

## FORUM ROMANUM: SHOW #20

### Odi et Amo

LIV A.C.

(anno quinquagesimo quarto ante Christum)

DCC A.V.C.

(anno septingentesimo ab urbe condita)

### *I. Salutatio*

**Favonius:** Salvete, omnes! Mihi nomen est Marcus Favonius et hoc est Forum Romanum! Quid novi est hodie? Summatim praedicam: hodie audiemus de carminibus Catulli, nam nobiscum est mulier quae dicit se esse Lesbiam ipsam— mulierem illam apud carmina Catulli et formosam et famosam. Hoc facto, feliciter nobis eveniet ut possimus audire Valerium Catullum, poetam ipsum, recitantem unum e suis carminibus. Omnia haec—plus etiam—agentur hac editione Fori Romani. Ante omnia, autem,

### I Hate and I Love

54 B.C.

700 A.U.C.

(the 700th 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? I'll give you a brief preview: Today we'll hear about the poems of Catullus, for with us is a woman who says that she is Lesbia herself – that beautiful and famous woman in Catullus' poems. After this is done, we're very lucky that we're able to hear Valerius Catullus, the poet himself, reciting one of his poems. All of these things – and more – will be done on this edition of Forum Roman. Before everything, though,

ecce Dictum Hodiernum!

## *II. Dictum Hodiernum*

**Lector:** Hoc est dictum hodiernum: Amantes sunt amentes.

## *III. Quid novi?*

**Favonius:** Verba notanda. Et nunc videamus quid novi sit. Hi nuntii modo Romam adlati sunt: Gaius Iulius Caesar, proconsul in Gallia, bellum Britannis iterum intulit! Et nunc ad alias res. Ego nuper inter cenam sumptuosam, apud Marcum Crassum consulem, audivi illum poetam Valerium Catullum unum e carminibus recitantem. Nonnulli carmina Catulli amant, nonnulli oderunt. Cum sic loquamur, opportunum est introducere mulierem quae dicit se esse Lesbiam illam, mulierem bene notam omnibus qui Catulli carmina audiverunt. Haec “Lesbia” est cum Iulia Pauli.

here is the Saying of the Day.

## *II. Saying of the Day*

**Lector:** This is the saying of the day: Lovers are out of their minds.

## *III. What's new?*

**Favonius:** Words to remember. And now let's see what's new. This news was just brought to Rome: Gaius Julius Caesar, Proconsul in Gaul, has again begun to wage war against the Britons! And now to other things. Recently in the midst of a fine meal at the house of the Consul Marcus Crassus, I heard the poet Valerius Catullus reading one of his poems. Some love the poems of Catullus, others hate them. Since we are speaking in this way, it's timely to introduce the woman who says that she is that 'Lesbia', the woman well-known to all who have heard Catullus' poems. This 'Lesbia' is with Julia Pauli.

#### *IV. Persona Notanda*

**Iulia:** Gratias, Favoni. Carmina Catulli sunt bene nota—aut fortasse male nota—totam per Urbem Romam. Atque his de carminibus nemo est aut melius aut peius nota quam Lesbia illa. His dictis, gratum est mihi hoc dicere: hodie nobiscum est quaedam mulier quae declarat se esse illam Lesbiam, puellam quondam Catulli poetae. Multum salve, Lesbia!

**Lesbia:** Salve, Iulia Pauli.

**Iulia:** Gaudemus maxime te adesse nobiscum, Lesbia, quia omnes volunt cognoscere plura de te.

**Lesbia:** Et pergratum est mi adesse vobiscum nam mihi placet esse in Foro Romano—id est, in hoc spectaculo optimo.

**Iulia:** Gratias, Lesbia. Nimis benigna es.

#### *IV. A Noteworthy Person*

**Iulia:** Thanks, Favonius. The poems of Catullus are famous – or perhaps ‘infamous – through the whole city of Rome. And from these poems nobody is either better or worse known than that ‘Lebia.’ These things being said, it’s my pleasure to say this: With us today is a certain woman who claims that she is that Lesbia, once the girlfriend of the poet Catullus. Hello, Lesbia!

