



COMPILATION OF MARVELOUS ACCOUNTS

Antigonus

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The Unexpected Cosmology

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¹ Timaeus, who wrote the history of Sicily, says that where the river called Alex forms a boundary between the Locrians and the people of Rhegium, the cicadas [tettix] among the Locrians sing while those among the people of Rhegium are voiceless. And he narrates something yet more fabulous than this: for when the citharodes Ariston from Rhegium and Eunomus from Locri arrived at Delphi, they disagreed between themselves about the lot - the former thought that he ought not to draw the inferior position since all of Rhegium was colonized from Delphi and had been set up by the god, while the latter inveighed against him that it was entirely unsuitable for those to play the cithara among whom the cicadas did not sing. So although the man of Rhegium was the favourite to win the contest, Eunomus the Locrian was victorious for this reason: while he was singing, a cicada which had flown onto his lyre began to sing, and the assembled multitude acclaimed the occurrence and demanded his victory.

² Another such fabulous thing is recorded at Rhegium, that Heracles, having fallen asleep at some spot in the region and having been mobbed by cicadas, prayed that they would become voiceless.

³ In Cephallenia, too, a river partitions the land, and while on the near side there are cicadas, there are none on the far side.

⁴ Nor do the frogs give voice in Seriphus: and myths prevail among the Seriphians, too, except that some are about Heracles, some about Perseus.

⁵ Myrsilus, who wrote a *Lesbiaca*, says of Antissa—where the tomb of the head of Orpheus is pointed out and its story told by the inhabitants—that its nightingales are more sweet-voiced than others.

⁶ Our genre of compilation might naturally touch upon the partridges [perdix] spoken of in Attica and Boeotia, of whom some are agreed to be melodious, others completely weak-voiced.

⁷ There is a singular thing, too, about the guts of sheep [probata]: those of the ram are soundless, those of the ewe, melodious. From this, one might understand the poet [Homer] to have said (although he is altogether over-curious and excessive), that “he strung seven strings of female sheep.”

⁸ Something no less marvelous than this, but more familiar, is the fact concerning the thorn in Sicily called cardoon [kaktos]: whenever a deer treads on it and is injured, its bones are soundless and useless as flutes. Which Philetas, too, has interpreted, when he said, “The fawn will sing on

its departure from life if it has guarded itself from the prick of the sharp cardoon.”

⁹ In the islands of the Lemnians called Neae, partridges are not to be found, but if anyone tries to introduce them, they die. Some say that there are things even more prodigious than this, that they die if they even see the land.

¹⁰ Although Boeotia has a great many mole-rats [aspalax], in Coroneia alone this animal is not found, but dies if it is introduced. The same is true of [wolves and] little owls [glauk] in Crete, where they say that the region bears no deadly animals.

¹¹ There are no snakes in Astypalaea, nor are there hares in Ithaca, nor the wild pig [hys] nor deer in Libya, nor the weasel [gale] in Rheneia which is near Delos; and the guinea-fowl [meleagris] is not to be seen at all in any place [other than in Leros].

¹² Amelesagoras the Athenian, who wrote the Atthis, says that the crow [korone] does not fly towards the Acropolis, and there is nobody who can say that they have seen one do so. He gives the reason in fabulous form. For he says that when Athena was given to Hephaestus, as she lay down with him she vanished and Hephaestus fell to the ground and emitted his sperm. The earth, he says, afterwards bore to him Erichthonius, whom Athena nurtured and then shut up in a basket and handed over to the daughters of Cecrops (Agraulos, Pandrosos and Herse). Athena instructed them not to open the chest until she herself came. When she went to Pallene [or Pellene] to fetch a mountain so that she might make a defence in front of the Acropolis, two of the daughters of Cecrops, Agraulos and Pandrosos, opened the chest and saw two serpents [drakon] around Erichthonius. Amelesagoras says that a crow met Athena as she carried the mountain, which is now called Lycabettus, and said that Erichthonius was out in the open. She, on hearing this, flung the mountain to its present position and said to the crow that because of the bad news it had brought, it was not to be lawful for it to approach the Acropolis.

¹³ In the Scythian region, and likewise in that of Elis, there are no mules.

¹⁴ Theopompus says that there is in the neighbourhood of the Chalcidians in Thrace a place of the following nature, that whenever any other sort of animal enters it, it comes back unharmed, but that no dung-beetle escapes: it turns round and round in a circle and then it dies: indeed, the place is called Cantharolethrus ('Beetle-death') because of this.

¹⁵ In Crannon in Thessaly they say that there are only two ravens: and because of this, on the city seal attached to decrees of proxeny—just as is customary among all men to attach—are depicted two ravens on a bronze cart, because more than this have never been seen. The cart is depicted for the following reason (and this, too, might seem outlandish): they have a bronze cart as a dedication which, whenever there is a drought, they shake while beseeching the god for water, and they say that their prayers are fulfilled. Theopompus tells something more singular than this: for he says that while the ravens stay in Crannon until such time as they hatch their young, once they have done this, they leave the young and return [inland].

¹⁶ Ctesias narrates something similar in respect of the people of Ecbatana and Persia. But I disregarded the excerpt because of his many lies: in fact, it seemed freakish.

¹⁷ Myrsilus of Lesbos says that there is a sanctuary of Apollo and a heroön of Lepetymnus in Mt. Lepetymnus, on which, just as in Crannon, there are only two ravens, although there are not a few in the nearby areas.

