

The Roman Empire, Rome and Villa dei Quintili around 180 AD

Facts

The Roman Empire had its largest extension in the first centuries AD. It reached from Scotland in the north to Sahara and North Africa in the south. Rome was the centre of the world (caput mundi) with more than one million inhabitants. The city was overcrowded with many multi-storey houses and narrow alleys.

Marcus Aurelius became emperor in the year AD 161. His palace was on the Palatine Hill, but he was seldom there. Most of the time he was at war, in the year 180 there

was a war against the Germanic tribe, the Markomanni, and the emperor's camp was close to Vindobona (Vienna). Marcus Aurelius's son Commodus became co-regent in 177 and very early showed ambitions for power.

Roman society and the city of Rome was clearly sub-divided. One third of the population were slaves and very few people had the possibility to reach the upper layers of society. The father was the one who decided in the family and only men had citizenship. Boys become grown up when they were thirteen years of age.

The more well-off people in the city sent their sons and daughters to school where they learned to read and write and to recite the famous poets.

The baths were important institutions. In the city of Rome there were hundreds of public paths that people visited in the afternoon after work. In the city the horse races at Circus Maximus and the gladiator shows at the Flavian Amphitheatre (Colosseum) were very popular.

In the latter half of the second century several big villas were built on the outskirts of the city. The Quintili brothers started to build a huge residence for themselves in the middle of the second century, eight kilometres from the centre, along the Via Appia. The soil in the area was fertile and the brothers had large rural estates and lots of cultivated land.

The two brothers, Sestus Quintilus Condianus och Sestus Quintilius Valerius Maximus, were senators and became well-known for their nobility, culture, wealth and military skill. They became consuls in AD 151 AD. They were often in other parts of the Empire and had important duties both in Greece and in Asia.





The residential part of the villa had a private sector and a more public part with reception rooms. The villa had a heating system and running water. There were at least three baths, a small private bath for the owners, another one for the servants and a big bath for guests and meetings. The villa was richly decorated with marble floors, mosaics, paintings and statues of different gods. Outside there was a stadium, a

gymnasium for sports and an arena for shows and plays. Probably more than a thousand people worked at the villa, most of them slaves working with agriculture. In the residence there was also many servants and slaves. A few of them were Christians.

The brothers were patrons for hundreds of people. Families, men and women, were clients to the brothers and dependant on them. The brothers, on the other hand, were protectors and helpers of their clients.

Scenario

Villa dei Quintili, in the year 933 after the foundation of Rome and in the 19th year of the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (AD 180)

The Quintili brothers (Condianus and Maximus) have built a huge villa on the outskirts of Rome. Hundreds of people are working there, both slaves and servants. The brothers are also patrons for hundreds of dependant people, clients, in Rome and in the surroundings.

This time of the the year the seasonal feast of Quinquatrus is celebrated, a feast to honour the god of Minerva. The Quinquatrus feast always takes place in the middle of March. The Quintili brothers invite their clients with their sons and daughters to the villa to take part in the feast. The celebration lasts for several days, with new clients coming to the villa every day. Minerva is the god of knowledge and learning, but also the god of art, games, music and dancing.





The clients come to the villa to show their loyalty and tribute to their patrons. The sons and daughters want to honour their parents by doing services and showing their skills to the patrons. The Quintili brothers are their protectors and benefactors. Many of the children have the possibility to come to the feast because there is a school break this very week. Maybe even some of the sons and daughters are interested to get a job as a servant at the villa.

This year the feast of Quinquatrus is very special. The Quintili brothers have been away for more than two years in the province of Asia. But now they are expected back, at first the brother Valerius Maximus. People say he will be back any day and of course he expects a big welcome from all his clients. We have to hurry and work hard to make all the preparations for the welcoming of Valerius Maximus.

The curator Servius Claudius is the leader of all the work at the villa, for the feast

and for the welcoming of the brothers. The female part of the work is led by the curatrix Antonia. She needs help to prepare the meal with several courses.

The curator has decided that some new decorations will be made to honour the god Minerva and to welcome the brothers. Of course there will also be games, sports and shows at the arena.

Everyone is interested to hear news from the different parts of the Empire, from Asia and from the war against the Markomanni. Hopefully nothing has happened to the emperor in the war. Many people trust Marcus Aurelius but are uncertain if his son Commodus is quite as reliable. Everybody is concerned about the future. What will happen with the villa, the brothers, all their servants and the clients if Commodus comes into power? The clients and their patrons are essential to make closer connections because of an uncertain future.

But today is a day of feast. It starts with a sacrifice, a burnt offering, to the god Minerva. Then all the preparations for the feast will be done. We hope that Quintilius Valerius Maximus will arrive today. In that case there will be an outdoor banquet and a big show.