**Lesbia:** Hi, Julia Pauli.

**Iulia:** We’re very happy that you are with us, Lesbia, since everyone wants to know more about you.

**Lesbia:** And I’m very pleased to be with you, for I like being in Forum Romanum – that is, on this excellent show.

**Iulia:** Thanks, Lesbia. You’re too kind.

**Lesbia:** At vero, praesertim mihi placet adesse quod iam dudum cupiebam Aulum Serenum ipsum praesentem videre! Quam bellus homo est—quavis cumque tempestate!

**Iulia:** Facete dictum, Lesbia. Sed tamen, narres pauca de hac “familiaritate” cum illo poeta Valerio Catullo.

**Lesbia:** Ita faciam libenter. Verum dicis: Catullum bene novi, ut ita dicam.

**Iulia:** Ubi tu primum Catullum aspexisti?

**Lesbia:** Non pro certo memini. Ut mi videtur erat apud virum...em oblita sum. Non memini ubi essemus.

**Iulia:** Nil refert. Narra nobis, quaeso, vidistine tu illum aut ille te?

**Lesbia:** But I’m especially pleased to be here because now for a long time I’ve wanted to see Aulus Serenus in person! He’s such a handsome man – in any kind of weather!

**Iulia:** Smartly said, Lesbia. But go on, say a few things about this “acquaintance” with the poet Valerius Catullus.

**Lesbia:** Yes, I’ll do so freely. You speak the truth: I ‘knew’ Catullus well, so to speak.

**Iulia:** Where did you first see Catullus?

**Lesbia:** I don’t remember for sure. As it seems to me, he was with my husband... uh... I forgot. I don’t remember where we were.

**Iulia:** It doesn’t matter. Tell us, please, did you see him, or did he see you?

**Lesbia:** Si recte memini...ego cum quodam homine lepide loquebar ridebamque identidem, cum aspexi hunc—Gaium Catullum—me spectare stupefactum quasi lupo fame paene confectus.

**Iulia:** Horrendum visu!

**Lesbia:** Non tam horrendum, ut mi visum est. Melius *inspectari* quam *non* spectari, nonne?

**Iulia:** Lepide. At vero, nunc memini. Erat sic ut in illius versibus:

“Ille mi par esse deo videtur ille, si fas est, superare divos qui sedens adversus identidem te...”

**Lesbia:** Sic erat, atque “lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus / flamma demanat” et cetera.

**Lesbia:** If I remember correctly... I was speaking with a certain charming man and laughing repeatedly, when I saw that this – Gaius Catullus – was staring at me, stunned like a wolf nearly dying of hunger.

**Iulia:** A terrible thing to see!

**Lesbia:** Not so terrible, as it seemed to me. It’s better to be inspected than not to be ‘spected,’ right?

**Iulia:** Clever. But now I remember. It was thus, like in the verses of that man:

“That man seemed to be equal to a god (if it’s permitted, to surpass the gods), who sitting there across from you repeatedly...”

**Lesbia:** It was like that, and “... but the tongue grows heavy, a slender flame flows down the limbs...” etc.

**Iulia:** Itaque quid tunc?

**Lesbia:** Quid tunc? Ego mulier eram, ille amans cupidus erat. Cetera, quis nescit?

**Iulia:** Etiam lepide, sed cave ne sis tam lasciva, Lesbia! Nonne te pudet ita dicere?

**Lesbia:** Nil me pudet.

**Iulia:** Hoc in aperto est. Sed tamen, perge dicere, quaeso, de hoc amore inter te et Valerium Catullum.

**Lesbia:** Quid dicam? Eram mulier urbana et ille adulescens amans atque poeta doctus. Primo omnia optime suavissimeque agebantur...

**Iulia:** Sed deinde...

**Iulia:** So, what then?

**Lesbia:** What then? I was a woman; he was a passion-struck lover. The rest: Who doesn't already know?

**Iulia:** Also clever, but be careful that you not be so sensual, Lesbia! Doesn't it bother you to speak in this way?

**Lesbia:** Nothing bothers me.

**Iulia:** This is clear. But, continue to speak, please, about this love between you and Valerius Catullus.

**Lesbia:** What am I going to say? I was a woman of the city and he a love-struck young man and learned poet. At first everything was going very well and very smoothly...

**Iulia:** But then...

**Lesbia:** Sed deinde...at vero tu bene scis: “Da mi basia mille, deinde centum, dein mille altera, dein secunda centum...” Nimis erat! Immo etiam taedet obestque magis. “Sat superque” dixi.

