

FORUM ROMANUM: SHOW #13

De Arte Coquinaria

xxvi A.D.

(vicesimo sexto anno Domini)

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: De gustibus non est disputandum.

III. Quid novi?

Favonius: Verba notanda. Et nunc videamus quid novi sit. Imperator Tiberius Iulius Caesar

The Art of Cooking

26 A.D.

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

Reader: This is the saying of the day: Don't argue about matters of taste.

III. What's new?

Favonius: Words to remember. And now let's see what's new. The emperor Tiberius Julius

Augustus Roma Capreas profectus est! In animo habet Tiberius vivere ac valere in hac insula parva, procul a curis Urbis. Quia loquimur de illa vita bona qua Tiberius Capreis mox fruatur, opportunum est introducere hominem insignem hodiernum qui est cum Iulia Pauli.

IV. Persona Notanda

Iulia: Gratias, Favoni. Mecum est Marcus Apicius, coquus clarissimus. Multum salve, Apici!

Apicius: Et tu, Iulia. Pergratum est mihi tecum loqui de arte coquinaria.

Iulia: Ergo narra tu nobis quidnam cibi paraveris hodie.

Apicius: Libenter. Ecce omnia quae velis—ab ovo usque ad mala.

Caesar Augustus has left Rome for Capri! Tiberius has it in mind to live and be well on this small island, far from the cares of the city. Since we are speaking about the good life which Tiberius is enjoying, there's an opportunity to introduce a contemporary famous man who is with Julia Pauli.

IV. Famous Person

Julia: Thanks, Favonius. With me is Marcus Apicius, a very famous cook. Hello, Apicius!

Apicius: And hello to you, Julia! I'm happy to speak with you about the art of cooking.

Julia: Therefore, tell us what you prepared today.

Apicius: No problem. Here are all the things you may want – from the egg to the apples [i.e. from appetizer to dessert]

Iulia: Facete dictum.

Apicius: Ecce, panis, caseus, oleum, et mel;
pisces fricti atque carnes assatae; patinae
pomorum et holerum— praesertim brassica et
asparagus, ambo optimi non solum ad gulam sed
etiam ad ventrem!

Iulia: Mea mater idem dicebat.

Apicius: Recte ea dixit. Scisne autem iecur piscis
optimum esse sanguini valido corporique
robustiori?

Iulia: Numquam antea haec audivi. Verone?

Apicius: Verumst. Ecce me!

Coqua: Quid sit robustius?

Iulia: Certissime.

Julia: Well said.

Apicius: Look, bread, cheese, olive oil, and
honey; fried fish and grilled meats; plates of
fruits and vegetables – especially cabbage and
asparagus, both very good not only for the throat
but also for the stomach.

Julia: My mom used to say the same thing.

Apicius: She said that correctly. And do you
know that the liver of a fish is really good for
healthy blood and a robust body.

Julia: I've never heard this before. Is it true?

Apicius: It's true. Look at me!

Cook (Apicius' assistant): What could be more
'robust'?

Julia: Absolutely.

Apicius: Deridesne me? [*se vertit ad coquam*]
Vapula!

Julia: Nolo. Ignosce mihi, Apici. Perge, amabo te.

Apicius: Ita faciam. Hic sunt ea quae maxime ad artem coquinariam pertinent: condimenta—id est, garum et liquamina varia, atque sal et piper, sine quo non decet ullam patinam condi. Sit amor condimentum vitae, tamen, si me consultas, piper est condimentum cibi!

Julia: Fortasse, sed piper et garum maximi pretii sunt, nonne?

Apicius: Fateor, sed vivere est valere et, ut mihi videtur, valere est bene cenare. Atque sine dubio bene cenare operae pretium est!

Julia: Verum perdifficil' est omnia haec spectare

Apicius: Are you making fun of me? [*turns to his cooking assistant*] Idiot!

Julia: I don't mean to. Forgive me, Apicius. Go on, please.

Apicius: I'll do so. Here are the things which are most important for the art of cooking: condiments – that is fish paste and different sauces, and salt and pepper, without which it is not right for any dish to be prepared. Love may be the "spice" of life, but, if you ask me, pepper is the "spice" for food!

Julia: Perhaps, but pepper and fish paste are very expensive, aren't they?

Apicius: I admit it, but to live and be well, as it seems to me, to be well is to eat well. And without a doubt to dine well is worth the price!