¹⁸ In Latmos in Caria, Aristotle says that the scorpions cause only moderate pain if some stranger disturbs them, but torment almost to the point of death if it is a local.

¹⁹ Of the Libyans, there are some called Psylli, with whom something happens in the opposite fashion to this: for they suffer nothing when struck by cobras, but of the other Libyans, not one can escape once bitten.

²⁰ In Lycia there grows a plant called goat's bane [aigolethros], which none of the local goats will taste, but whenever a foreign goat comes upon it and eats the plant through ignorance, it dies through the destruction of that compartment of its stomach called the 'echinus'.

²¹ There is an island near the regions of Carystia and Andria which is called Gyarus; there, the mice eat through iron. In the island of Ceos, the wild pear [acherdos] is lethal, and if you were to graft it onto another tree, it would cause it to wither.

²² The sting of the marine stingray [trygon] does the same thing: if you apply it to the teeth, it rots them.

²³ There are singular things, too, concerning the comparisons and differences of animals, as well as their births, such as that in Egypt if an ox is buried in a certain place so that the horns themselves rise above the

earth and are afterwards sawn off, they say that bees fly out of them: for by rotting they are converted into this insect. And Philetas, who is pretty inquisitive, seems to turn his attention to this; so he addresses them as “ox-born” in saying “Proceed afar, calling the bees 'ox-born'.” (a) They say, too, that the crocodile generates scorpions, (b) and that wasps are generated from horses. And a certain Archelaus, an Egyptian who interpreted paradoxa for Ptolemy in epigrams, spoke thus concerning scorpions: (a) Into you, scorpions, does nature who gives life to all things dissolve the crocodile when it has died and about wasps (b) From the body of a horse you author this offspring, wasps: see what nature makes from what! Aristotle says that scorpions are generated from rotting bergamot-mint [sisymbrios].

²⁴ No less amazing than these examples is the usefulness of perishable materials—such as the gecko [galeotes], which whenever it sheds its skin, having turned it around, swallows it: for it is, they say, as Aristotle writes, a cure for epilepsy. Likewise, the seal [phoke] is said to vomit out its whey—this indeed is useful for the same disease. Mares eat off the excrescence on their embryos called 'hippomanes': this occurs on the forehead and is sought for many purposes. The doe buries her right horn in the earth: this, too, is useful in many ways. Thus these things, whether they are so by choice or by chance, demand a great deal of attention

²⁵ The octopus eats its own tentacles in winter. This is “On the wintry day, when the boneless one gnaws its foot.” The embryos of dog-fish, on being born, are dispensed from the stomach but crawl back into the mouth. The lioness does not conceive twice: for, as Herodotus says, she ejects the womb with the new-born. Nor does the viper [echidna], for the embryos eat its stomach.

²⁶ The bat alone of birds has teeth and breasts and milk. Aristotle says that the seal, too, and the whale [phalaina] have milk. He writes down something no less monstrous than these, for he says that in Lemnos milk was extracted from a he-goat in sufficient quantities to make cheese.

²⁷ The male of the halcyon are called “keryloi”: when they become weak through old age and are no longer able to fly, the female carry them by taking them upon their wings. The saying of Alcman is connected with this, for he says that he is weak from old age and unable to go around with the choruses or with the dances of the maidens: “No longer, sweet-spoken maidens, divine-voiced, are my limbs able to carry me: would, oh would

that I were a kerylos, which over the foam of the wave flies with the halcyons with resolute heart - the sacred, purple bird.”

²⁸ The Poet, too, is said by everyone to be pretty painstaking and full of curiosity, for Odysseus, when the dogs had attacked him on the way up to the swineherd, “crouched in cunning, and cast the staff from his hand.” For they say that whenever anyone who is being chased crouches down, the dogs do him no harm.

²⁹ Also amazing are those animals which, like the octopus, make themselves similar to their surrounding: for it becomes indistinguishable from the colour of the sea-bed and from that of anything which it might entwine, so that it is difficult to hunt. From this, the poet clearly wrote something that is in common currency: “Having the spirit of the octopus in your breast, child, adapt yourself to [whatever is in accordance with popular sentiment].

³⁰ The same thing happens with the chamaeleon, for it changes its skin in the same way to that of tree-trunks and leaves and earth and any place at all.

³¹ Aristotle says that the animal called the elk undergoes this as well: it is a quadruped and almost equal to the ass, thick-skinned and hairy, and [he says] that it is remarkable how its hair changes so quickly.

³² There is a certain plant, called sea-starwort [tripolion]: it grows on the seashore on rocks and puts forth a flower which changes its colour three times a day—it is sometimes white, sometimes purple and sometimes apple-yellow. Certainly, one would most accurately learn the other instincts of living creatures—such as pertain to conflicts, to healing of wounds, to the preparation of the necessities of life, to memory—from the collection of Aristotle, from which I will at first make my excerpt.

³³ He says that around Conopeium in the Maeotian lake the wolves procure their sustenance from the fishermen and guard their prey, and that if they suspect that they have been cheated in any way, they ruin their nets and their fish.

³⁴ In Thrace, in the city once called Cedriopolis, men and hawks jointly hunt small birds: the former drive them away with sticks while the hawks pursue closely and [the little birds] in their flight fall into [the clutches of] the men. Because of this, they share their prey with the hawks.

