

## FORUM ROMANUM: SHOW #17

### Carmen et Error

**IX A.D.**

(nono anno Domini)

**DCCLXII A.V.C.**

(septingentesimo altero et sexagesimo 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: Rident stolidi verba Latina.

### A Poem and a Mistake

**9 A.D.**

**762 A.U.C.**

(762 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 is the saying of the day.

#### *II. Saying of the Day*

**Lector:** This is the saying of the day: Fools mock the Latin language.

### *III. Quid novi?*

**Favonius:** Verba notanda. Et nunc videamus quid novi sit. Hos nuntios modo modo recepimus: clades in Germania! Hodie rumor horribilis et vix credibilis totum per forum pervolitabat exercitum Romanum in Germania conlocatum nefarias per insidias superatum esse. Extra Curiam ipsam ex quodam de senatoribus auditum est tres legiones—circa viginti milia militum—omnino exstinctas esse. Etiam fertur Quinctilium Varum, harum legionum ducem, necatum esse. Facta ipsa cladis huius adhuc non tam clara sunt. His de rebus igitur plura vobis nuntiabimus cum ea pro certo habebimus. Nunc ad alias res tractandas, hic est Iulia Pauli.

### *IV. Persona Notanda*

**Iulia:** Gratias, Favoni. His temporibus apud nos Romanos perpauci poetica laude tam florent quam Publius Ovidius Naso, cuius carmina de

### *III. What's new?*

**Favonius:** Words to remember. And now let's see what's new. We just received this news: Disaster in Germany! Today a horrible rumor and hardly believable has been circulating through the entire forum that the Roman army stationed in Germany has been defeated by means of an abominable ambush. Outside of this very Curia from one of the senators it has been heard that three legions - nearly 20,000 soldiers - have been entirely wiped out. It is also reported that Quinctilius Varus, the leader of these legions, has been killed. The actual facts of this disaster are still not so clear. So, we'll tell you more about these things when we know them for certain. Now to discuss other things, here is Julia Pauli.

### *IV. An Important Person*

**Iulia:** Thanks, Favonius. These days among us Romans very few abound in poetic praise like Publius Ovidius Naso, whose poems about love

amore et de fabulis heroicis formisque mutatis (“Metamorphoses” inscripta), bene nota sunt. Hic poeta, ut fortasse omnes vestrum adhuc in memoria tenetis, anno priore in exilium missus est. Ovidio igitur iter longissimum faciendum erat ad terras remotissimas in parte orientali Maris Nostri. Poeta ipse nobiscum nunc in colloquium venit. Salvus sis, Ovidi Naso! Usque vales?

**Ovid:** Salva sis, Iulia. Valeo, quantum possum.

**Iulia:** Ubinam gentium ergo es tu nunc?

**Ovid:** Tomis, prope Pontum Euxinum.

**Iulia:** Tomisne? Quale oppidum est? Et quales sunt Tomitani? Nonne barbari sunt?

**Ovidius:** Certe huic oppido nil urbanitatis est. Sed tamen, ut Tomitanis videtur, barbarus hic ego sum, quia non intelligor ullis et rident stolidi

and about epic tales and transformations (called the "Metamorphoses"), are well known. This poet, as perhaps all of you still remember, in the previous year was sent into exile. So, Ovid had to make a very long journey to very far off lands in the eastern part of the Mediterranean. The poet himself is not coming to talk with us. Hello, Ovidius Naso! How are you?

**Ovid:** Hello, Julia. I'm as well as I can be.

**Iulia:** So, where in the world are you now?

**Ovid:** Tomis, near the Black Sea.

**Iulia:** Tomis? What sort of town is it? And what are the people of Tomis like? Aren't they barbarians?

**Ovidius:** Certainly, there's no urbanity in this town. But nevertheless, as it seems to the people of Tomis, I am the barbarian here, since I am not

verba Latina.

**Julia:** Vae tibi. Sed, ut ais tute ipse in scriptis, “perfer et obdura; dolor hic tibi proderit olim.”

**Ovid:** Parce perdere mea dicta in me, Iulia, nam habitare in his locis Roma remotissimis est onus vix ferendum!

**Julia:** At vero, nonne tu etiam in carminibus scripsisti, “leve fit quod bene fertur onus”?

**Ovid:** En ego confiteor! Scripsi. Sed aliud est carmen, alia vitast, nam nulla vox est quae miseriam tristitiamque meam possit comprehendere. Cum fata tam mala me rapiunt—ignosce mihi —sollicitor putare nullos esse deos!

