

CHAPTER I: GRAECIA CAPTA

DATE	March 1, 86 BC
TOP STORY	Lucius Cornelius Sulla has taken Athens!
FEATURE	Editorial by the actor Roscius Gallus on the benefits of Greek culture

PROLOGVS

In the top story, we learn that the Roman general Sulla has besieged and captured Athens, to punish the city for siding with King Mithridates of Pontus (in Asia Minor) in his war against the Romans. Sulla's men inflicted grave damage on many famous Athenian sites and monuments, but the general himself is said to have forbidden the burning of the city, not wanting to take responsibility for the total destruction of Athens. Why did Athens get this special consideration?

A line from the poet Horace helps to answer that question: *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes intulit agresti Latio* ("Captive Greece captured her fierce captor and brought the arts into uncultured Latium"). Greece had begun to come under Roman control in the second century bc, but, as Horace suggests, the pen was mightier than the sword. Long after Athens became a provincial backwater, Greek culture continued to reign supreme in the Mediterranean, beguiling wealthy Romans and exerting a profound effect on Roman life. While Roman legions marched in conquest throughout Greece, there was a Greek "invasion" of Italy, consisting of the Greek literature, myths, paintings, and sculptures that the Romans brought back. These imports fired the interest of Rome's upper crust in things Greek, but some old-fashioned Romans, notably Cato the Elder, reacted strongly against this onslaught of Greek art, literature, drama—and the un-Roman ideals that came with them.

This episode of *Forum Romanum* focuses on the continuing debate in Italy over whether the effects of Greek culture were good for Rome and the Romans. Roscius Gallus, who gives the editorial in this episode, is a famous actor, renowned throughout Italy for his good looks and theatrical genius. As you would expect, Roscius sides with those who think Greek culture is good for Italy. In his opinion, Greek culture has brought nothing but benefit to the Roman state.

Here are some questions to help you know what to look for:

1. Why was southern Italy sometimes called *Magna Graecia*?
2. What famous monuments in Athens are mentioned in the account of its capture by the Roman army, led by Sulla?
3. Many Romans fear that Greek culture has become a bad influence on Roman society. Why does the actor Roscius disagree?
4. Who are some of the literary figures—poets, playwrights, historians, *et alii*—mentioned by Roscius in his commentary?
5. What are some of the places—cities, bodies of water, *et alia*—mentioned in southern Italy and the Greek world by Serenus in the weather segment?

VERSUS

Nota bene: People, places, and things explained in the *Commentarium* section below are in boldface. Terms and difficult vocabulary defined in the *Glossarium* section below are underlined.

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!

QUAESTIO HODIERNA

LECTOR

Quaestio hodierna est de rebus Graecis: Tot civitates in Italia meridiana Graecae sunt ut illa pars Italiae saepe esset appellata _____ . Responsum dabitur ad finem *Fori Romani*.

QUID NOVI?

FAVONIUS

Et nunc videamus quid novi sit. Hos nuntios modo recepimus: Lucius Cornelius Sulla Athenas cepit! Hodie, Kalendis Martiis, L. Cornelius Sulla, imperator Romanus, obsidione Athenas cepit. Hanc obsidionem Athenis exercitus Romanus exsequebatur multos menses sed hodie copiae Romanae tandem iter in urbem ruina moenium invenerunt.

IULIA

Gratias, Favoni. Athenae, clarissima urbium Graecarum, uno anno ante in amicitiam venerunt cum **Mithridate**, nefario atque perfido hoste populi Romani. Qua de causa, Cornelius Sulla, qui bellum contra Mithridatem adhuc feliciter gerit, oppugnationem in Athenas fecit. Favoni?

FAVONIUS

Multae partes Athenarum detrimentum acceperunt: **agora**, locus communis similis nostro foro, accepit detrimentum grave. Etiam detrimentum accepit **Erectheum**, templum sanctissimum in acropole. **Parthenon** autem, clarissimum templum Athenae, quoque in acropole situm, nil detrimenti accepit, quoad scimus.

