an outdoor banquet (*convivium*) in connection with the approval of the new court pages.

There are many contacts with the Germanic tribes. More Germanic people are needed in the emperor's lifeguard. At the court they are expecting visits of Germanic people and chieftains.



Roles

The pupils are Romans from upper and middle class families, sons and daughters of senators, craftsmen, merchants and knights who come to the emperor's court. They are all interested to be assistants, pages, at the court. They like to show their abilities for the praepositus Olympius and the praeposita Serena. Some of the girls are good at painting and decorating, others can cook and prepare the food. Some of the boys like to read and recite

the old roman authors, the most revered at the time is Vergilius. Others can write in ink or on a wax board. Some boys like to serve as soldiers in the legions or to be part of the emperor's lifeguard.

We give the pupils a Roman name. They decide if they are the son or daughter of a craftsman, a merchant, a senator or a knight. The teachers are servants from those families who help the boys and girls to get to the palace.

All participants get historical dresses, keeping to the times. When the drama starts, the year 1157 (after the foundation of Rome) is the present time. We hope that both pupils and adults can keep their roles and for a couple of hours forget the year AD 2002.

Welcome to a historical role-play. We hope that you will find it interesting and exciting.

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