

FORUM ROMANUM: SHOW #11

Aeneis* Vergili

XV Octobris, XXX A.C.

(quinto decimo Octobris, tricesimo ante Christum)

Id. Oct. DCCXXIV AVC

(idibus Octobribus, septingentesimo vicesimo quarto ab urbe condita)

I. Salutatio

Favonius: Salvete, omnes! Mihi nomen est Marcus Favonius et hoc est Forum Romanum! Quid novi est hodie? Brevi tempore videbimus. At prius, ecce Quaestio Hodierna!

II. Quaestio Hodierna

Lector: Quaestio hodierna est de Vergilio poeta:

Vergil's Aeneid

October 15, 30 BC

(the 15th of October, the thirtieth year before Christ)

(the ides of October, 724 years after the founding of the city)

I. Greeting

Favonius: Hello, everyone! My name is Marcus Favonius and this is Forum Romanum! What's new today? We'll see in a little while. But first, here is the Question of the Day!

II. Question of the Day

Lector: The Question of the Day is about the

Vergilius, cum intellexisset se moriturum, quod mandatum amicis dedit? Responsum dabitur ad finem Fori Romani.

III. Quid novi?

Favonius: Et nunc videamus quid novi sit. Aeneis Vergili tandem edita est! Hodie, Idibus Octobribus, dies natalis poetae ipsius, Aeneis Vergili tandem in toto edita est. Iulia?

Iulia: Publius Vergilius Maro imprimis ob carmina Bucolica et Georgica factus est dum vivus poeta clarus. Atque nunc ob hoc carmine Aeneis recenter edito, Vergilius Maro fortasse fiet clarissimus omnium poeta.

Favonius: At vero, hoc carmen paene nobis non superest! Dum in Graecia, Vergilius in morbum

poet Vergil: Vergil, after he understood that he was about to die, gave what order to his friends? The answer will be given at the end of Forum Romanum.

III. What's New?

Favonius: And now let's see what's new today. Vergil's Aeneid has been published at last! Today, on the Ides of October, the birth day of the poet himself, the Aeneid of Vergil at last has been published in its entirety. Julia?

Iulia: Publius Vergilius Maro at first was made a famous poet in his lifetime on account of his Bucolic [shepherding] and Georgic [farming] poems. And now, because of the recent publishing of this poem, the *Aeneid*, perhaps Vergilius Maro will become the most famous poet of all.

Favonius: But this poem almost didn't survive for us! While in Greece, Vergil fell into a very

gravissimum cecidit, atque cum intellixisset se moriturum Vergilius mandatum amicis dedit Aeneidem imperfectam incendi esse!

Iulia: Augustus, tamen, his amicis Vergili, Plotio Tuccae et Vario Rufo, "Veto!" inquit. Quam ob rem hoc carmen optimum superest, ut dignum est. Dis gratias!

Favonius: Immo etiam, Augusto gratias! Ut plura audiamus de Vergilio Marone et carmine Aeneio, Iulia Pauli locuta est cum Gaio Maecenate qui bene noverat Vergilium Maronem.

IV. Et alia (Iulia interrogat Maecenatem)

Iulia: Mecum est Gaius Maecenas, patronus poetarum et amicissimus Caesari Augusto ipsi. Salve, Maecenas.

Maecenas: Et tu salve, Iulia Pauli.

grave illness, and after he understood that he was going to die, Vergil gave a command to his friends that the unfinished *Aeneid* be burned.

Iulia: But Augustus, said to these friends of Vergil, Plotius Tucca and Varius Rufus, "I forbid it!" Wherefore, this excellent poem survives, as is proper. Thanks to the gods.

Favonius: On the contrary, thanks to Augustus! To hear more about Vergilius Maro and the poem called the Aeneid, Julia Pauli has spoken with Gaius Maecenas, who knew Vergilius Maro well.

IV. And other things (Julia interviews Maecenas)

Iulia: With me is Gaius Maecenas, a patron of poets and a very good friend to Caesar Augustus himself. Hello, Maecenas.

Maecenas: And hello to you, Julia Pauli.

Iulia: Nimis benignus es loqui nobiscum, Maecenas, nam certe sunt plurima officia negotiaque quae tibi impendent.

Maecenas: Nihil est. Gratum est mihi.

Iulia: Loquamur prius de Vergilio, si vis. Dic nobis pauca de hoc homine, Vergilio Marone.

Maecenas: Libenter. Ut fortasse iam scis, Vergilius erat optime doctus et litteris studiosus. Erat staturae longae, coloris fuscus, sed valetudinis saepe infirmae.

Iulia: Qualis vir erat?

Maecenas: Admodum tacitus humilisque, magnopere humilis. Ut credo, usque ad supremum tempus, Vergilius nescivit quantum ingenium poeticum sibi insit!

Iulia: You are too kind to speak with us, Maecenas, for certainly many, many duties and jobs are hanging over you.

Maecenas: It's nothing. The pleasure is mine.