IULIA

Sulla, cum copiae Romanae Athenas intrarent, iussit urbem non flammis incendi. Sulla, ut videtur, demonstrabat reverentiam rerum Graecarum. Favoni?

PERSONA NOTANDA (EDITORIAL BY ROSCIUS GALLUS)

FAVONIUS

Reverentiam rerum Graecarum. Saepe nos Romani dicunt de humanitate aut, si vis, de cultura nostra et Graeca. Fatendum est culturam Graecam praeclaram esse. Re vera, sunt multi qui dicant culturam Graecam meliorem quam nostram esse. Ad his de rebus dicendum, hic est histrion clarissimus, Quintus Roscius Gallus.

ROSCIUS

Salvete! Gratum est mihi adesse vobiscum. Et gratissimum est mihi dicere de cultura Graeca. Saepe dictum est, "Cultura Graeca moribus Romanis detrimento est." Marcus **Cato Censorius persaepe** hoc dixit. At verum, nonne Cato ipse Graece et dicere et scribere poterat? Nonne Cato Romam portavit Quintum **Ennium**, clarissimum poetam? Multi homines dicunt culturam Graecam intulisse magna mala rei publicae Romanae! Quid mali est in scriptis **Platonis** aut **Aristotelis** aut **Herodoti**? Quid mali est in tragoediis **Aeschyli** aut **Sophoclis** aut **Euripidis**? Quid in comeodiis **Aristophanis**? Quid ergo mali est apud Homerum? Nonne Ilias Odysseaque sunt optima maximaque carmina umquam scripta? Praeter has litteras bonas, modo cogita de artibus! Cogita de architectura! Cogita de medicina astrologiaque! Ut multis videtur, mos maiorum in periculo est. Quomodo potest? Quidnam periculi est in rebus Graecis? Re vera, cultura Graeca plurimos annos in Italia fuit. Ut bene scitis, pars meridiana nostrae Italiae appellata est **Magna Graecia**! Graecane cultura periculosa?! Minime, inquam! Immo etiam, ut mihi videtur, cultura Graeca intulit nil nisi bonum rei publicae Romanae!

FAVONIUS

Multas gratias, Rosci Galle! Dicendum est: Sententia Roscii Galli non necessarie est sententia *Fori Romani*.

*TEMPESTAS HODIERNA***FAVONIUS**

Tempus est audire de tempestate. Quam ob rem, hic est Aulus Serenus!

SERENUS

Gratias tibi ago, Favoni. Videamus quanam sit tempestas hodie. Per maiorem partem Italiae sol lucet, praesertim super **Latium** Romamque. Gratias Iovi! **Auspicia** autem item sunt bona ad tempestatem crastinam. Sed ad meridiem, in parte Italiae saepe appellata "Magna Graecia" pluit multum. Fortasse caelum lacrimat ob Athenas a Sulla captas! Pluit hic ubi sunt **Neapolis et Pompeii et Capua**. Ventosa madidaque hic in insula Sicilia, ubi sunt multae civitates Graecae, ut, exempli gratia, **Syracusae**, notissima urbs in Sicilia. Etiam pluit hic ubi est **Brundisium**, portus a quo nobis est mos navigare ad Graeciam. Ventosum et turbidum est **Mare Adriacticum**. Nec mirum, totam per Graeciam nubilosum est, praesertim hic ubi sunt miserae Athenae et **Piraeus**, portus Athenarum. Etiam ventosum et madidum est hic in **Peloponneso** ubi est Sparta. In Thessalia, ubi situs est **Mons Olympus**, pluit et tonat fulgetque! Ut Mare Adriaticum, **Mare Aegaeum** turbidum est, praesertim ad meridiem maris ubi sita est Creta. Tempestas ergo totas per terras Graecas horrida est, ut dignum, nam illi Graeculi non debent esse amici Mithridati, regi Pontico, et inimici nobis Romanis! Iam satis est. Aulus Serenus sum atque spero caela sint vobis valde serena!