Julia: But it's really difficult to look at all these

cum moriar fame extrema. Da mi gustum, quaeso!

Apicius: At vero ut aiunt, fames est cibi condimentum optimum. Ergo, em tibi. Ecquid libet?

Iulia: Haud libet. Quidnam id est?

Apicius: Isicia de cerebellis.

Iulia: Sapit quasi gallinacea. Non mihi placet.

Apicius: At tamen ut plerumque dictum est, de gustibus non est disputandum!

Iulia: Constat. Sed quid aliud?

Apicius: Patina ex piscibus mullis. Est mullus salsus.

Iulia: (gustat) Plurimum salsus! Da mi quod

things when I'm dying of extreme hunger. Give me a taste, please!

Apicius: But as they say, hunger is the best spice for food. Therefore, here, for you. Do you like it?

Julia: I don't like it at all. What the heck is it?

Apicius: Stuffing made from brains.

Julia: It tastes like chicken. I don't like it.

Apicius: But as has been said a lot, don't argue about matters of taste.

Julia: Agreed. But what's the other thing?

Apicius: It's a dish of mullet fish. It's salted mullet.

Julia: (takes taste) Too salty! Give me

bibam, si vis.

Coqua: Em tibi. (**poculum vini ad Apicium tradit**)

Apicius: Em tibi. (**poculum vini ad Iuliam tradit**)

Iulia: (**bibit**) Mmm, suave. Quid est?

Apicius: Conditum paradoxum—vinum caldum cum melle et pipere.

Iulia: Valde placet. Sed quomodo fit haec patina de piscibus?

Apicius: Patina sic fit. Ecce caepae. Oportet coquere pisces cum paululum olei super caepis. Cum bene cocti sunt pisces, paululum vini melliti addas et sparge cum pipere aut quovis condimento. Lepidum!

something to drink, please.

Cook (Apicius' assistant): Here you go. (**hands cup of wine to Apicius**)

Apicius: Here you go. (**hands cup of wine to Iulia**)

Julia: (**drinks**) Yum, tasty. What is it?

Apicius: A preparation of opposites – hot wine with honey and pepper.

Julia: I like it a lot. But how is this dish of fish made?

Apicius: The dish is made in this way. Behold the onions. You need to cook the fish with a little bit of olive oil over the onions. When the fish have been well cooked, you add a little bit of honey wine and sprinkle it with pepper or with whatever condiment you want. Nice!

Julia: Optime, bone vir. Utinam plus temporis esset nobis sed, ut semper, tempus fugit. Ecquid aliud vis tu nostris spectatoribus dicere?

Apicius: Hoc tantum: vivamus dum licet esse bene...tanto magis dum licet ēsse (**gesticulatio edendi**) bene!

Julia: Facete dictum! Summas gratias, Apici, et bene vale. Totum est, Favoni. Rursus ad te!

V. Tempestas Hodierna

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

Serenus: Gratias tibi ago, Favoni. Valde esurio omnia haec obsonia spectando. Porcellus assatus mihi maxime placet. Et glires pipere sparsi! Quid sit melius! Sed tamen, videamus quanam sit tempestas hodie. Quam bellus est dies Romae hodie. Magis idoneus cenae sumptuosae! Usque

Julia: Excellent, good man. I wish we had more time but, as always, time flies. What other thing do you want to say to our viewers?

Apicius: Just this: Let's live well while we can... (**gesture of eating**) but much more so while we can eat well!

Julia: Well said! Thanks a lot, Apicius, and farewell. That's all, Favonius. Back to you!

V. Tempestas Hodierna

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

Serenus: Thanks, Favonius! I'm very hungry from watching all these dishes. I particularly like roasted piglet. And dormice sprinkled with pepper! What could be better! But, let's see what the weather is like today. How beautiful the day in Rome is, today. Rather suitable for an elegant

serenum est. Vix unus nimbus in caelo. Etiam sunt auspicia bona ad tempestatem crastinam. Atque paene totam per Italiam sol splendide lucet. Gratias Apollini! Sunt nonnulli nimbi, tamen, apud Neapolim, non tam procul ab insula Capreis, domu novissima Imperatoris Tiberi ipsius. Et nunc, videamus quaenam sit tempestat alibi circum Mare Nostrum. In Britannia, pluit ut semper. Tempestat in Gallia et Germania frigida est. Nec mirum. In Graecia et Asia pluvit paullulum. In Africa et Aegypto aestuosum est. Sic calet tamquam furnus. Tandem in Hispania sol plerumque lucet. Iam satis est. Tempus cenare adest. Ergo eundumst mihi. Aulus Serenus sum atque spero caela sint vobis valde serena!