Iulia: Let's speak first about Vergil, if you please. Tell us a few things about this man, Vergilius Maro.

Maecenas: No problem. As perhaps you already know, Vergil was very well educated and studious of literature. He was tall, brown, but often of sickly health.

Iulia: What sort of man was he?

Maecenas: Very quiet and humble, exceedingly humble. As I believe, all the way up to the very end, Vergil didn't know how great a poetic genius resided in him!

Iulia: Sed tu intellexisti, nonne?

Maecenas: Bene intellexi! Qualis patronus poetarum ego si aliter? Atque bene intellexerunt poetae Horatius et Propertius, qui Vergilium tam magnopere diligunt quam ego.

Iulia: Nonne Horatius suis in carminibus appellat Vergilium "animae dimidium meae?"

Maecenas: Sic scripsit. Quod magis, Propertius, compluribus versibus Aeneidos auditis, de hoc carmine scripsit, "Cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Grai! Nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade!"

Iulia: Quot annos huic carmini Aeneio operam dabat?

Maecenas: Multos annos. Ut credo, circa undecim annos. Atque ultima postulatio Vergili erat Aeneidem incendi!

Iulia: But you knew it, didn't you?

Maecenas: I knew it well! What sort of patron of poets would I be, if otherwise? And the poets Horace and Propertius understood it well, who loved Vergil as much as I.

Iulia: Didn't Horace in his poems call Vergil "half of my soul"?

Maecenas: Yes, he wrote that. What's more, Propertius, after he heard many lines of the Aeneid, wrote about this poem, "Get out of the way, Roman writers, get out of the way, Greeks! Something greater than the Iliad is being born!"

Iulia: For how many years was he working on this poem, the Aeneid?

Maecenas: For many years. As I believe, for around eleven years. And the last order of Vergil was that the *Aeneid* be burned!

Iulia: Vix credibile! Audisti omnes versus Aeneidos. Placentne tibi?

Maecenas: Maxime. In hoc carmine sunt irae deorum, facta heroica, amor ardens at infandus, et proelia magna...Quid multa?

Iulia: Qui versus tibi imprimis placent?

Maecenas: Hem. Versus de Equo Troiano optime scripti sunt. Quando Laocoon inquit, "Equo ne credite, Teuceri. Quidquid id est, timeo Danaos et dona ferentis!" Deinde serpentes adveniunt...vix poteram reliquum audire! Et versus de Infernis, ubi scelesti puniuntur...Atque improbus amor Didonis....maxime mihi placent, maxime.

Iulia: Hoc carmen ergo omnino tibi placet, nonne?

Iulia: Hard to believe! You've heard all the lines of the Aeneid. Do you like it?

Maecenas: Very much! In this poem there's the anger of the gods, heroic deeds, burning but forbidden love, and great battles... What more?

Iulia: What lines do you like the most?

Maecenas: Hmm. The lines about the Trojan Horse were written very well. When Laocoon said, "Don't trust the horse, Trojans! Whatever it is, I fear the Greeks, even bearing gifts." Then the snakes arrive... I was barely able to listen to the end! And the lines about the underworld, where the wicked are punished... and the improper love of Dido... I like that very much.... very much.

Iulia: Therefore, you like this poem in every way, do you?

Maecenas: Immo, non omnino. Ut saepe visum est, Vergilius in hoc carmine nimis benignus est erga hostes inimicosque Aeneae. Interdum bellator Turnus et infelix Dido visi sunt heroes, non hostes. At vero, hoc est illa “mollitia rustica” Vergili.

Iulia: “Mollitia rustica?” Non satis intellego.

Maecenas: Difficilest explicare. Magnopere Vergilium miseret humanitatis. Vitae mortesque, res adversae, calamitates huiusmodi—haec omnia Vergilio plurimi sunt, nam manifesta est in hoc versu Aeneidos: “Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.” Ut mihi videtur, hoc in versu est argumentum totius carminis!

Iulia: Itane dicis? Ad summam, quoti ergo aestimas hoc carmen Aeneium, ab uno usque ad quinque.

Maecenas: Quinque.

Maecenas: Not at all, not entirely. It appeared that often, in this poem Vergil was too kind toward the public and personal enemies of Aeneas. At times the warrior Turnus and cursed Dido seemed like heroes, not enemies. But this is that "country sensitivity" of Vergil.

Iulia: “Country sensitivity?” I don't understand.

Maecenas: It's difficult to explain. Vergil felt deeply about humanity. Life and death, troubles, misfortunes of this sort - all of these things are very important to Vergil, which is evident in this line of the Aeneid: "There are tears for deeds and mortal things touch the mind." As it seems to me, the theme of the whole poem is in this line.

Iulia: So you say? To sum up, how do you rate this poem about Aeneas, from one to five?

Maecenas: Five.

Iulia: Gratias tibi ago, Maecenas, et gratias agunt omnes poetae quibus tu operam dedisti.