FAVONIUS

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

*RESPONSUM QUAESTIONI***LECTOR**

Quaestio hodierna erat ut sequitur: Tot civitates in Italia meridiana Graecae erant ut illa pars Italiae saepe esset appellata _____. Responsum est hoc: Magna Graecia.

FAVONIUS

Nunc tempus est videre nostrum dictum hodiernum!

DICTUM HODIERNUM

LECTOR

Dictum hodiernum excerptum a scriptis poetae Horatii: Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit.

VALEDICTIO

FAVONIUS

Verba notanda. Ut repetamus nuntios principales: Lucius Cornelius Sulla Athenas cepit! Multae partes urbis, inprimis agora et **Erectheum** in acropole, detrimenta acceperunt. Parthenon autem nil detrimenti accepit. Totum est ad hanc editionem *Fori Romani*. Gratias summas agimus et di vobis faveant. Valet omnes!



Scene from *Graecia Capta*

(Nota Bene: The glasses are not authentic Roman garb.)

COMMENTARIUM

agora. The agora was a large, open, public place of assembly and business in Athens, like the forum in Rome.

auspicia. “Taking the auspices” means judging the will of the gods by watching the actions of birds.

Brundisium. Brundisium (Brindisi today) is a seaport in southeastern Italy on the Adriatic Sea.

Cato Censorius. Cato “the Censor” (or “the Elder”) was active in Roman politics in the early second century BC. In his public life, he presented himself as an aggressive protector of traditional Roman values.

Ennius. Quintus Ennius (third/second century BC) was a poet and playwright from southern Italy, a part of Italy steeped in Greek culture. Cato the Elder is said to have brought him to Rome.

Erectheum. The Erectheum, built on the Athenian acropolis in the fifth century BC, can still be visited today. It was a temple that housed various cults.

Latium. Latium (Lazio today) was the district of Italy in which Rome was located. The adjective *Latinus* (“Latin”) comes from *Latium*.

Magna Graecia. *Magna Graecia* refers to the Greek colonies in southern Italy, or to southern Italy itself.

Mare Adriaticum. The Adriatic Sea lies between Italy and Greece.

Mare Aegaeum. The Aegean Sea is east of Greece, lying between it and Asia Minor.

Mithridates. Mithridates “the Great” was a king of Pontus in Asia Minor. He fought several wars with the Romans, facing such Roman generals as Sulla and Pompey. The story is told that Mithridates, to prevent his ever being assassinated by poison, took a little poison each day to build up his immunities.

Mons Olympus. Mount Olympus, the fabled home of the gods, is located in northern Greece, in an area called Thessaly.

mos maiorum. Literally, “the custom of our ancestors,” this expression means “tradition” or “way of life” as something highly valued and revered. The plural of *mos* is *mores* (“customs” or “habits”). The word is used today in English to mean the general, accepted customs of a society.

Neapolis et Pompeii et Capua. Naples, Pompeii, and Capua are located in Campania, the area of Italy south of Rome and Latium.

Parthenon. The Parthenon, built in the fifth century BC for Athena Parthenos (“the Virgin”), still stands on the Athenian acropolis. Its design and sculpture represented the pinnacle of Greek artistic achievement.

Peloponnesus. The Peloponnese is the southwestern peninsula of Greece, where Sparta and Olympia are located.

Piraeus. The Piraeus was (and still is) a major seaport near Athens in Greece.

Platonis, Aristotelis, Herodotui, Aeschlyli, Sophoclis, Euripidis, Aristophanis, Homerum. These are well-known Greek writers. Plato wrote about philosophy; Aristotle, also a philosopher, wrote about everything. Herodotus, a historian, is often called the “Father of History”; Aeschylus, Sophocles, and

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Euripides wrote tragedies; Aristophanes wrote comedies; Homer produced the two most famous works of antiquity—the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Syracusae. Syracuse was in ancient times the leading Greek city of Sicily.