**Julia:** Noli istaec dicere; nefas enim est! Sane ista loca sunt valde dissimilia Urbi Romanae, sed vix credibile est Tomos oppidum tam atrox

understood by any and the fools mock the Latin language.

**Julia:** That's too bad for you. But, as you yourself say in your writings, "Endure and tough it out; at some point this pain will benefit you.

**Ovid:** Don't use my words against me, Julia, for to live in this place so far from Rome is a burden I can barely bear.

**Julia:** But, didn't you also write in your poetry, "a burden born well becomes light"?

**Ovid:** Look, I admit it! I wrote it. But a poem is one thing, life is another, for no voice is able to capture my misery and sadness. Since such evil fates seize me - forgive me - I'm tempted to think that there are not gods!

**Julia:** Don't say such things; for it's wicked! Of course, those places are very unlike the city of Rome, but it's hard to believe that the town of

esse.

**Ovid:** Tu ipsa ergo Tomos veni! Haec sunt loca inculta, aspera, planissima, arboribus vacua— persaepe etiam nobis sustinendi sunt impetus barbarorum, in quos ego ipse arma sumpsi! At vero, ut plane vides, amator sum non pugnator!

**Iulia:** Plane video. At tamen, quomodo nunc tu dies noctesque consumere soles?

**Ovid:** Scribere conor sed vita mea nunc nil nisi tristitia est. Tunc eram poeta Urbi et orbi dilectissimus, nunc ipse ego exsul mentisque domusque sum. Donec eram felix, multos amicos numerabam; quia tempora nunc nubila sunt, solus sum. Cur semper ego ab urbe ipsa Roma absim? Dignus hac iniuria fui?

**Iulia:** Sed tu narra mihi, si grave non est, causas exsilii tui. Constat enim Caesarem Augustum

Tomis is so terrible.

**Ovid:** Therefore, you come yourself to Tomis! This place is uncultivated, harsh, very flat, free of trees - also quite frequently we must endure the attacks of barbarians, against whom I myself have taken up arms! but, as you plainly see, I'm a lover not a fighter!

**Iulia:** Plainly I see it. but, how are you accustomed to spend your days and nights now?

**Ovid:** I try to write but my life now is nothing except sadness. Then I was a poet in the City and I was the darling of the world, now I myself am an exile from my mind and my home. While I was lucky, I had many friends; since times are cloudy now, I'm alone. Why in the world am I apart the city of Rome? Did I deserve this punishment?

**Iulia:** But do tell me, if it's not too much trouble, the reasons for your exile. For it's reported that

carmen tuum de arte amatoria graviter tulisse. Etiam nonnulli dicunt te in flagrante delicto quodam apprehensum esse. Cui delicto nomen Iuliae, neptis Caesaris Augusti ipsius, additum est.

**Ovid:** Unde hoc scis? Nugas agis atque falso dicis. Falso, aio. Non mea opera neque pol culpa evenit ut Iulia, Augusti neptis, in exilium mitteretur.

**Iulia:** Nil pro certo habeo, sed ita est rumor apud vulgus, nam dicunt causas exsili tui esse et carmen et errorem.

**Ovid:** Vera dicam: nil nimium studebam Caesari Augusto displicere. Sane sententia nostri Augusti maximi momenti mihi nobisque omnibus est. At vero, carmen meum de arte amatoria scribere iussit Amor, saevus puer ille. Haud scio quare hic sim. Credibile non est quam cupidus sim

Caesar Augustus did not take very well your poem about the art of love. Some also say that you were caught in the middle of committing a certain transgression. The name of Julia, Caesar Augustus own granddaughter, was added to that transgression.

**Ovid:** How do you know this? Your spouting nonsense and telling lies. Lies, I say. It's not going to be my work nor, by Pollux, is it going to be my fault that Julia, Augustus' daughter, be sent into exile.

**Iulia:** I don't know anything for certain, but that's the rumor with the crowd, for they say that the reasons for your exile are a poem and a mistake.

**Ovid:** I'll tell you the truth: I don't want to upset Caesar Augustus too much. Of course, the opinion of our Augustus is very important to me and to all of us. But, LOVE, that cruel little boy, commanded me to write my poem about the art of love. I don't know why I'm here. It's incredible

redeundi domum. Hoc autem est in votis.

