

## FORUM ROMANUM: SHOW #8

### INCENDIUM ROMAE

**XXVI Iulii, LXIV A.D.**

*(vicesimo sexto [die] Iulii, sexagesimo quarto anno Domini)*

**a. d. vii kal. Aug. DCCCXVII A.V.C.**

*(ante diem septimum kalendas Augustas octingentesimo septimo decimo [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 primum, ecce Quaestio Hodierna!

#### II. Quaestio Hodierna

**Lector:** Quaestio hodierna est de Incendio

### FIRE IN ROME

**26 July, 64 AD**

*(the 7th day before the kalends of August, the 817th year after the founding of Rome)*

#### I. Greeting

**Favonius:** Hello, everyone! My name is Marcus Favonius and this is Forum Romanum! What's new today? In a short time, we'll see. But first, here's the Question of the Day!

#### II. Question of the Day

**Lector:** The Question of the Day is about the

Magno: In quos Nero contulit culpam Incendii Magni Romae? Responsum dabitur ad finem Fori Romani.

### III. Quid novi?

**Favonius:** Et nunc videamus quid novi sit. Hodie, novem diebus postquam ignis conclamatus est, Incendium Magnum tandem extinctum est! Iulia?

**Iulia:** Ut credimus, flammae primo visae sunt inter tabernas apud Circum. Brevissimo tempore, ventus ignem distulit totum per Circum et omnia per illa loca. Dimidia pars Urbis autem in ruinis nunc est.

**Favonius:** Nec mirum, populus Romanus, praesertim vulgus, maxime iratus est. Multi culpam contulerunt in nostrum imperatorem principemque Neronem Caesarem. Nero autem hodie contulit culpam huius incendii in

Great Fire: On whom did Nero place the blame for the Great Fire of Rome? 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, nine days after "Fire!" was shouted, the Great Fire has finally been extinguished! Julia?

**Iulia:** As we believe, the flames were first seen among the shops at the Circus. In a very short time, wind spread the fire through the whole Circus and through all those places. And half of the City is now in ruins.

**Favonius:** Not surprisingly, the Roman people, particularly the commoners, are extremely angry. Many have placed the blame on our emperor and leader Nero Caesar. But today Nero has placed the blame for this fire on the Christians, a Jewish sect, both religious and pernicious. To hear more

Christianos, sectum Iudaicum, et religiosum et perniciosum. Ad amplius audiendum de hoc Incendio Magno, nostra Iulia Pauli locuta est cum uno e vigilibus.

#### **IV. Et alia (interrogatio cum vigile\*)**

**Iulia:** Ut notum est omnibus, vigiles sunt custodes Urbis, qui, inter alia, pugnant cum incendiis. Mecum est vigilis, Lucius Favillus nomine. Ave atque salve, Faville!

**Vigilis:** Et tu salve!

**Iulia:** Quomodo res aguntur?

**Vigilis:** Multo melius, quia incendium tandem exstinctum est!

**Iulia:** Quaeso, dic nobis pauca de hac calamitate.

about this Great Fire, our Julia Pauli has spoken with one of the vigils.

#### **IV. And other things... (an interview with a vigil/fireman)**

**Julia:** As everyone knows, the vigils are the guardians of the city who, among other things, fight fires. With me is a vigil named Lucius Favillus. Greetings and salutations, Favillus!

**Fireman:** And greetings to you!

**Julia:** How are things going?

**Fireman:** Much better, since the fire has finally been put out!

**Julia:** Please, tell us a few things about this disaster.

**Vigilis:** Libenter. Ut credimus, incendium conclamatum est inter tabernas apud Circum Maximum. In illa parte urbis, autem, tabernae et insulae domusque sunt densissimae.

**Iulia:** Certe scio.

**Vigilis:** Atque difficillimum erat nobis auxilium ferre nam viae ibi, ut bene scis, quoque sunt angustae et densissimae atque tortuosae.

**Iulia:** Certum est. Sed tamen, quomodo incendium tandem exstinctum est?

**Vigilis:** Nos vigiles multa aedificia domoliti sumus ut ignis nil alimenti caperet. Ut mihi videtur, incendium tam magnum modo inedia finitum est.

**Iulia:** Teneo quid dicas. Si licet mihi rogare, nonne ergo tu es libertus?

**Fireman:** No problem. As we believe, “Fire!” was shouted among the shops at the Circus Maximus. In that part of the city, moreover, the shops and apartments and houses are very dense.

