

FORUM ROMANUM: SHOW #18

Morituri te Salutant

LXXXVI A.D.

(octogesimo sexto anno Domini)

DCCCXXXIX A.V.C.

(octingentesimo undequadragesimo anno 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 Dictum Hodiernum!

II. Dictum Hodiernum

Lector: Hoc est dictum hodiernum: Mens sana in corpore sano.

Those Who Are About to Die Salute You

86 A.D.

839 A.U.C.

(839 years after the founding of Rome)

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 bit. But first, here's the saying of the day.

II. Saying of the Day

Lector: This is the saying of the day: A healthy mind in a healthy body.

III. Quid novi?

Favonius: Verba notanda. Et nunc videamus quid novi sit. Hodie Imperator Caesar Augustus Titus Flavius Domitianus ludos apparavit “Agon Capitolinus” nuncupatos. Sicut ludi Olympia, certamina et athletica et musica facta sunt. In animo habet noster Domitianus ut, sicut ludi Olympia, unusquisque Agon Capitolinus habeat intervallum quadriennium. Ut plura audiamus, eamus cito ad Iuliam Pauli quae in Campo Martio est.

IV. Persona Notanda

Iulia: Gratias, Favoni. Adsum in Campo ubi fit celebritas ludorum valde miranda. Re vera, quia non ludi sed “agon” fit, Graeco more fiunt certamina musicorum athletarumque—quorum, stadium currere et luctari et pugilatio maxime spectatoribus placent. Ut plura verba faciat de hoc agone et de ludis aliis, mecum est Crescens, olim optimus gladiator et nunc rudiarius. Ave

III. What's New?

Favonius: Words to remember. And now let's see what's new. Today the emperor Caesar Augustus Titus Flavius Domitian put on games called the "Capitoline Olympika." Like the games in Olympia, there were athletic and music competitions. Our Domitian has in mind that, like the games in Olympia, each Capitoline Olympika will have a 4-year interval. To hear more, let's quickly go to Julia Pauli who is in the Campus Martius.

IV. A Notable Person

Iulia: Thanks, Favonius. I'm here in the Campus where a very wonderful celebration of games is taking place. In truth, since it isn't "games" but an "Olympika" that is happening, the music and athletic competitions are taking place in the Greek style - and of them, the foot-races, wrestling, and boxing are especially pleasing to the spectators. To speak more about this

atque salve, Crescens.

Crescens: Salva sis, Iulia Pauli.

Iulia: Quidnam tu censes de hoc Agone Capitolino? Placetne tibi?

Crescens: Satis me iuvat. Pugilatio in primis mihi placet. Re vera, de aliis certaminibus Graecis, non flocci facio.

Iulia: Fortasse ludi circenses muneraque gladiatoria tibi multo magis placent.

Crescens: Profecto multo magis mihi placent. Nonne Romanus sum? Mea sententia, hic agone Graecus non potest animos spectatorum tam firme tenere quam ludi nobis soliti—id est, munera et circenses.

Olympika and about other games, with me is Crescens, once an excellent gladiator and now a retiree. Greetings and salutations, Crescens.

Crescens: Greetings, Julia Pauli.

Iulia: What in the world do you think about this Capitoline Olympika? Do you like it?

Crescens: I like it well enough. I like the boxing the most. In truth, I don't give a darn about other Greek competitions.

Iulia: Perhaps chariot races and gladiatorial combat are much more pleasing to you.

Crescens: Of course, I like them much more. Am I not a Roman? In my opinion, this Greek Olympika isn't able to hold the attention of the audience as firmly as our usual games - that is, gladiatorial combat and chariot races.

Iulia: Ivisitine igitur hoc matutino tempore spectatum munera gladiatoria?

Crescens: Ivi et spectavi. Sed si me interrogas, isti gladiatores quos nunc habemus non pluris facio quam bestiae stolidi. Illi omnes sunt bene pasti, bene armati, sed mediocriter exercitati.

Iulia: At vero, quid de Celado Thrace, quem omnes censent optimum esse?