**Iulia:** Tunc ergo nescis quare tam longe Roma missus sis?

**Ovid:** Non mentior: peream si sciam; sed erratum quod feci, quidquid id erat, ignorans feci. Postea quam mihi renuntiatum est de exilio meo...quid facerem haud scivi. Urbs Roma mihi sola placebat. Nunc ego, Pieridum vates, adsum hic in terra paene incognita. Romam, urbem mihi carissimam, redire cupio. Num nimium volo?

**Iulia:** Quidquid id erat, pergraviter tulit Augustus qui te misit usque ad extremas partes Maris Nostri. At tamen, censeo, Ovidi, tempus nostrum paene iam fugisse. Ecquid aliud cupis dicere?

**Ovid:** Quid dicam aliud nescio. At vero, me miserum, levior poena fiat! Iusta precor! Nil opus erat exilio— veniam rogo! Si dis et Augusto

how much I want to return home. But this is fate.

**Iulia:** So, do you not know why you were sent so far from Rome?

**Ovid:** I'm not lying; heck if I know; but the mistake which I committed, whatever it was, I did unknowingly. Until my exile was announced to me... I didn't know what I did. The City of Rome alone pleased me. Now I, a poet of Pieris, am here in an almost unrecognizable land. I want to go back to Rome, a city most dear to me. Surely, I don't want it too much, do I?

**Iulia:** Whatever it was, Augustus bore it very ill to send you all the way to the furthest parts of the Mediterranean. But still, I think, Ovid, that our time has already nearly fled. Do you have anything else you want to say?

**Ovid:** I don't know of anything else to say. But, poor me, would that the penalty could become lighter! I beg for justice! There was no need for

placebit mox Romae ero. Nihil mihi optatius cadere posse. Utinam ibidem adessem...

**Iulia:** Me paenitet, Ovidi miser, sed nil temporis relictum est nobis. Gratias igitur tibi ago. Fac ut tuam valetudinem cures.

**Ovid:** Vale, Iulia, et salutem multam dicito omnibus Romae, ne mei obliviscantur!

**Iulia:** Ita faciam. 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. Videamus quaenam sit tempestas hodie. Romae, caelum est aliquantulum nubilosum etiam paullulum frigidum est hodie. Interdiu tonitrus auditur

exile - I ask for mercy! If it pleases the gods and Augustus, soon I'll be in Rome. Nothing could happen that I wish for more. I wish I were there...

**Iulia:** I'm sorry, poor Ovid, but there is no time left to us. So, thank you. Take care of your health.

**Ovid:** Goodbye, Julia, and give a big greeting to everyone in Rome, tell them not to forget me!

**Iulia:** I'll do so. That's all, 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:** Thanks, Favonius. Let's see what the weather is like today. In Rome, the weather is a little cloudy and a little cold today. At times thunder is being heard and flashes of lightning



fulgoresque crebri videntur atque in septentrionali parte Italiae fit imber grandine mixtus. In parte meridiana Italiae ferunt statuas signaque lacrimare et Capuae vitellum bicipitem natum esse. Qualia omina pessima! Fortasse illi rumores de clade horribili in Germania non sine causa totam per urbem volitant! Etiam sunt auspicia pessima ad tempestatem crastinam. Quin videamus quaenam sit tempestatas alibi circum Mare Nostrum. Multis in partibus varium est caelum hodie: alias Iuppiter pluit, alias Apollo currum manifesto agit. In Britannia, vix credibile, sol lucet. In Gallia et nefaria Germania pluit. Nec mirum. In Graecia et Asia etiam paulum pluit. Pluit quoque hic Tomis apud Pontem Euxinum ubi miserrimus Ovidius dies noctesque tristissimas agit. Utinam Ovidius carmina tam lasciva non scripsisset. Melius si ipsa verba sua observasset: "In medio tutissimus ibis." At tamen, iam satis est. Aulus Serenus sum atque spero caela sint vobis valde serena!

are being seen and in the northern part of Italy rain mixed with hail is occurring. In the southern part of Italy, they report that the statues and images are crying and in Capua that a two-headed calf was born. What terrible omens! Perhaps it's not without reason that those rumors about the horrible disaster in Germany are flying through the whole city. Why not take a look at what the weather is like in other places around the Mediterranean? The weather is different today in many parts: Jupiter is raining on some, Apollo is driving his chariot with clear skies on others. In England, hard to believe, the sun is shining! In Gaul and abominable Germany it's raining. Not surprising. In Greece and in Asia it's also raining a little. It's also raining here in Tomis near the Black Sea where terribly miserable Ovid spends his sad days and nights. I wish that Ovid had not written such provocative poems. It would have been better if he had observed his very own words: "You'll go safest in the middle." But that's enough. I'm Aulus Serenus and I hope that your skies are always clear!