GLOSSARIUM

ad meridiem – towards the south
ad tempestatem crastinam – for tomorrow's weather
apud Homerum – in the works of Homer
At primum – but first
de humanitate aut, si vis, de cultura – about being civilized, or, if you prefer, about culture
detrimentum – damage
feliciter – favorably
Gratias Iovi! – Thanks (be) to Jupiter!
histrion – actor
Fatendum est – You have to admit (that)...
Immo etiam – On the contrary
in amicitiam venerunt – made an alliance
in Italia meridiana – in southern Italy
in primis – especially, foremost
Kalendis Martiis – on March 1
maiores partem – most of
modo cogita de... – just think about...
modo recepimus – we've just received
moribus Romanis detrimento est – is harmful to Roman morality
mos maiorum – our way of life, tradition
nil nisi bonum – nothing but good
nobis est mos navigare – we customarily sail
non flammis incendi – not to be burned
nubilosum – cloudy
obsidione...cepit – captured after a siege
persaepe – very often
plurimos annos – for many, many years
praesertim – especially
Quid mali est...? – What harm is there...?
Quid novi est? – What's new?
Quidnam periculi est...? – What's the danger in...?
Re vera – in point of fact, actually
quoad scimus – as far as we know
Quomodo potest? – How is that possible?
reverentiam – high regard, deep respect
ruina moenium – through a breach in the walls
Sententia – the opinion
tempestas – the weather
tonat fulgetque – there's thunder and lightning
ut dignum – as it should be
Ut Mare Adriaticum – As with the Adriatic Sea
ut sequitur – as follows
ut videtur – as it appears
valde serena – very sunny
ventosa madidaque – windy and wet
Verba notanda – Words to remember
videamus – let's see

LATINE LOQUAMUR

Useful expressions

Here are some examples of conversational Latin used in this show. Try out some or all of these useful expressions in your own Latin conversations.

Di vobis faveant! – May the gods smile on you!	exempli gratia – for example
Gratias tibi ago. – I thank you.	Gratias! – Thanks!
Gratum est mihi – I'm glad	Iam satis est. – Enough already.
Mihi nomen est – My name is...	Minime! – No! Not at all! No way!
Multas gratias! – Thanks a lot!	nec mirum – and no wonder
Quid novi? – What's new?	re vera – in fact, actually
Salvete, omnes! – Greetings, everyone!	si vis – if you wish, if you please
Sol lucet. – The sun is shining.	ut bene scitis – as you (pl.) well know
ut mihi videtur – in my opinion, "as it seems to me"	Valete! – Goodbye, all!

Talking the talk

Below is a short conversation that uses some of these useful expressions. Do your best to translate the conversation, then practice the dialogue in Latin with a partner.

Serenus: Salve, Marce! Quid novi?

Favonius: Et tu salve, Aule! Nihil multi. Quid novi apud te?

Serenus: Etiam nihil multi. Re vera, gratum est mihi te videre!

Favonius: Multas gratias, Serene. Sed, ut mihi videtur, omnia grata est tibi.

Serenus: Nec mirum. Sol lucet. Ergo, omnia grata est mihi.

Favonius: Ut tu semper dicis, "Iam satis est." Vale, Serene!

Serenus: Et, ut tu semper dicis, "Di vobis faveant!"

GRAMMATICA

As a grammarian, you should know a grammatical form when you see it. But as a translator, use context as your guide and remember that a good translation must sound good in English.

1. The vocative case for directly speaking to someone

If a noun is a person being spoken to, the noun is said to be in the vocative case. Usually, the vocative looks just like the nominative, but for nouns ending in *-us* or *-ius* a change occurs: *-us* changes to *-e*; *-ius* changes to *-i*.

Example in context

1. Salvete, omnes!
2. Favoni?
3. Multas gratias, Rosci Galle!
4. Multas gratias, Serene.

Translation

1. Hello, everyone!
2. Favonius?
3. Thanks a lot, Roscius Gallus!
4. Thanks a lot, Serenus.

2. Expressions of time in the accusative and ablative cases

Expressions of time—when, within what time, or how long something occurred—use the accusative or ablative case. No preposition appears in the Latin, though the English translation usually (but not always) has a preposition.

Example in context

1. Brevi tempore videbimus.
2. Hanc obsidionem Athenis exercitus Romanus multos menses exsequebatur.
3. Cultura Graeca plurimos annos in Italia fuit.