Crescens: Celadus Thrax, quem “suspirium puellarum” appellant stulti! Video gladium et galeam, nondum gladiatorem video. Utinam illos leones haberemus cum adhuc in arena pugnarem!

Iulia: Sed ille Celadus totiens vicit quotiens pugnavit.

Crescens: Vah! Nugas garris. Vera dicam: Ego ipse, quamvis aetate provectus, hunc “multum

Iulia: So did you go this morning to see the gladiatorial games?

Crescens: I went and I saw them. But if you ask me, those gladiators which we have now are not more than stupid beasts. All of them are well-fed, well-armed, but not remarkably trained.

Iulia: But, what about Celadus the Thracian, whom everyone says is the best?

Crescens: Celadus the Thracian, whom fools call the "heartthrob of the girls"! I see a sword and a helmet, I do not yet see a gladiator. I wish we had those lions when I was still fighting in the arena!

Iulia: But that guy Celadus has won as many times as he has fought!

Crescens: Bah! You're speaking nonsense. I'll tell you the truth: I myself, although older, I am

hominem”ac “suspriumque puellarum” superare
possem stans pede in uno!

Iulia: Nil ultra de Celado quaero. Dic nobis
pauca, si grave non est, de vita gladiatoris.

Crescens: Libenter dicam. Capuis eram, cum
adhuc essem in ludo gladiatorio. Atque ibi
quidam lanista, Ostorius nomine, et corpora
nostra et mentes ad unguem exercuit, quia, si
quis gladiator aliquid vitae longae velit, non
solum gladio sed etiam mente pugnandum erit.

Iulia: “Mens sana in corpore sano,” ut aiunt.

Crescens: Rem acu tetigisti. Ibi Capuis nos
adacti sumus iureiurando: uri, vinciri, verberari,
ferroque necari. Deinde in familia gladiatoria
aedilis Auli Suetti Pompeiis pugnabam.

able to beat this "Powerful Man" and "heartthrob
of the girls" standing on one foot!

Iulia: I'm not asking anything else about
Celadus. Tell us a few things, if it's no trouble,
about gladiator life.

Crescens: I'll tell you freely. I was in Capua,
when I was still in gladiator school. And there a
certain sword trainer, named Ostorius, trained
our bodies and minds right down to the
fingernail, since, if any gladiator wanted a
somewhat longer life, he needed to fight not only
with his sword but also with his mind.

Iulia: “A healthy mind in a healthy body,” as
they say.

Crescens: You hit the nail on the head. There in
Capua we were compelled to swear an oath: to be
burned, chained, beaten, and killed with the
sword. Then I was fighting in Pompeii in the
gladiator family of the aedile Aulus Suettus.

Iulia: Meministine primae pugnae tuae?

Crescens: Quidni? Firmissime in memoria teneo quo die primum clamavi "Morituri te salutant!" Aestuoso erat sub sole nimio (spectatoribus scilicet vela erant), arena tam calda quam furnus. Murmillo eram, retiario quodam compositus. Hic retiarius tridente me laesit, quo facto spectatores una consurrexerunt omnes "Hoc habet! Hoc habet!" clamantes. At ego, simulans quasi graviter vulneratus, tridentiferum incaute et stulte appropinquantem ictu mortifero cecidi.

Iulia: Hoc facto, quidnam spectatores agebant?

Crescens: Quasi dementes spectatores rabie commoti clamitabant omnes, "Iugula! Iugula!"

Iulia: Do you remember your first fight?

Crescens: Why not? I hold firmly in my memory the day when I shouted, "Those about to die salute you!" It was very hot under a bright sun (of course, there were awnings for the spectators), the arena was as hot as a furnace. I was a Murmillo (Fish Fighter), matched with a certain Retiarius (Net Fighter). This Retiarius wounded me with his trident, after which the all the spectators got up together shouting "He has him! He has him!" But I, pretending that I was seriously wounded, with a mortal wound struck down the trident-bearer who was approaching carelessly and foolishly.

Iulia: After that, what did the spectators do?

Crescens: The spectators like madmen moved with rage all shouted "Go for the throat! Go for the throat!"

Iulia: Quid ergo tu fecisti?

