

THE ATTIC NIGHTS
OF AULUS GELLIUS

BOOK VI

A. GELLII
NOCTIUM ATTICARUM
LIBER SEXTUS

I

Admiranda quaedam ex annalibus sumpta de P. Africano superiore.

- 1 Quod de Olympiade, Philippi regis uxore, Alexandri matre, in historia Graeca scriptum est, id de P. quoque Scipionis matre qui prior Africanus appellatus
2 est memoriae datum est. Nam et C. Oppius et Iulius Hyginus, aliique qui de vita et rebus Africani scripserunt, matrem eius diu sterilem existimatam tradunt, P. quoque Scipionem, cum quo nupta erat,
3 liberos desperavisse. Postea in cubiculo atque in lecto mulieris, cum absente marito cubans sola condormisset, visum repente esse iuxta eam cubare ingentem anguem eumque, his qui viderant territis et clamantibus, elapsum inveniri non quisse. Id ipsum P. Scipionem ad haruspices retulisse; eos, sacrificio
4 facto, respondisse fore ut liberi gignerentur, neque multis diebus postquam ille anguis in lecto visus est,

¹ Fr. 2, Peter². ² Fr. 4, Peter²; p. 37, Bunte.

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BOOK VI

I

Some remarkable stories about the elder Publius Africanus,
drawn from the annals.

THE tale which in Grecian history is told of Olympias, wife of king Philip and mother of Alexander, is also recorded of the mother of that Publius Scipio who was the first to be called Africanus. For both Gaius Oppius¹ and Julius Hyginus,² as well as others who have written of the life and deeds of Africanus, declare that his mother was for a long time thought to be barren, and that Publius Scipio, her husband, had also given up hope of offspring; that afterwards, in her own room and bed, when she was lying alone in the absence of her husband and had fallen asleep, of a sudden a huge serpent was seen lying by her side; and that when those who had seen it were frightened and cried out, the snake glided away and could not be found. It is said that Publius Scipio himself consulted soothsayers about the occurrence; that they, after offering sacrifice, declared that he would have children, and not many days after that serpent had been seen in her bed, the woman began to experi-

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- mulierem coepisse concepti fetus signa atque sensum pati; exinde mense decimo peperisse natumque esse hunc P. Africanum qui Hannibalem et Carthaginienses in Africa bello Poenico secundo vicit.
- 5 Sed et eum inpendio magis ex rebus gestis quam ex illo ostento virum esse virtutis divinae creditum est.
- 6 Id etiam dicere haut piget, quod idem illi quos supra nominavi litteris mandaverint, Scipionem hunc Africanum solitavisse noctis extremo, priusquam dilucularet, in Capitolium ventitare ac iubere aperiri cellam Iovis atque ibi solum diu demorari, quasi consultantem de republica cum Iove, aeditumosque eius templi saepe esse demiratos, quod solum id temporis in Capitolium ingredientem canes semper in alios saevientes neque latrarent eum neque incurrerent.
- 7 Has vulgi de Scipione opiniones confirmare atque approbare videbantur dicta factaque eius pleraque admiranda. Ex quibus est unum huiusmodi:
- 8 Assidebat oppugnabatque oppidum in Hispania, situ,¹ moenibus, defensoribus validum et munitum, re etiam cibaria copiosum, nullaque eius potiundi spes erat, et quodam die ius in castris sedens dicebat
- 9 atque ex eo loco id oppidum procul visebatur. Tum

¹ situm, ω , corrected in ζ .

¹ A similar story is told of Augustus (Suet. *Aug.* xciv. 4) as well as of Alexander the Great (§ 1 and Livy, xxvi. 19. 7).

² At Zama, 202 B.C.

³ As well as Alexander and Augustus; see note 1.

⁴ The name *Capitolium* was applied to the southern summit of the Capitoline Hill, and also to the temple of *Jupiter Optimus Maximus*. The temple contained three shrines, to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva.