³⁵ He says that does give birth by the roadside, to avoid predatory animals, for wolves are least likely to attack them there; they lead even their offspring to their lair, so as to accustom them to that which they must flee—this is a precipitous rock with only one exit. A female deer had previously been captured which had ivy on its horns when they were moist. Deer are captured by whistling and singing so that they lie down, overcome with pleasure.

³⁶ The wild goats in Crete, whenever they are shot, seek dittany, for it seems to be effective in casting out the arrows.

³⁷ Some say that the leopard has been observed—since living things delight in its smell—to hide itself and thus prey on animals which come close to it.

³⁸ The Egyptian mongoose [*ichneumon*], whenever it sees an asp [*aspis*], does not attack it before calling upon others to help, and they plaster themselves in mud [as a protection] against its bites and blows: for, having moistened their skin, they roll about in the dust.

³⁹ He says that the Egyptian plover [*trochilos*] cleans out the teeth of crocodiles and gains its nourishment from them. [The crocodiles] perceive it as useful and whenever the *trochilos* wants to get out, they move their neck so that it is not bitten by the closing teeth.

⁴⁰ The tortoise [*chelone*], whenever it eats a snake, eats oregano afterwards; and once, when someone had observed closely and stripped off the leaves, it died since it did not have oregano to eat.

⁴¹ The weasel, whenever it fights with a snake, eats mountain rue [*peganon*] beforehand, for its smell is repugnant to the snake. In addition, rue helps against snake-bite when it is placed in unmixed wine and drunk. And a pig, when it is bitten by a snake, takes itself at once to rivers and seeks the crab: this, too, is included in prescriptions and is extremely efficacious for snake-bite.

⁴² The ring-dove [*phatta*], whenever it is bitten, packs oregano into the wound and becomes healthy in this way.

⁴³ Aristotle says that the swallow, when building its nest, plait earth together with twigs and, if earth is lacking, it gets itself wet and rolls about and picks it up with its wings and makes itself a bed of straw using the same techniques as a human being, putting the stiff bits underneath. It gives its young their food in proportion, watching carefully lest it give

twice to the same ones. When they are small, it throws the excrement out itself, but when they have grown, it teaches the young to turn around and discharge it outside.

⁴⁴ Pigeons do not like to mate with many nor to leave their pairing unless they are widowed. For their young, they chew up salty earth and spit the food which they have prepared into their mouths.

⁴⁵ Partridges, whenever anyone hunts their young, roll about in front of the hunter as though they are disabled and draw [them] on, until the young escape. Because of their passion for sex, they destroy their eggs so that the female does not incubate them, but she plots against this and lays them while running away. The 'widowers' [i.e., those males successfully eluded by their brooding mate] fight among themselves and the one which is worsted follows [the victor] and is mounted by him alone.

⁴⁶ The cranes fly to a great height so that they can look down on a wide area; and if they see clouds and storm, they rest. They have a leader, too: while the others sleep with their heads placed beneath their wings, the leader keeps his bare so as to watch ahead, and if he perceives anything, he signals the others by crying out.SOL

⁴⁷ [Aristotle] relates that pelicans swallow down smooth mussels [konche]; and afterwards, having held them down for a while in the section above their stomachs, vomit them up when they have gaped open and then eat the meat having separated it in this way.

⁴⁸ It is said by some that no-one has seen either the young of the vulture or its nest. And because of this, Herodorus, the father of Bryson the sophist, says that they are from some other high land, for they lay their eggs on inaccessible rocks.

⁴⁹ Some say, too, that 'cinnamon' refers to a bird and that it carries the spice and makes its nest from this. It nests in high and unclimbable trees, and the locals tip their arrows with lead to shoot at and break up the nests.

⁵⁰ It seems that the cuckoo makes its young supposititious because of its cowardice and inability to defend them, for they are picked on by the least [of birds]. Those birds that take in the young throw out their own because of the beauty of the cuckoo's.

⁵¹ The aigithos flies to the female goat and suckles her: it has taken its name from this fact. The breast [dries out] whenever it suckles [and the goat] goes blind. The bird is lame, from which Callimachus of Egypt, too,

wishing to be very lucid, said (having spoken previously of some other bird) “ἀϊγιθος ἀμφιγυήεις.” His account is not confirmed, for it is not lame in both feet. “ἀμφιγυήεις” means not lameness of this sort but that which is spoken of in connexion with Hephaestus, whenever one has been lamed in both limbs. I have been led to speak of Callimachus because of his implausibility.

⁵² Aristotle says that when the eagle grows old, its beak grows and curves and it finally dies of starvation. The vulture [phene] takes those young cast out by the eagle and brings them up. The sea-eagle [haliaietos] compels its young while still unfeathered to look towards the sun, and whichever one of them gets watery eyes and is unwilling to withstand [the sun], it kills.

^{52b} The fish called the ‘fishing frog’ [batrachos halieus] hunts little fish with the appendages from its eyes, whose length is like that of hair, but with an attachment at the tip like round bait: so it hides itself and sticks this out.

⁵³ The electric ray [narke] hides itself in the sand and seizes the fish that, whenever it is nearby, are rendered incapable of swimming because of the torpor it induces.

⁵⁴ The so-called ‘foxes’ [alopex], whenever they sense that they have swallowed a fish-hook, run back and bite off the line from above.