Maecenas: Mihi placet his rebus dare operam, quantulacumque est.

Iulia: At nunc tu nimis humilis es, Maecenas. Si sint Maecenates, non derunt** Marones! Totum est, Marce Favoni. Rursus ad te.

V. Tempestas Hodierna

Favonius: Tempus est audire de tempestate. Quam ob rem, ecce Aulus Serenus!

Serenus: Gratias tibi ago, Favoni. Videamus quaenam sit tempestas hodie, natali die Vergili Maronis. Totam per Italiam subfrigdum est caelum hodie, ut saepe Autumno. In Gallia Cisalpina, unde venit Vergilius Maro, pluit paululum. Nubilosum est Romae, ubi hodie multi adsunt in basilicis ut versus recentes Aeneidos

Iulia: I thank you, Maecenas, and all the poets whom you have helped thank you.

Maecenas: I'm happy to help with these things, however little it is.

Iulia: But now you are too humble, Maecenas. As long as there are Maecenases, Maros will not be lacking! That's all, Marcus Favonius. Back to you.

V. Today's Weather

Favonius: It's time to hear about the weather. Wherefore, here is Aulus Serenus!

Serenus: Thanks, Favonius. Let's see what the weather is like today, on Vergilius Maro's birthday. Through all of Italy the weather is very cold today, as often in Autumn. In Cisalpine Gaul, where Vergilius Maro came from, it's raining a little bit. It's cloudy in Rome, where today many people are present in the basilicas to

audiant. In meridiana parte Italiae, sol lucet paulum, praesertim apud Brundisium ubi Vergilius mortuus est. Interdum sol lucet super terras Neapolis, ubi sepultus est poeta. Alibi circum Mare Nostrum pluit paulum, exempli gratia hic in Graecia, ubi est Megara, urbs in qua Vergilius in morbum cecidit. Etiam pluit in Asia, sede Troiae ac domu patris Aeneae! "Arma virumque cano..." Utinam ego carmen tam fabulosum scriberem! Sed ut Vergilius ipse, poetarum maximus, scripsit, "Non omnia possumus omnes!" Iam satis est. Aulus Serenus sum atque spero caela sint vobis valde serena!

VI. Responsum Quaestioni

Favonius: Multas gratias, Serene. Et nunc, ecce responsum quaestioni hodiernae.

Lector: Quaestio hodierna erat ut sequitur: Vergilius, cum intellexisset se moriturum, quod

hear the recently published lines of the Aeneid. In the middle part of Italy, the sun is shining a little, particularly in Brundisi where Vergil died. Meanwhile the sun is shining over the lands of Neapolis, where the poet was buried. In other places around the Mediterranean, it's raining a little, like here in Greece, where Megara is, the city in which Vergil got sick. It's also raining in Asia, the location of Troy and the home of Aeneas' father! "I sing of arms and a man..." I wish that I could write a poem so awesome! But, as Vergil himself, the greatest of poets, wrote, "We're not all able to do all things!" That's enough now. I'm Aulus Serenus and I hope that your skies will always be clear.

VI. Responsum Quaestioni

Favonius: Thanks a lot, Serenus. And now, here's the answer to the question of the day.

Lector: The question of the day was as follows: Vergilius, after he understood that he was about

mandatum amicis dedit? Responsum est hoc:
Aeneidem imperfectam incendi iussit.

VII. Dictum Hodiernum

Favonius: Nunc tempus est videre nostrum
Dictum Hodiernum!

Lector: Dictum hodiernum venit a libro quinto
Aeneidos: Non omnia possumus omnes.

VIII. Valedictio

Favonius: Verba notanda. Ut repetamus nuntios
principales: Hodie, Idibus Octobribus, dies
natalis Vergili ipsius, carmen Aeneium tandem in
toto editum est. Totum est ad hanc editionem
Fori Romani. Gratias summas agimus et di vobis
faveant. Valete omnes!

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to die, gave what command to his friends? This is
the answer: He ordered that the unfinished
Aeneid be burned.

VII. Saying of the Day

Favonius: Now it's time to see our Saying of the
Day!

Lector: The saying of the day comes from the
fifth book of the *Aeneid*: We're not all able to do
all things.

VIII. Farewell

Favonius: Words to remember! To review our
main news: Today, on the Ides of October, the
birthday of Vergil himself, Aeneas' poem was
finally completely published. That's all for this
edition of Forum Romanum. Thanks a lot and
may the gods bless you. Good-bye everyone!

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* N.B. Nomen 'Aeneis' declinatur hoc modo:
Aenēis, Aenēidem, Aenēidos, Aenēidī, Aenēide.

cf. adiectivum 'Aeneius -a -um' (sc. "de heroe Aenea").

** derunt (*fut*) < deesse

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Note Well: "The Aeneid" is declined in this way:
Aenēis, Aenēidem, Aenēidos, Aenēidī, Aenēide.

Compare the adjective "Aeneius" (meaning, of course, "pertaining to the hero Aeneas.")