Crescens: Id quod faciendum erat. Aspexi munerarium pollice verso et statim morientem confeci.

Iulia: Horrendum auditu.

Crescens: Nisi fallor, munerarius illo die ipso decem gladiatores occidit. Fortasse comitia brevi tempore habenda et benevolentia populi erat captanda.

Iulia: Quam diu in familia gladiatoria eras?

Crescens: Ego adhuc adulescentulus bello captivus a Britannia ablatu, atque post ludum circa octo annos in familia gladiatoria Pompeiis et duos annos in Ludis Magnis Romae eram. Quo tempore triginta tres pugnas pugnavi, in quibus, viciens vici, stans noviens, et missus sum quater.

Iulia: So what did you do.

Crescens: What had to be done. I saw the game promoter with his thumb turned down and I immediately finished off the dying man.

Iulia: That's horrible to hear.

Crescens: Unless I'm mistaken, the game promoter killed ten gladiators on that very day. Perhaps there was going to be an election soon and he needed the people's support.

Iulia: How long were you in the gladiator family?

Crescens: When still a young man I was carried off in war from Britannia, and after gladiator school I was in my gladiator cohort for eight years in Pompeii and for two years in the Great Gladiator Schools in Rome. In that time, I fought thirty-three matches, wherein I won twenty times, tied nine times, and was spared four times.

Iulia: Macte virtute, Crescens. Sane plura audire vellem, sed nobis eundumst. Gratias tibi ago et fac valeas. Haec est fabula hic, Favoni. Rursus ad te!

V. Tempestas Hodierna

Favonius: Tempus est audire de tempestate hodierna. Itaque, ecce Aulus Serenus!

Serenus: Gratias tibi ago, Favoni. Videamus quaenam sit tempestas hodie. Romae caelum tepidum est, dies idoneus ludis in Campo spectandis. Domu maesta relictā, Proserpina manifesta in terris nunc ambulat. Totam per Italiam—praesertim in Etruria, Latio, et Campania—sol splendide lucet. Gratias Phoebō Apollini agamus! Auspicia item sunt bona ad tempestatem crastinam. Et nunc, videamus quaenam sit tempestas alibi circum Mare Nostrum. In Britannia et Caledonia adhuc est tempus hiemale. Idem in Gallia Germaniaque

Iulia: Congratulations, Crescens. Of course, I'd like to hear more, but we need to go. Thank you and take care of yourself. That's the story here, Favonius. Back to you!

V. Today's Weather

Favonius: It's time to hear about today's weather. And so, here's Aulus Serenus!

Serenus: Thank you, Favonius. Let's see what the weather is today. In Rome the weather is mild, a perfect day for the games to be watched in the Campus. Having left behind her depressing abode, Persephone is now walking on land in the open. Through all of Italy - especially in Etruria, Latium, and Campania - the sun is shining brightly. Let's give thanks to Phoebus Apollo! The forecast is also good for the weather tomorrow. And now, let's see what the weather is like other places around the Mediterranean. In England and Scotland, the weather is still wintry.

frigida. In summis Alpibus autem adhuc nivolum est. Sed in parte septentrionali Italiae apud Mediolanum, exempli gratia, tepescit paulum. Iam pridem autem tepescit in Hispania et Lusitania, item in Africa et Aegypto et maiore parte Asiae. In Graecia est varietas caeli, nam sol lucet in Attica, ubi sitae sunt Athenae, sed pluvit in Peloponneso, praesertim Olympiae, ubi ludi Olympia quoque anno quarto facta sunt. Sed tamen, iam satis est. Aulus Serenus sum atque spero caela sint vobis valde serena!

VI. De Ludis

Favonius: Multas gratias, Serene. Et nunc, ut de ludis audiamus, praesto est Scirtus Agitator!

Scirtus: Avete omnes! Eamus ad ludos! Ut iam audivistis, Agon Capitolinus datus est hodie ab nostro domino Domitiano et consensu omnium haec certamina Graeca optima erant. In stadio,

Likewise, it's cold in Gaul and Germany. And high in the Alps it's still snowy. But in the north of Italy, near Milan, for example, it's becoming a little warm. Now for a long time it's been growing warm in Spain and Portugal, likewise in Africa and Asia and in most of Asia. In Greece there's a variety of weather, for the sun is shining in Attica, where Athens is located, but it's raining on the Peloponnese, especially in Olympia, where the Olympic Games have been held every fourth year. But now that's enough. I'm Aulus Serenus and I hope that your skies are always clear!