⁵⁵ The octopus puts food into chambers and whenever the useful bits are used up, expels the unusable and preys on those little fish [ichthydion] which come to [feed on] the cast-offs by changing its colour close to that of the stones it happens to be nearby. It does the same thing whenever it is frightened.

⁵⁶ Now the nautilus octopus [nautilus polypous] is also unusual in what it does, for it has a shell which it turns downward on ascending so that it might more easily be propelled with it empty, but when it descends from above, it reverses it. It has webbing like a membrane between its tentacles up to a certain point and this, whenever there is a breeze, it uses as a sail, and instead of steering-oars lets down [two] of its tentacles alongside.

⁵⁷ When bees have been fumigated and are badly affected by the smoke, it is then most of all that they eat [honey], but for the rest of the time they use it sparingly as if storing it by as food. They smear the hive with drops from the trees as a protection against other animals. When the worker bees kill [other bees], they try to do it outside: if they kill within the hive,

they carry out the body. The so-called ‘robber’ bees do damage if they come in unnoticed. But they seldom enter—for they are watched out for and guards are placed everywhere. [5] There are bees appointed to each of the tasks: some gather flowers, others level the combs. [6] They are disgusted both by the bad smell of food and by perfume, and go away [from the hive] to discharge their excrement. [7] And the elders work inside [.]

^{57b} If one takes a wasp by the legs and lets its wings buzz, he [i.e. Aristotle] says that the stingless ones fly towards it but none of those with stings do so.

⁵⁸ They say that the bison [monapos] is found in Paeonia on the mountain of Marsanos [Messapium] and that it has no upper teeth, like the ox or any other two-horned beast, and in other respects is similar to the bull. When it is pursued, it projects its excrement quite a distance; whenever it does this in fright, its dung burns in such a way that the hounds’ hair falls out, but if it does it free from fear, nothing suffers or is injured.

^{58b} [.] if [a bull elephant] mates with [a female] and makes it pregnant, it does not touch that one again.

⁵⁹ They say that the King of Scythia had a noble mare: he led a foal born from herself to her so that it might mate, but [the foal] was unwilling. When they led in the mare having first covered her over, he mounted her, but when she had been unveiled and he saw her face, he fled and threw himself off the cliffs.

⁶⁰ Of marine creatures, the dolphin is the most gentle—indeed, they comport themselves passionately towards boys, as happens around Tarentum, Caria and many other places. In Caria, when a dolphin had been captured and had received many wounds, many of them came into the harbour to its aid until the fisherman let it go.

⁶¹ Concerning the parturition of wolves, Aristotle makes a precise relation of something fabulous (though he does so as one who is conscious of this): for he says that they all give birth in a single twelve-day period of the year. The reason for this, as the story goes, is that they brought Leto from the Hyperboreans to Delos in twelve days, during which time she was in the form of a wolf.

⁶² The owl and the crow are enemies: while the crow [steals away the eggs] of the owl by day because the owl cannot see, the owl does the same to

the crow by night because the crow cannot see. So while one rules by night, the other does by day.

⁶³ The ass and the aigithos, too, are at war with one another: for [the ass] comes by and scratches itself on the thorns and because of this, and whenever it brays, it throws out the eggs of the aigithos and the nestlings fall out in fright. Because of this injury, the aigithos flies at it and pecks its sores.

⁶⁴ And the merlin [aisalon] is enemy to the fox, but the raven and the fox are friends—the raven, too, makes war on the merlin, which is why it comes to the aid of the fox when the latter is struck.

⁶⁵ [Aristotle] says that the goatherds say that when the sun turns most quickly, the goats lie down facing each other.

⁶⁶ Lycus narrates something similar to this. He says that in Libya the flocks—of which some, for the rest of the time, sleep facing one another while others sleep in whatever way they chance to lie down—on the night on which the dog-star rises, are turned towards that same star. The inhabitants use this as evidence of its rising. Aristotle also goes through other such matters, apart from the instincts of animals concerning their way of life, using a great deal of care in the majority of his works and not using anything inconsequential in his explanation. In total, he has written nearly seventy books on these matters, and has tried to dwell more on explanation than on narrative in each. As regards my excerpt, it is sufficient for it to summarize the strange and paradoxical content of both the aforementioned and his other writings.

⁶⁷ He says that all the land animals which have lungs breathe but that wasps and bees do not breathe.

⁶⁸ Of those that have bladders, all have intestines as well, but of those that have intestines, not all have bladders.

⁶⁹ While many animals are bloodless, on the whole they are those which have more than four feet.

⁷⁰ Of those that have hair, all give birth to living offspring, but the reverse is not the case.

⁷¹ All creatures can move their lower jaw except the crocodile, which can only move its upper jaw.

⁷² Among the Illyrians and in Paeonia there is a [pig] with uncloven feet; of the two-horned animals, no specimen with uncloven hoof is to be found, and [few] one-horned beasts with uncloven hoof, like the Indian ass [Indikos onos] (this animal alone of the uncloven-footed has a knucklebone, too).

⁷³ The genitals of the weasel are bony.

⁷⁴ The male has more teeth than the female in both man and the other animals.

⁷⁵ The heart of the horse is bony, as is that of some cattle.

⁷⁶ Of deer, the so-called *achaïnai* seem to have gall in the tail.

⁷⁷ Fish do not have a windpipe: because of this, the stomach of larger fish falls forward into their mouths when they chase smaller ones.