Translation

1. In a little while we'll find out.
2. The Roman army carried on this siege at Athens for many months.
3. Greek culture has been in Italy for very many years.

3. Uses of infinitives to complete certain expressions

Infinitive forms are used to complete certain expressions. Below are some examples of present tense infinitives (active and passive voice) that were used in this show.

Example in context

1. Gratum est mihi adesse vobiscum.
2. Gratissimum est mihi dicere de cultura Graeca.
3. Iussit urbem incendi.
4. Tempus est audire de tempestate.

Translation

1. I'm glad to be here with you.
2. I'm very happy to speak about Greek culture.
3. He ordered the city to be burned.
4. It's time to hear about the weather.

RĒCITATIO

Practice reading aloud—with your teacher or in pairs—these excerpts from the show. After you practice reading aloud, sum up in a few words what the excerpt is about. At this point, don't translate, just give the gist—that is, an in-a-nutshell summary or paraphrase.

1. Hos nuntios modo recepimus: Lucius Cornelius Sulla Athenas cepit! Hodie, Kalendis Martiis, L. Cornelius Sulla, imperator Romanus, obsidione Athenas cepit.
2. Fatendum est culturam Graecam praeclaram esse. Re vera, sunt multi qui dicant culturam Graecam meliorem quam nostram esse.
3. Salvete! Gratum est mihi adesse vobiscum. Et gratissimum est mihi dicere de cultura Graeca.
4. Re vera, cultura Graeca plurimos annos in Italia fuit. Ut bene scitis, pars meridiana nostrae Italiae appellata est Magna Graecia!
5. Videamus quaenam sit tempestas hodie. Per maiorem partem Italiae sol lucet, praesertim super Latium Romamque. Gratias Iovi!
6. Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit.

DELIBERANDA

1. What examples of Greek cultural influence on Roman culture (literature, art, architecture, etc.) can you name?
2. Cato the Censor said publicly that Greek culture is a danger to Roman traditional values, but privately he studied Greek literature and spoke Greek. What might motivate Cato to take this public position? Is this apparent hypocrisy evident in politics today?
3. Why should we care if a more dominant culture overshadows or replaces a less prevalent culture?



A Greek Temple in Paestum in Southern Italy (Magna Graecia)

EXERCITATIO

I. PARI RESPONDERE (MATCHING)

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Sulla | A. urbs notissima in Sicilia |
| _____ 2. Neapolis | B. divinatio aves spectando |
| _____ 3. Mons Olympus | C. histrio clarissimus |
| _____ 4. agora | D. pars Italiae in qua Roma sita est |
| _____ 5. Parthenon | E. rex Asiaticus a Sulla Pompeioque superatus |
| _____ 6. Latium | F. imperator Romanus qui Athenas cepit |
| _____ 7. Herodotus | G. insula Maris Aegaei |
| _____ 8. auspicia | H. pars meridiana Italiae |
| _____ 9. Mithridates | I. templum Athenae in acropole |
| _____ 10. Euripides | J. sedes deorum |
| _____ 11. Roscius Gallus | K. tragicus Graecus |
| _____ 12. Syracusae | L. pater historiae |
| _____ 13. Creta | M. locus communis Athenis |
| _____ 14. Brundisium | N. portus a quo navigatum est ad Graeciam |
| _____ 15. Magna Graecia | O. urbs in Campania |

II. VERUM AN FALSUM? (TRUE OR FALSE?)

1. Pars meridiana Italiae saepe "Magna Graecia" appellata est.
2. Athenis locus communis similis foro Romano est appellatus Piraeus.
3. Artes liberales, et architectura, et medicina et astrologia sunt studia Graeca.
4. Ut Roscio videtur, cultura Graeca intulit magna mala rei publicae Romanae.
5. Sunt multae civitates Graecae in Sicilia.