VI. Sports

Favonius: Thanks, Serenus. And now, so that we can hear about sports, here is Scirtus Agitator!

Scirtus: Hi everybody! Let's get to sports! As you've already heard, the Capitoline Olympika was put on today by our lord Domitian and by the consent of all, these Greek competitions were

Pugnax palmam pugilationis vicit, Kalokagathes
luctator optimus erat, et Pernicius cursum vicit.
In certaminibus musicorum, Orpheides et
Psalteria victores erant. Praeter haec certamina
Graeca, ludi circenses et munera data sunt. In
circo, factio Albata (olim mea factio) quinque
cursus vicit, factio Prasina septem, Russata tres,
et factio Veneta novem cursus. In amphitheatro
munus gladiatorum editum est pro salute
Imperatoris Caesaris Augusti Domitiani. Viginti
gladiatorum paria pugnarunt. Ab his viginti,
novem perierunt et undecim missi sunt. Inter
mortuos erant Atticus Murmillo, Cygnus Samnis,
et Ostorius Retiarius. Inter victores erant Nobilior
Thrax, Pugnax Samnis, Scylax Secutor et
Celadus Thrax qui iam plus quam vicies vicit,
qua de causa celeriter factus est decus
spectatorum atque, ut aiunt, suspirium puellarum.
Tandem venatio data est in qua Felix bestiarius,
ad ursos pugnans, miserabiliter necatus est. At
tamen, ut dicitur in ludis scaenicis, acta est
fabula! Atque interea, spectator care, vive
valeque et otiosus esto!

excellent. In the stadium, Pugnax won the boxing
victory, Kalokagathes the wrestler was excellent,
and Pernicius won the race. In the music
competitions, Orpheus and Psalteria were the
winners. Besides these Greek competitions,
chariot races and gladiatorial games were given.
In the circus, the White Team (at one time my
team) won five races, the Green Team seven, the
Red three, and the Blue Team nine. In the
amphitheater a performance of gladiators was
given for the health of Emperor Caesar Augustus
Domitian. Twenty pairs of gladiators fought. OF
the twenty, nine died and eleven were spared.
Among the dead were Atticus the Murmillo,
Cygnus the Samnite, and Ostorius the Retiarius.
Among the champions were Nobilior the
Thracian, Pugnax the Samnite, Scylax the
Secutor, and Celadus the Thracian who has
already won twenty times before, for which
reason he has quickly become the glory of the
audience and, as they say, the heartthrob of the
ladies. Finally a hunt was given in which Felix
the animal-fighter, fighting with bears, was sadly

VII. Valedictio

Favonius: Gratias, Scirte. Ut repetamus nuntios principales: Hodie “Agon Capitolinus”, ludi more Olympiorum, ab Imperatore Caesare Augusto Tito Flavio Domitiano apparatus est. Sicut in ludis Olympiis, certamina et athletica et musica facta sunt. Sic factumst hodie. Gratias plurimas Crescenti gladiatori agimus. Totum est ad hanc editionem Fori Romani. Gratias summas agimus et di vobis faveant. Valete omnes!

© 1998 by John Donohue

killed. But, as it's said in showbusiness, that's a wrap! And in the meantime, dear viewer, live and be well and take it easy!

VII. Valedictio

Favonius: Thanks, Scirtus. To review our main news: Today the "Capitoline Olympika", games in the style of the Olympics, was given by the emperor Caesar Augustus Titus Flavius Domitianus. Just as in the Olympic Games, both athletica and musical competitions were held. It happened like this today. We give many, many thanks to Crescens the gladiator. That's all for this edition of Forum Romanum. Thanks a lot, and may the gods bless you. Good-bye everyone!

© 2017 Translation by Joseph Klomparens. Used by permission of the American Classical League.