⁷⁸ Snakes have thirty ribs. And if one pricks their eyes out, they grow back again, just like those of the swallow.

⁷⁹ Of the fish, the parrot-wrasse [*skaros*] is the only one which ruminates.

⁸⁰ The bones of the lion are so hard that when they are struck frequently they light fire.

⁸¹ In Phrygia there are cattle which can move their horns.

⁸² Those creatures that have feet and are viviparous have hair, those that have feet and are oviparous, scales.

⁸³ With some people, when they are sick their hair become grey, but when healthy grow black again.

⁸⁴ If sheep drink from the river called *Psychros* in the Chalcidice, by Thrace, it causes their offspring to be black. And in *Antandria* there are two rivers, of which one makes offspring white, the other, black. The *Scamander* is supposed to make them yellow, and because of this the Poet addressed it as “*Xanthus*” [i.e., 'yellow'] instead of “*Scamandrus*”. And in *Euboea*, along the *Histiaeon* boundary with *Chalcis*, there are two rivers, *Ceron* and *Neleus*: if goats drink about the time of conception from the *Ceron*, they give birth to black offspring but if from the *Neleus*, to white.

⁸⁵ Aristotle says that ants, when sprinkled with oregano and sulphur, abandon their anthill.

⁸⁶ The eel is neither male nor female.

⁸⁷ With partridges, if the female stands downwind of the male, it becomes fertilized.

⁸⁸ The so-called starfish is so hot that whatever fish it catches hold of is at once boiled.

⁸⁹ And the sponge is capable of perception: if it becomes aware that someone is about to pull it away, it contracts and is a hard job to remove. The same thing happens when there is wind or a rough sea.

⁹⁰ In the snow there are shaggy worm-like creatures. In Cyprus, where copper ore is smelted, a creature slightly larger than a fly is generated: the same thing happens in the furnaces at Carystus. These animals die when separated from snow and fire, respectively.

⁹¹ The salamander extinguishes fire.

⁹² Aristotle says that around the river Hypanis in the Cimmerian Bosphorus, about the Summer solstice, things like wallets, larger than grapes, are carried down, from which when they break open a four-footed animal emerges that lives for one day: it is singular as a winged creature in being four-legged.

⁹³ Hives come to destruction if there are no leaders or, on the contrary, there are many.

⁹⁴ Land scorpions are killed by their children. The venom-spider, too, kills its female parent and often the male as well, for they incubate the eggs jointly.

⁹⁵ Things like small eruptions form in human flesh: if one pricks them, lice emerge; and if a person is moist, this disease can be fatal, as with Alcman the lyric poet and Pherecydes of Syros.

⁹⁶ This, too, is singular, that when the spinal chord of certain corpses rots, small snakes are generated from the spine, if the person breathed in the odour of a dead snake before death. We have already encountered an epigram of Archelaus, of whom I have formerly made mention, who wrote this also about marvels and says:

All beings through each other does long eternity seal up;
From the cord of the hollow spine of a man
Comes a terrible serpent, when the worthless body has rotted;
Which monstrosity takes new breath from him,
Dragging living being from the dead: if this is so,

The birth of dual-formed Cecrops is no marvel.

So we make an established matter of this phenomenon — which is averred cursorily in hearsay and certain sayings in common currency — through the evidence of the epigram.

⁹⁷ Aristotle says that a living thing is generated in wax, which is held to be the smallest of all and is called 'akari'.

⁹⁸ The river-crocodile grows to a very great size from very small beginnings: for though its egg is no larger than that of the goose, the crocodile itself grows to seventeen cubits.

⁹⁹ Octopi rule over crayfish, for they suffer no injury from the latter's shells. And over octopi, the conger eels, for the octopi are unable to deal with them because of their smoothness. And over the conger, the crayfish: for the conger does not glance off the crayfish but is lacerated by the the jaggedness of its shell.

¹⁰⁰ He says that the mullet, whenever it is afraid, hides its head, as if it were hiding the whole of its body.

¹⁰¹ All birds of prey are given to mimicry.

¹⁰² Every creature bitten by a rabid dog becomes rabid, except man.

¹⁰³ With animals, the larger are male and the lesser, female.

¹⁰⁴ In Egypt, birds make hatch chicks by burying the eggs in dung.

¹⁰⁵ In Syracuse, a drunkard buried eggs deep in the ground and put a rush-mat over them and drank continuously until such time as the eggs hatched. Already eggs laid in warm vessels have been rubbed out* and hatch.

¹⁰⁶ The young of the swallow regain their sight if anyone should blind them.

¹⁰⁷ While the hawk bears three eggs, it hatches only two, and when the young have grown it selects one, for it is not able to feed both because throughout this time its talons are distorted and it cannot seize anything. The vulture takes over the care of the one left to wander.

¹⁰⁸ In practically all cases, the crooked-clawed birds eject their young when they are able to fly swiftly, except the crow which even when they can fly feeds them for some time.

¹⁰⁹ No-one has seen the chicks of the cuckoo, for it does not lay its eggs in its own nest but flies into those of small birds, either those of the wild pigeon or those of the hypolaïs, after it has consumed the eggs already there.

¹¹⁰ Partridges build [two] compartments in the nest for their eggs and each of them [i.e. male and female] incubates and rears the chicks, and they copulate with the young when they first lead them out.