**Iulia:** Tu ergo non dilexisti eum ita ut ille te, nonne?

**Lesbia:** Ille me amabat plus quam oculos suos...

**Iulia:** Sed tu...

**Lesbia:** Sed ego ... melius hoc dicere: Oculi mei amabant alios plus quam Catullum.

**Iulia:** O factum male! O miselle Catulle!

**Lesbia:** Re vera, quondam fulsere vere candidi nobis soles. Sed omnia mutantur. Melius est, ut mi videtur, quod vides perisse, perditum ducere.

**Lesbia:** But then... but you know it well: “Give me 1000 kisses, then 100, then another 1000, then a second 100...” It was too much! Rather, it was even boring and quite a pain. “More than enough” I said.

**Iulia:** So, you didn’t love him as he loved you, did you?

**Lesbia:** He loved me more than his eyes...

**Iulia:** But you...

**Lesbia:** But I... it’s better to say this: My eyes loved others more than Catullus.

**Iulia:** O what a terrible thing to do! O poor Catullus!

**Lesbia:** In truth, at one time the ‘white sun truly shone upon us.’ But all things change. It’s better, as it seems to me, when you see that you have lost, to take the loss. Why now torture yourself

Quare iam amplius te excrucies?

**Iulia:** Cur etiam. Sed tamen, vae nobis, nil temporis relictum est. Summas ergo gratias tibi ago, Lesbia, et bene vale. Totum est, Favoni. Rursus ad te!

### *V. De Ludis (Recitatio)*

**Favonius:** Et nunc, praesto est Scirtus Agitator!

**Scirtus:** Avete omnes! Scirtus Agitator nominor sed, vae nobis, ludi non sunt hodie. Sed voluptatis vestrae causa—qualiscumque erit—audiemus Catullum ipsum recitantem unum e carminibus.

**Catullus:** Furi et Aureli, comites Catulli – sive in extremos penetrabit Indos, litus ut longe resonante Eoa tunditur unda, sive in Hyrcanos Arabasve molles, seu Sagas sagittiferosve Parthos, sive quae septemgeminus colorat

anymore?

**Iulia:** Why indeed. But, too bad for us, there's no time left. So, I thank you very much, and bid you farewell. That's all, Favonius. Back to you!

### *V. Sports (A Poetry Reading)*

**Favonius:** And now, here is Scirtus Agitator.

**Scirtus:** Hey, everyone! I am Scirtus Agitator but, too bad for you, there are no sports today. But for your pleasure – whatever sort it will be – we'll hear Catullus himself reading one of his poems.

**Catullus:** Furius and Aurelius, friends of Catullus – Whether he travels deep into far-off India, as the shore is beaten far-and-wide with the resounding wave of Dawn, or to the Sagae or the arrow bearing Parthians, or to the seas which



aequora Nilus, sive trans altas gradietur  
Alpes, Caesaris visens monimenta magni,  
Gallicum Rhenum, horribile aequor, ultimi-  
mosque Britannos – omnia haec, quaecumque feret  
voluntas caelorum, temptare simul parati, pauca  
nuntiate meae puellae non bona dicta: cum suis  
vivat valeatque moechis, quos simul complexa  
tenet trecentos, nullum amans vere, sed  
identidem omnium ilia rumpens; nec meum  
respectet, ut ante, amorem, qui illius culpa cecidit  
velut prati ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam  
tactus aratro est.

**Scirtus:** Ita est ut mater mea semper dixit,  
“Amantes sunt amentes!” Sane hoc carmen  
aliquid veri habet, sed de aliis carminibus  
Catulli...nugae, si me roges, nil nisi nugae! Nam  
qui Romanus vult audire de rebus quam  
levissimis... “passer deliciae meae puellae.”  
Quisnam curat? Gaudeo passerem mortuum esse!

the seven-brothered Nile splashes with color, or  
whether he crosses the lofty Alps, witnessing the  
monuments of Great Caesar, the Gallic Rhine,  
the horrible sea, and the far-off Britons – you  
two, prepared to endure all these things at the  
same time with me, whatever the will of the gods  
may bring, announce a few unpleasant things to  
my girlfriend: May she live and thrive with her  
man-whores, 300 of whom she holds in her  
embrace at the same time, loving none of them  
truly, but breaking the loins of all of them again  
and again and again; and she doesn't look back at  
me, as before, her lover, who has fallen because  
of her like a flower of a distant field, after it has  
been crushed by a passing plow.