## *VI. De Ludis*

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

**Scirtus:** Avete omnes! Eamus ad ludos! Sed prius, de Ovidio Nasone haec pauca dicere volo. Carmina eius audivi et nostro Caesari Augusto admodum adsentio: istaec carmina de amore et aliis rebus magno detrimento populo Romano morique maiorum esse. Nempe circus est locus ad ludos et aurigas fortissimos spectandos non ad puellas captandas! Tametsi hae puellae, ut ait ille Ovidius, "Spectatum veniunt, veniunt spectentur ut ipsae." Ut mihi videtur, merito ac iure in exilium ille "doctus vates" missus est, nam haec pretia ignaviae sunt. Sed nil ad nos pertinet. His dictis, nunc ad ludos eundumst. Ludi circenses editi sunt ab Imperatore Caesare Augusto et consensu omnium optimi erant. In circo, factio Albata septem cursus vicit, factio Prasina octo, factio Russata sex, et Veneta tres cursus vicit.

## *VI. Sports*

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

**Scirtus:** Hi everyone! Let' go to sports! But first, I want to say a few things about Ovidius Naso. I heard his poems and I entirely agree with our Caesar Augustus: Those poems about love and other things very harmful to the Roman people and to the tradition of our ancestors. Certainly, the Circus is a place for games and watching the most daring charioteers, not for picking up girls! Even if these girls, as that Ovid says, "Are coming to watch, are coming so that they themselves can be watched." As it seems to me, deservedly and justly that "learned poet" was sent into exile, for that's the price of stupidity. But that doesn't matter to us. With that said, now we need to get to sports. The chariot races were produced by the emperor Caesar Augustus and by the consent of all they were very good. In the

Etiam in circo erat venatio magna in qua plurimae bestiae caesae sunt. Accidit autem aliquid ominis mali quando aper ferocissimus (in silvis Germanicis captus, ut aiunt) priusquam necatus unum e venatoribus dentibus transfixit—venator ille autem brevi tempore multo in sanguine vita discessit, quo facto nonnulli spectatores valde conturbati sunt. Sed tamen, ut dicitur in ludis scaenicis, acta est fabula! Atque interea, spectator care, vive valeque et otiosus esto!

### *VII. Valedictio*

**Favonius:** Gratias, Scirte. Ludis amotis, seria quaeramus. Ut repetamus nuntios principales: Hoc ipso tempore rumor horribilis et vix credibilis totam per Urbem volitat tres legiones—circa viginti milia militum—per insidias in Germania omnino extinctas esse. Huius cladis autem facta ipsa adhuc non tam clara et

Circus, the White Team won seven races, the Green eight, the Red Team six, and the Blue won three races. Also, in the Circus there was a grand hunt in which a whole lot of beasts were killed. But a bad omen occurred when a very vicious boar (captured in the German forests, as they say) pierced one of the hunters with his teeth before he was killed - and that hunter died in a short time in a lot of blood, because of which some spectators were very disturbed. 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. Goodbye*

**Favonius:** Thanks, Scirtus. With sports set aside, let's deal with serious matters. To review our main news: At this very time a terrible rumor and hard to believe is flying through the whole City that three legions - around 20,000 soldiers - have been entirely destroyed in Germany. But the actual facts of this disaster are not so clear and

bene nota sunt. Cum plura sciamus, statim vos certiores faciemus. Sic factumst hodie. Gratias plurimas Ovidio poetae agere volumus. Totum est ad hanc editionem Fori Romani. Gratias summas agimus et di vobis faveant. Valet omnes!

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are not known. When we know more, we'll let you know right away. It happened like this today. We want to thank the poet Ovid a lot. That's it for this edition of Forum Romanum. Thanks a lot, and may the gods favor you. Goodbye, everyone!

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