¹¹⁰fight each other armored in their own hide, which they make rough in preparation by rubbing against trees and wallowing in mud and letting it dry. He records that some say (as if he himself had no direct experience of it) that if a pig has one of its eyes knocked out, it dies soon after.

¹¹¹ Goats and sheep give birth, for the most part, to male offspring if they copulate while there is a north wind, but to female in the case of a south wind. The offspring are white if there are white veins under the tongue of the ram, but black if the veins are black. The same principle holds for red offspring. that drink salted water are the first to be mounted.

¹¹² Laconian dogs copulate better when tired out.

¹¹³ The procreation of mice is amazing because of its speed: a pregnant female once got trapped in a jar and after a short time one hundred and twenty mice came to light. In some places in Persia, when the female mouse is dissected the embryos are discovered to be already pregnant.

¹¹⁴ It is said that the blood of the aigithos and the goldfinch scarcely mix.

¹¹⁵ Whenever a she-goat touches the tip of the beard — which is like hair — the others stand as if stupefied and stare at her.

¹¹⁶ The genitals of the yellow-breasted marten are bony, and are supposed to be a remedy for strangury.

¹¹⁷ No eunuch becomes bald.

¹¹⁸ The second growth of hair in eunuchs who are castrated as children does not take hold, while in those castrated later, it all falls out except for the pubic hair.

¹¹⁹ A woman gives birth to five at a time at most; though one is memorable because from four births, she had twenty children and reared most of them. If a woman uses an over-abundance of salt while pregnant, the children are born without nails.

¹²⁰ There are both men and women who have female and male offspring, respectively, as is told about Heracles: for out of seventy-two children, he begot just one daughter.

¹²¹ There are those born from lame or blind parents who are likewise lame or blind; there are some cases where even marks have been inherited.

¹²² In Elis a woman who had committed adultery with an Ethiopian bore a white daughter, but the daughter's child was Ethiopian.

¹²³ Children, up until forty days, neither laugh nor cry while awake but do both in their sleep.

¹²⁴ He derives character from some features as follows: those who have a large forehead are sluggish, while those with a small one are agile – adding that it is for the most part in each case; those who have broad foreheads are excitable.

¹²⁵ Level eyebrows are indicative of a gentle nature; those bent towards the nose, a harsh; towards the temples, a mocking and ironic.

¹²⁶ If the corner of the eye is fleshy, it indicates a dishonest nature; middling ears are indicative of the finest character, but those which are large and protruding, of foolish talk and prattling.

¹²⁷ He says that, of female creatures, the horse is quite inclined towards sex and goes extremely “horse-mad”, from which the word is also transferred as an insult and used to censure women who are highly-sexed. Aeschylus, too, seems to have said from personal experience much the same sort of thing in relation to maidens in *The Archer Women*:

While I sing, in chaste maidens without experience of the
marriage bed
the glance of the eyes is cast downwards.
and after an interval he adds
her eye does not blaze unnoticed
by me, whoever she might be who has tasted of a man:
I have a horse-judge's spirit in such matters.

The things being many of which Aristotle wrote, so far we have been able at this point to excerpt some of them and note others.

¹²⁸ ... the historian says that Arsames the Persian had teeth right from birth.

¹²⁹ Myrsilus of Lesbos says that the Ozolian Locrians came by their common nickname because [the water] of their land gave off an odour, most of all the waters of the mountain called Taphion, and that it flows from that place into the sea like pus. Nessus the Centaur, whom Heracles slew, is buried in this mountain.

¹³⁰ The Lemnian women became malodorous when Medeia arrived with Jason and cast poison into the island: at certain times and particularly on those days in which they relate that Medeia was present, the women become so foul-smelling that no-one will approach them.

¹³¹ Theopompus the historian says that the so-called “leopard’s bane” originates in the place named Akonai around Heracleia in Pontus, from where it also happened upon its name akoniton. Although it is plainly efficacious, it has no effect if one drinks rue on the same day.

When Clearchus the tyrant killed many with poison and tried to avoid detection, once the situation became clear, the majority of the Heracleians did not leave their houses until they had eaten rue. Theopompus writes both the cause and the origin of how this became manifest at great length, for which reason I have skipped over it.

¹³² The writer of the Samian Annals says that a white swallow appeared in the presence the first of those called †students of Herostratus†.

¹³³ Hippys of Rhegium [concerning places said to kill those that come into them] writes this sort of thing. He says that when Epainetus was Basileus at Athens in the 38th Olympiad in which Arytamas the Laconian won the stadion that in Palice in Sicily a place was built into which anyone who entered died if they lay down, but suffered nothing if they walked around.

¹³⁴ It is also recorded about the island of Leuce that none of the birds is able to rise up in flight over the temple of Achilles.

¹³⁵ It seems that in many places there is a pit of the type called 'barathron' or 'Charonian', such as the cleft called Cimmerus around Phrygia, as Eudoxus says, and the 'orygma' in Latmos.

¹³⁶ Those things that wax and wane with the moon are singular — such as the livers of mice, of which it is told that they grow full and wane and wax with the month. For this reason, many people when speaking in proverbs use the phrase "mice's livers" to signify matters falling under the class of wondrous prodigies.

¹³⁷ The eggs of the sea-urchin also wax and wane with the moon. It is singular that all sea urchins have five eggs, set apart at equal intervals from one another and in a circle around the periphery of the shell <.....>, so that equal [radii] meet them from the spines.