III. TRANSFER ANGLICE (TRANSLATE INTO ENGLISH)

1. Responsum dabitur ad finem *Fori Romani*.
2. Ecce quaestio hodierna!
3. Et nunc videamus quid novi sit.
4. Hos nuntios modo recepimus!
5. Nunc tempus est videre nostrum dictum hodiernum.
6. Verba notanda.
7. Totum est ad hanc editionem *Fori Romani*.
8. Gratias summas agimus.
9. Di vobis faveant
10. Iam satis est.

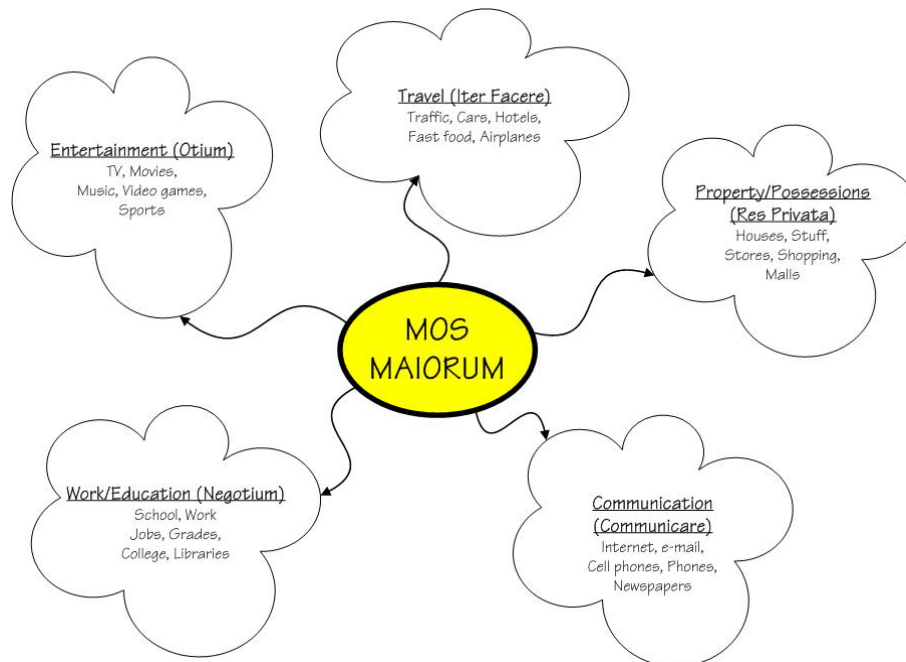
IV. QUOMODO DICITUR LATINE? (HOW DO YOU SAY IT IN LATIN?)

1. Hello, everyone!
2. My name is Marcus Favonius.
3. What's new?
4. in a short time
5. The sun is shining.
6. Thanks a lot, Serenus.
7. No! (Not at all!)
8. Goodbye, everyone!
9. In fact (actually)
10. In my opinion (As it seems to me)

STVDIA AMPLIVS: Our *mos maiorum* idea map (20 minutes)

The Latin idiom *mos maiorum* was a central idea in classical Rome. A modern English translation might be “our way of life.” What are some of the things that make up our way of life today?

1. Write the Latin phrase *mos maiorum* in the middle of the board. Then have students get into small groups of three to five students. Ask each group to take five minutes to come up with five things that their group believes characterize our *mos maiorum* or “way of life” today.
2. After five minutes, ask one group to call out one of its characteristics. Write that characteristic somewhere on the board as a “satellite” idea to the central idea of *mos maiorum*. Then ask if any other group came up with the same or a similar characteristic. If so, write the characteristic on the board next to the first characteristic. Continue this way until you have exhausted all similar ideas.
3. Ask another group for a new characteristic and repeat the process of grouping similar ideas. Continue for 10 more minutes until you have a more fully developed idea map. It might look something like the image below.
4. Finally, ask the group as a whole to try to come up with a word or phrase that sums up the idea in each grouping. Then, work together to see if you can come up with a Latin equivalent to the word or phrase you used as the idea group label. The teacher can help students come up with suitable Latin words or phrases, if necessary. When you are finished with your *Mos Maiorum* Idea Map, ask students to copy the map down in their own notebooks.



Sample *Mos Maiorum* Idea Map