**Scirtus:** It's like my mama always told me,  
“Lovers are out of their minds!” Of course, this  
poem has some truth in it, but concerning the  
other poems of Catullus... nonsense, if you ask  
me, nothing but nonsense! For what Roman  
wants to hear about such trivial things... “my  
sweet girlfriend's sparrow.” Who in the world

Melius si poetae Romani res gestas gloriosas canant—exempli gratia, de aurigis audacibus qui, quasi heroes prisci, multas palmas in Circo complent! Immo etiam, Valeri Catulle, tu ineptus es, aio, multo ineptior Marrucino Asinio aut Arrio illo qui fluctus Ionios “**H**ionios” dixit!.... Sed tamen, ut dicunt in ludis scaenicis “Haec est fabula!” Itaque, spectator bone, vive valeque et otiosus esto!

### *VI. Tempestas Hodierna*

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

**Serenus:** Gratias tibi ago, Favoni. Audistine id quod Lesbia dixit: me esse hominem bellum—quacumque tempestate?

**Favonius:** Etiam audivi. Sed mulier fatuo quod dicit Sereno, in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua!

cares? I’m happy that the sparrow is dead! It’s better if Roman poets sing of glorious deeds – for example, about daring charioteers who, like heroes of old, win many victories in the Circus! Rather, I say you are even a fool, Valerius Catullus, much more a fool than Marrucinus Asinius or that man Arrius who said that the Ionian waves were “H-ionian”! ... But still, as they say in show business, “That’s a wrap!” And so, dear viewer, live and be well and take it easy!

### *VI. Today’s Weather*

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

**Serenus:** Thank you, Favonius. Did you hear what Lesbia said: That I am a handsome man – in any kind of weather.

**Favonius:** Yes, I heard. But whatever a woman says to a love-struck Serenus should be written on the wind and on swift water!

**Serenus:** Fugit te, Favoni. Sed tamen, videamus quaenam sit tempestas hodie. Hodie Romae, quam dies bellissimus, ut saepe fit primo vere! Ita est ut Catullus scripsit:

“Iam ver egelidos refert tepores...  
Iam mens praetrepidans avet vagari,  
iam laeti studio pedes vigescunt!” Et qualis sit tempestas alibi circum mare nostrum, fortasse requiris? Scio. Apud “monimenta magni Caesaris”—id est, apud “Gallicum Rhenum horribilesque ultimosque Britannos”—pluit, nec mirum. In parte orientali, apud “Arabas molles” et “sagittiferos Parthos” sol plerumque lucet. Etiam sol lucet in Aegypto ubi “septemgeminus colorat aequora Nilus.” Sed tamen, tempus fugere sentio et excrucior. Ergo eundum est mihi. Aulus Serenus sum atque spero caela sint vobis valde serena!

## *VII. Valedictio*

**Serenus:** You don’t get it, Favonius! But let’s see what the weather is like today. Today in Rome, the day is as beautiful as can be, as often happens at the beginning of spring! It’s as Catullus wrote:

“Now spring brings back sunny warmth...  
Now the ever-fearful mind desires to sally forth,  
Now the joyful feet grow strong with desire!”  
And what is the weather like in other places around the Mediterranean, perhaps you ask? I know. Near the “monuments of Great Caesar” – that is, “near the Gallic Rhine and the horrible and far off Britons” – it’s raining, not surprising. In the east, near the “Arabian heaps” and the “arrow-bearing Parthians,” the sun is especially bright. The sun is also bright in Egypt where “the seven-brothered Nile splashes the sea with color.” But I feel that time flies; I am tormented. So, I need to go. I’m Aulus Serenus, and I hope that your skies will always be clear!

## *VII. Farewell*

**Favonius:** Gratias, Serene. At tamen, ut repetamus nuntios principales: Gaius Iulius Caesar bellum Britannis iterum intulit—sane res gestae litteris dignae. Itaque, spectatores, totum est ad hanc editionem Fori Romani. Gratias summas agimus et vobis feliciter eveniat. Valet omnes!

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**Favonius:** Thanks, Serenus! But moving on, to repeat our main story: Gaius Julius Caesar has again begun to wage war against the Britons – deeds clearly worthy of literature. Thank you so much and may things go well for all of you. Goodbye, everyone!

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