¹³⁸ They say, too, that the strait of Italy wanes and fills according to the waning and waxing of the moon.

¹³⁹ Hellanicus of Lesbos states that there is a cave in the city of Thebes in Egypt, where on the thirtieth day of the month alone there is no wind, but a wind blows on the other days.

¹⁴⁰ The Euripus does not turn on the seventh day of the month — an excerpt that might seem impossible to investigate and difficult to observe. And that ants take a rest at the new moon.

¹⁴¹ The Delphians say that in Parnassus the Corycium seems golden at certain times. Because of this, no-one could hold that Philoxenus is speaking figuratively when he says the following:

for they themselves through Parnassos
in the golden-roofed chambers of the nymphs.

¹⁴² Among †the Phylloi† it is said that the sheep drink every four days.

¹⁴³ Something more prodigious than this is said to happen in Zacynthus: when the Etesian winds are blowing, the mountain goats stand with mouths agape towards the north wind and by doing this they do not require water, nor do they drink.

¹⁴⁴ Callimachus of Cyrene also made a compilation of paradoxa, from which I will write down as many as seem to me to be worth hearing. He says that Eudoxus records that every so often asphalt rises to the surface of the Sea of Thrace below Hieron Oros. The sea below Chelidonia has sweet springs over a large area.

¹⁴⁵ He says that Theophrastus says that the sea around the islands of Aeolus is boiling for the space of two plethra, so that it is impossible to go ashore because of the heat.

¹⁴⁶ From the sea below Demonesus near Chalcedon, divers brought up bronze of two fathoms' length, from which were made the statues dedicated by Heracles in Pheneus.

¹⁴⁷ He says that Megasthenes who wrote the Indica reported that trees grow in the sea around India.

¹⁴⁸ He says that Lycus says, concerning rivers and springs, that the Camicus flows a boiling sea; and, of the †Kapaïos† and Criniseus, that the water on the surface is cold while that underneath is hot. The Himera divides into two streams from one source, one channel having salty water, the other, drinkable water.

¹⁴⁹ He says that Timaeus says of the rivers in Italy that the Crathis turns the hair yellow.

¹⁵⁰ He says that Polycritus has written down that the Liparis in Soli is not misnamed, but is so oily that one does not require unguent. The Mouabis in Pamphylia turns straw or brick to stone, if one throws them in.

¹⁵¹ He says that in the region of Agrian Thrace the river called Pontus brings down coal-like stones and that while these burn, they do so in an entirely opposite way from charcoal taken from wood: for when they are blown on by the bellows, they are quenched, but when sprinkled with water, they burn all the better. No creeping thing can abide their smell.

¹⁵² The spring in Lusi, just like that at Lampsacene, has in it a mouse like the domestic variety. He says that Theopompus relates this.

¹⁵³ He says that Eudoxus says that the Ophioussas in Alus stops white leprosy.

¹⁵⁴ He says that Lycus of Rhegium says that the spring in the region of the Sicanians carries vinegar, which they use on their food. The spring in Mytistratus flows like olive oil: this is burned in lamps and can cure tumours and the mange, and is called Mytistraton. Nearby there is a spring which from the rising of Arcturus to the Pleiades flows with water no worse than any other source; but from the Pleiades to Arcturus puts out smoke during the day and exhales heat, while in the night it is full of flame.

¹⁵⁵ The Arethusa in Syracuse, as Pindar and others tell, has its fount in the Alpheius in Elis. Because of this, when they wash the entrails of the sacrificial victims in the river while the Olympic Games are being held, the spring in Sicily is not pure but flows with dung. He says, too, that a bowl once thrown into the Alpheius appeared in the Arethusa. Timaeus relates this as well.

¹⁵⁶ He says that Theopompus writes that if anyone tastes from the spring in the lands of the Cinchropes in Thrace, they die instantly.

¹⁵⁷ In Scotussa there is a singular spring which can cure ulcers not just in humans but in livestock as well. And if you throw split or broken wood into it, it grows together.

¹⁵⁸ Salt is obtained from the spring at Chaonia, if the water is boiled off.

¹⁵⁹ He says that Aristotle says of the springs in Hammon that one of them is considered to belong to the sun: it becomes hot around midnight and noon, though it is like ice at dawn or in the evening. The other belongs to Zeus and rushes forth when the sun is visible but subsides at its setting.

¹⁶⁰ He says that Ctesias says that the spring in Ethiopia has red water, as if it were cinnabar, and that those who drink from it go mad. This is told, too, by Philon, who wrote the *Aethiopica*.

¹⁶¹ The spring Sila in India does not allow even the lightest of things to float on top but drags down everything. Many more have spoken on these matters, and concerning yet more waters.

¹⁶² He says that Eudoxus relates that little crocodiles, like those in Egypt, live in the spring in Chalcedon.

¹⁶³ In Athamania there is a shrine to the nymphs, the spring in which has water that is unspeakably cold, but if you were to put something over it, it becomes hot — if one brings a dry stick or anything else of that sort up to it, it is set on fire.

¹⁶⁴ In Arabia in the city of Leucothea, he says that Amometus — who composed the *Sailing Up* from Memphis — writes that if one pours a cup of wine into the so-called Spring of Isis, one gets a well-mixed draught thereby.