**Julia:** I know that for a fact.

**Fireman:** And it was very difficult for us to bring help for the roads there, as you well know, are also narrow and very close together and twisty.

**Julia:** That’s for sure. But go on, how was the fire at last put out?

**Fireman:** We vigils destroyed many buildings so that the fire would get no “food”. As it seems to me, such a big fire is stopped only by “fasting”.

**Julia:** I get what you are saying. It it’s OK for me to ask, then aren’t you a former slave?

**Vigilis:** Libertus sum. At nil me pudet.

**Julia:** Certe. Quid tu censes de illis rumoribus de Nerone?

**Vigilis:** Quales rumores?

**Julia:** Rumor vulgo est Neronem ipsum Romam incendere, atque, dum Urbs incendio deleatur, Neronem suum carmen Troianum cantabat!

**Vigilis:** Nerone incendiarius? Haud sic credo. Hi rumores omnes ego accipio tamquam panem edo: cum grano salis!

**Julia:** Facete atque bene dictum, vigilis! Multas gratias. Totum est hic, Favoni, rursus ad te!

## **V. Tempestas Hodierna**

**Favonius:** Tempus est audire de tempestate.

**Fireman:** I am a freedman. But I'm not ashamed.

**Julia:** Certainly. What do you think about the rumors concerning Nero?

**Fireman:** What sorts of rumors?

**Julia:** The rumor from the commoners is that Nero himself set fire to Rome, and, while the City was being destroyed by the fire, that Nero was singing his own song about Troy.

**Fireman:** Nero an arsonist? I don't think so. I take all these rumors in the way that I eat bread: with a grain of salt!

**Julia:** Wisely and well said, Vigil! Thanks a lot. That's all, Favonius, back to you!

## **V. Today's Weather**

**Favonius:** It's time to hear about the weather.

Quam ob rem, hic est Aulus Serenus!

**Serenus:** Gratias tibi ago, Favoni. Videamus quaenam sit tempestas hodie. Ut semper mense Iulio, percaldum est hodie totam per Italiam atque totum per Mare Nostrum. Sol lucet, credo, sed nemo solem potest videre! Super Romam autem adhuc sol obscuratur nam fumus Incendii Magni non iam evanuit. Fortasse Apollo non potest currum agere per fumum tam densum! Re vera, etiam totum per Latium sol obscuratur—ab Etruria usque ad Campaniam. Mirabile, si verum est. Auspicia autem sunt multo meliora ad tempestatem crastinam, gratias Iovi! Sed, ut aiunt, tempus fugit! 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.

For that, here is Aulus Serenus!

**Serenus:** Thank you, Favonius. Let's see what the weather is like today. As always in the month of July, it's very hot today through all of Italy and through the whole Mediterranean. The sun is shining, I believe, but nobody is able to see the sun! Over Rome, indeed, the sun is still blocked, for the smoke of the Great Fire has not yet dissipated. Perhaps Apollo isn't able to drive his chariot through the dense smoke! In truth, also through all of Latium the sun is hidden - from Etruria all the way to Campania. Amazing, if it's true. But the forecast for tomorrow's weather is much better, thanks be to Jove! But, as they say, time flies! That's enough for now. I am Aulus Serenus and I hope that your skies may always be clear!

## VI. Responsum Quaestioni

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

**Lector:** Quaestio hodierna erat ut sequitur: In quos Nero contulit culpam Incendii Magni Romae? Responsum est hoc: in Christianos.

## VII. Dictum Hodiernum

**Favonius:** Nunc tempus est videre nostrum Dictum Hodiernum!

**Lector:** Hoc est dictum hodiernum: cum grano salis.

## VIII. Valedictio

**Favonius:** Verba notanda. Ut repetamus nuntios principales: Incendium Magnum tandem extinctum est! Totum est ad hanc editionem Fori Romani. Gratias summas agimus et di vobis faveant. Valete omnes!

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**Reader:** The question of the day was as follows: On whom did Nero put the blame for the Great Fire of Rome? The answer is this: on the Christians.

## VII. Dictum Hodiernum

**Favonius:** Now it's time to see our saying of the day!

**Reader:** This is today's saying: with a grain of salt.

## VIII. Valedictio

**Favonius:** Words to remember. To review our main news: The Great Fire has at last been put out! That's all for this edition of Forum Romanum. We thank you very much and may the gods favor you. Good-bye everyone!

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N.B. 'Vigil' est homo qui urbem conservat et custodit, quemadmodum custos publicus aut siphonarius.

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Note Well: A 'vigil' is a person who serves and protects a city, like a police officer or a fireman.