BOOK VI. I. 4-9

ence the indications and sensation of conception.¹ Afterwards, in the tenth month, she gave birth to that Publius Scipio who conquered Hannibal and the Carthaginians in Africa in the second Punic war.² But it was far more because of his exploits than because of that prodigy that he too³ was believed to be a man of godlike excellence.

This too I venture to relate, which the same writers that I mentioned before have put on record: This Scipio Africanus used often to go to the Capitolium in the latter part of the night, before the break of day, give orders that the shrine of Jupiter be opened,⁴ and remain there a long time alone, apparently consulting Jupiter about matters of state; and the guardians of the temple were often amazed that on his coming to the Capitolium alone at such an hour the dogs,⁵ that flew at all other intruders, neither barked at him nor molested him.

These popular beliefs about Scipio seemed to be confirmed and attested by many remarkable actions and sayings of his. Of these the following is a single example: He was engaged in the siege of a town⁶ in Spain, which was strongly fortified and defended, protected by its position, and also well provisioned; and there was no prospect of taking it. One day he sat holding court in his camp, at a point from which there was a distant view of the town.

¹ The temple was guarded at night by dogs, as were doubtless other similar places, and as it is said that the ruins of Pompeii are to-day. Geese were also used for the purpose; see Cic. *pro Sex. Rosc.* 56, *anseribus cibaria publice locantur et canes aluntur in Capitolio, ut significant, si fures venerint.*

⁶ According to Valerius Maximus, iii. 7. 1, the town was Badia.

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- e militibus, qui in iure apud eum stabant, interrogavit quispiam ex more in quem diem locumque
10 vadimonium promitti iuberet; et Scipio, manum ad ipsam oppidi quod obsidebatur arcem protendens, "Perendie," inquit, "sese sistant illo in loco."
11 Atque ita factum; die tertio, in quem vadari iusserat, oppidum captum est eodemque eo¹ die in arce eius oppidi ius dixit.

II

De Caeselli Vindicis pudendo errore, quem offendimus in libris eius quos inscripsit *Lectionum Antiquarum*.

- 1 TURPE erratum offendimus in illis celebratissimis commentariis *Lectionum Antiquarum* Caeselli Vindicis, hominis hercle pleraque haut indiligentis.
- 2 Quod erratum multos fugit, quamquam multa in Caesellio reprehendendo etiam per calumnias rimarentur. Scripsit autem Caesellius Q. Ennium in
- 3 XIII. *Annali* "cor" dixisse genere masculino.
- 4 Verba Caeselli subiecta sunt: "Masculino genere, ut multa alia, enuntiavit Ennius. Nam in XIII.
- 5 *Annali* 'quem cor' dixit." Ascripsit deinde versus Ennii duo:

Hannibal audaci dum pectore de me hortatur
Ne bellum faciam, quem credidit esse meum cor?

¹ eo omitted by RV.

BOOK VI. 1. 9-II. 5

Then one of the soldiers who were on trial before him asked in the usual way on what day and in what place he bade them give bail for their appearance. Then Scipio, stretching forth his hand towards the very citadel of the town which he was besieging, said: "Appear the day after to-morrow in yonder place." And so it happened; on the third day, the day on which he had ordered them to appear, the town was captured, and on that same day he held court in the citadel of the place.

II

Of a disgraceful blunder of Caesellius Vindex, which we find in his work entitled *Archaic Terms*.

IN those highly celebrated notes of Caesellius Vindex *On Archaic Terms* we find a shameful oversight, although in fact the man is seldom caught napping. This error has escaped the notice of many, in spite of their diligent search for opportunities to find fault with Caesellius, even through misrepresentation. Now, Caesellius wrote that Quintus Ennius, in the thirteenth book of his *Annals*, used *cor* in the masculine gender.

I add Caesellius' own words: "Ennius used *cor*, like many other words, in the masculine gender; for in *Annals* xiii. he wrote *quem cor*." He then quoted two verses of Ennius¹:

While Hannibal, of bold breast, did me exhort
Not to make war, what heart thought he was
mine?

¹ 381 ff., Vahlen².

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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