¹⁶⁵ He says that Ctesias relates, concerning pools, that there is a pool in India which does not take down things thrown into it — just like those in Sicily and Media — except objects made of gold or iron or bronze; and if something falls into it obliquely, it is cast out straight up. It cures the so-called ‘white disease’. In another one, oil floats on top on calm days.

¹⁶⁶ He says that Xenophilus says that in the spring near Joppa not only does an object of any weight float, but that every third year it bears liquid asphalt: whenever this happens, bronze objects belonging to those who live within thirty stadia are tarnished.

¹⁶⁷ He says that Heraclides writes of the pool among the Sarmatians that no bird flies over it and that any that approaches dies from the smell.

Indeed, this seems to also happen around Aornis and the legend is prevalent among the majority.

¹⁶⁸ But Timaeus considers this to be false; for the majority of birds that are accustomed to live beside it are successful in leading their lives. However, he says the following: that because a thickly-wooded area abuts it and that of the many branches and leaves some are respectively broken or shaken off by the wind, nothing can be seen upon the lake but it remains clear.

¹⁶⁹ He says that Eudoxus tells that pitch is brought up from the pool at Zacynthus though it nonetheless supplies fish; if you throw anything into it, it appears on the sea, although there are four stadia intervening.

¹⁷⁰ He says that Lycus says that trees grow about the pool at Mylae in Sicily, and that in the middle of it rises water that is at times cold, and at times the opposite.

¹⁷¹ He says that Phanias says of the pool of the Pyrakoi that whenever it dries up, it burns.

¹⁷² Anything brought to the lake Ascania, which is drinkable, can be washed without soap, but if it is left in it for too long, it falls apart of its own accord.

¹⁷³ He says that Nicagoras asserts of the pool in Citium, that when the earth is drawn up from a little way down, salt is found.

¹⁷⁴ Concerning the same waters, he says that Theophrastus says of the so-called 'water of the Styx' that it is in Pheneus and that it trickles from a rock, and that those who wish to draw water from it hold sponges fastened to pieces of wood. It breaks all vessels except those made of horn. He who tastes of it dies.

¹⁷⁴ He says that Lycus relates that the waters named [Delloi] in Leontinoi bubble up as though the hottest of boiling matter, but the springs are cold. Of those that come near to the waters, those of the genus of birds die at once, while men die on the third day.

¹⁷⁶ The same thing happens with the Chytrinos in Cos, for though it casts out a vapour and has the appearance of boiling, the underlying waters are exceedingly cold.

¹⁷⁷ There is also another stream at Cos which has turned all the pipes through which it flows into stone. Both Eudoxus and Callimachus leave

out the fact that, so securely does this water petrify any sort of thing, the Coans quarried stone from it to build their theatre.

¹⁷⁸ He says that Eudoxus also writes about the wells in Pythopolis, that they experience something similar to the Nile: for during the summer they overflow their banks but in winter they withdraw to such an extent that it is not easy to dip a bucket in them.

¹⁷⁹ And concerning the little stream in Crete, those who sit above it whenever it is raining remain dry: the tradition is handed down by the Cretans that Europa washed herself in it after she had had intercourse with Zeus.

¹⁸⁰ He says that Theopompus asserts that in Lyncestis there is an acid water, and that those who drink from it are transformed as if they had drunk wine. This is attested by many.

¹⁸¹ He says that Ctesias relates of that water which falls from the rock in Armenia that it contributes black fish, which whoever eats, dies.

¹⁸² He says that Ctesias relates concerning fire that in the region of Phaselis on Mount Chimaera there is the so-called immortal fire; and that this, if one throws water into it, burns better, but if one congeals it by throwing rubbish in, it is quenched.

¹⁸³ Something similar can be seen to happen with salt; for a Sicilian guest gave me a present of a salt of such a type as was dissolved by fire but leapt about in water.

¹⁸⁴ Concerning stones, he says that the same writer says, that there is a type among the Bottiaeans in Thrace from which, whenever it is struck by the sun, fire is given off in fumes. There are stones there which serve the function of coal but remain unimpaired, and if one were to quench them again, as has been attempted, they carry out the same operation.

¹⁸⁵ He says that Aristotle asserts that, regarding plants, there is a genus of thorn to be found in Erytheia which has multi-coloured skin, from which plectrums are made. Timon the citharode had some and showed them to many, asserting that his teacher, Aristocles, had given them to him as a gift, and that in use their touch on the strings was hard.

¹⁸⁶ He says that Theopompus writes that at Thesprotia coals are dug up from the earth which are capable of being ignited.

¹⁸⁷ He says that Phantias says that in certain places in Lesbos and Neandria, clods of earth are useful for eye conditions, and if they are thrown into water, they neither sink nor are dissolved. Into the same category should fall the type of brick in Pitane which is said to float.

¹⁸⁸ He says that Lycus relates, concerning animals, that in the island of Diomedea the herons not only endure the touch of any Greek that approaches their haunts but even fly towards him and sink into his breast and fawn in a friendly manner ; and that something like the following is said by the natives, that the comrades of Diomedes have been metamorphosed into the form of these birds.

¹⁸⁹ He says that Theopompus asserts of the Eneti who dwell by the Adriatic Sea that at the sowing season they send gifts to the jackdaws, in the form of ground barley cakes. When those who have brought the cakes set them down they withdraw, and while the bulk of the birds stays thronging at the borders of the land, two or three fly forward and examine the offerings and then fly back, just as though they were ambassadors or scouts. So if the crowd

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