Roles

The pupils are sons and daughters of the clients of the Quintili brothers. They live in Rome and are invited to the seasonal feast of Quinquatrus to honour the god Minerva and to welcome the Quintili brothers home. They are expected to perform services and show their loyalty to their patrons. Maybe even some of them are interested in taking a job as a servant at the villa.

We give the pupils a Roman name.

The teachers are clients of the Quintili brothers and will also get a Roman name.

Note

If the pupils are well prepared it will be more easy for them to take part in the time-travel. We hope that they know the scenario, their roles, the facts and maybe something about roman life in the second century.

Time-plan

The pupils have their own picnic meal outside of the Antiquarium at about 9.30. At 10 o'clock we will pick you up and the drama starts. All participants get historical dresses, keeping to the times. The year 933 (after the foundation of Rome) will be the present time. The pupils will be divided into three/ four groups according to the activities. In the end of the drama there is a meal. The time-travel will end at 14.30 at the latest. We hope that both pupils and adults can keep their roles and for a couple of hours forget the year 2004 AD.

- 09.30 The pupils have their own picnic food
- 10.00 Welcome, change of dresses, the drama starts
Offering, activities, meal, performances
- 14.10 Change of dresses
- 14.30 End

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

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Ebbe Westergren
Helen Eklund
Inger Adriansson
Kalmar County Museum

The characters of the adults

Curator Servius Claudius – Ebbe
Curatrix Antonia (alt. the senators wife) – Helen/Inger
Painter Flavia – Helen/Inger
Clients



Activities

- Painting and writing: painting on wood, a mosaic pattern, writing on papyrus, calligraphy on papyrus
- Games, competitions and sports: board games (mill game, drafts, latrunculi, calculi, tesserae), ball games (clavus, Roman ball), sports (javelin, long jump, running), archery?
Joking and jesting, juggling, building pyramids, acrobatics
Gladiator training
Reciting, Vergilius
- Preparing the meal – banquet/ cena, gustatio/ first course with different ingredients (salad, egg, olives, tinned sprat, cabbage, carrots, sausage, olive oil), unleavened bread/ foccacia, leavened bread, (porridge), cena/ main course, (fried/boiled meat/pork with spicy sauces- garum, ev. peas/beans), secunda mensae/dessert (fruit), grape juice
Spices: lovage, marjoram, mint, cummin, mustard, fennel seed, anis, saffran and more valuable ones as peppar, cinnamon, ginger, laser.
Perfumed oils for the hands after the meal
Prepare the house altar to the Lares



Time plan

- 09.31 The pupils have their own picnic food
- 10.00 Welcome, change, rehearsing the scenario, new names
- 10.30 Offering (burnt offering with cookies, fruit, vegetables, ev. Libation offering, songs, music with flute, brummers and drums). Trumpet?
- 10.30 Gatering in the area, the reception hall
- 10.40 Activities
- 13.00 Maximus arrives, banquet, shows
- 14.00 Dance, change (discussion)
- 14.30 End

Valerius Maximus speech

"Salve. I am happy to see you all at my villa. I hope that you still are loyal och faithful clients to me and my brother.

For more than two years I have been governor in the province of Asia and lived in the city of Efesos. I have governed the eastern part of the Roman Empire. It has been hard work. Many people don´t realize the grandness of the Empire and are discontented with high taxes. Barbarians try to plunder some of our cities. But they will never succeed.

I have also news from our emperor Marcus Aurelius. He has won a big victory in the war against the Germanic tribe the Markomanni. Hopefully there will be peace now. But there are rumours saying that the emperor is ill. We pray to the gods that nothing will happen to him and that he will recover. Otherwise there might be problems for us Quintili brothers.

I am really pleased to be back in Rome. This must be the most magnificent villa there is on the outskirts of Rome. And I´m happy to celebrate the feast of Quinquartus with you, my faithful clients. I heard from my curator that you have prepared a warm welcome for me. I´m looking forward to see all your abilities.

Servius Claudius and Antonia, will you start serving the meal."

During the meal there will be some performances. The clients will also show there work.

After the meal Valrius Maximus will have a short speech and say:

"I hope that you all enjoyed the meal. It has been a pleasure seeing all your skills and all the work you have done. You are really capable clients. I´ll talk to my curator to see if some of you even can be employed as servants at the villa.

Let´s hope that our emperor Marcus Aurelius will recover from his illness. We don´t know what will happen to us Quintili brothers and the villa if Commodus will be the ruling emperor. In these times of uncertainty and troubles we must stick together. I expect that all of you will stay loyal and faithful to me and my brother. Next week my brother will be back at the villa and he also expects a big welcome from his clients.

Vale!"