V. De Ludis

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

feast. It is very clear. Barely one cloud in the sky. Also, the forecast is good for tomorrow's weather. And through almost all of Italy the sun is shining brightly. Thanks to Apollo! There are a few clouds, though, near Naples, not so far from the island of Capri, the newest home of our very own emperor Tiberius. And now, let's see what the weather is like in other places around the Mediterranean. In Britain, it's raining, as always. The weather in France and Germany is cold. Not surprising. In Greece and in Asia it's raining a little. In Africa and in Egypt it's really hot. It's as hot as an oven. Finally, in Spain the sun is shining a lot. Now that's enough. The time to eat dinner is here. Therefore, I need to go. I'm Aulus Serenus and I hope that your skies are always clear!

V. Sports

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

Scirtus: Avete omnes! Scirtus Agitator nominor itaque eamus ad ludos! Sed primum, hoc cupio scire: quid significat “ad gustum?” Cum libros de re coquinaria legam, saepissime sunt scripta praecepta sicut “adde salem et piper ad gustum.” Abs te quaero, quantum est “ad gustum?” Peream si sciam. Et isti callidi coqui his diebus omnes volunt cibum dissimulare—carnes facti piscibus aut poma crustulis facta. Quid negoti est? Vah, nil refert! Sed tamen...Ludi circenses editi sunt hodie ab Imperatore Tiberio Iulio Caesare Augusto in memoriam Divi Augusti et pro salute Populo Romano. Consensu omnium optimi erant. Factio Albata—olim factio in qua ego ipse multas victorias vici—quinque cursus vicit. Factio Prasina septem cursus vicit, Russata quattuor et Veneta octo. Fortunatus, agitator factionis prasinae, eripuit et palmam vicit equis his: Victore, Dario, Scintilla, et Pegaso. Bene memini cum adhuc essem auriga in Circo. Olim aurigae audacissimi erant, non sic ut isti barbatuli iuvenes qui sunt aurigae his diebus. At tamen, ne

Scirtus: Hi everyone! My name is Scirtus Agitator and let’s go to the games! But first, I want to know this: What does ‘to taste’ mean? When I read books about cooking, very often the recipes have been written like ‘add salt and pepper to taste.’ From you I want to know, how much is ‘to taste’? Heck if I know. And those clever cooks these days all want to disguise their food – steaks made from fish or fruits made from cookies. What’s the deal? Bah, it doesn’t matter. But... chariot races were put on today by Emperor Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus in memory of the Divine Augustus for the benefit of the Roman people. Everyone agrees they were the best. The white team – once the team on which I myself won many victories – won five races. The Green team won seven races, the Red team four, and the Blue eight. Fortunatus, the driver of the Green team, took the victory and won the prize with his horses: Winner, Darius, Spark, and Pegasus. I remember well when I was still a charioteer in the Circus. At one time

longum faciam... Haec est fabula, spectator bone,
vive valeque et otiosus esto!

VII. Valedictio

Favonius: Gratias, Scirte. Et nunc, ludis amotis
seria quaeramus. Ut repetamus nuntios
principales: Imperator Tiberius Iulius Caesar
Augustus Roma Capreas profectus est! Sic
factumst hodie. Gratias plurimas Apicio
coquo agere volumus. Totum est ad hanc
editionem Fori Romani. Gratias summas agimus
et di vobis faveant. Valete omnes!

© 1998 by John Donohue

charioteers were very aggressive, not like those
kids with little soul patches who are charioteers
these days. But, lest I make this too long... that's
a rap, good viewer! Keep on keeping on, stay
healthy, and take it easy!

VII. Valedictio

Favonius: Thanks, Scirtus. And now, with the
games set aside, let's deal with serious matters.
Te review the main news: the emperor Tiberius
Julius Caesar Augustus has set out from Rome to
Capri. It happened thus today. We want to give a
lot of thanks to the cook Apicius. That's all for
this edition of Forum Romanum. We thank you
and may the gods favor you! Good-bye,
everyone!

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