

PRAEFATIO

1 *** iucundiora alia reperiri queunt, ad hoc ut liberis quoque meis partae istiusmodi remissiones essent, quando animus eorum interstitutione aliqua negotiorum
2 data laxari indulgerique potuisset. Usi autem sumus ordine rerum fortuito, quem antea in excerpto feceram. Nam proinde ut librum quemque in manus ceperam seu Graecum seu Latinum vel quid memoratu dignum audieram, ita quae libitum erat, cuius generis cumque erant, indistincte atque promisce annotabam eaque mihi ad subsidium memoriae quasi quoddam litterarum penus recondebam, ut quando usus venisset aut rei aut verbi, cuius me repens forte oblivio tenuisset, et libri ex quibus ea sumpseram non adessent, facile inde nobis inventu atque depromptu foret.

3 Facta igitur est in his quoque commentariis eadem rerum disparilitas quae fuit in illis annotationibus pristinis, quas breviter et indigeste et incondite ex¹
4 eruditionibus lectionibusque variis feceram. Sed quoniam longinquis per hiemem noctibus in agro, sicuti dixi, terrae Atticae commentationes hasce ludere ac facere exorsi sumus, idcirco eas inscripsimus *Noctium esse Atticarum*, nihil imitati festivitates in-

¹ *ex, added by J. F. Gronov.*

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*** other more entertaining writings may be found,¹ in order that like recreation might be provided for my children, when they should have some respite from business affairs and could unbend and divert their minds. But in the arrangement of my material I have adopted the same haphazard order that I had previously followed in collecting it. For whenever I had taken in hand any Greek or Latin book, or had heard anything worth remembering, I used to jot down whatever took my fancy, of any and every kind, without any definite plan or order; and such notes I would lay away as an aid to my memory, like a kind of literary storehouse, so that when the need arose of a word or a subject which I chanced for the moment to have forgotten; and the books from which I had taken it were not at hand, I could readily find and produce it.

It therefore follows, that in these notes there is the same variety of subject that there was in those former brief jottings which I had made without order or arrangement, as the fruit of instruction or reading in various lines. And since, as I have said, I began to amuse myself by assembling these notes during the long winter nights which I spent on a country-place in the land of Attica, I have therefore given them the title of *Attic Nights*, making no at-

¹ The beginning of the sentence is lost; the following final clause depends upon some such verb as *scripsi*.

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5 scriptionum quas plerique alii utriusque linguae
 scriptores in id genus libris fecerunt. Nam quia
 variam et miscellam et quasi confusaneam doctrinam
 6 conquisiverant, eo titulos quoque ad eam sententiam
 exquisitissimos indiderunt. Namque alii *Musarum*
 inscripserunt, alii *Silvarum*, ille Πέπλον, hic Ἀμαλθείας
 Κέρας, alius Κηρία, partim Λειμώνας, quidam *Lectionis*
Suae, alius *Antiquarum Lectionum* atque alius Ἀθηρῶν
 7 et item alius Εὐρημάτων. Sunt etiam qui Δύχνους
 inscripserint, sunt item qui Στρωματεῖς, sunt adeo
 qui Πανδέκτας et Ἐλικῶνα et Προβλήματα et Ἐχει-
 8 ρίδια et Παραξιφίδας. Est qui *Memoriales* titulum
 fecerit, est qui Πραγματικὰ et Πάρεργα et Διδασκαλικά,
 est item qui *Historiae Naturalis*, et¹ Παντοδοπῆς Ἱστο-
 ρίας, est praeterea qui *Pratum*, est itidem qui Πάγκαρ-
 πον, est qui Τόπων scripserit²; sunt item multi qui
 9 *Coniectanea*, neque item non sunt qui indices libris
 suis fecerint aut *Epistularum Moralium* aut *Epistoli-*
carum Quaestionum aut *Confusarum* et quaedam alia in-
 scripta nimis lepida multasque prorsum concinnitates
 10 redolentia. Nos vero, ut captus noster est, incuriose
 et inmediate ac prope etiam subrustice ex ipso loco
 ac tempore hibernarum vigiliarum *Atticas Noctes*

¹ et, *Skutsch*; est, ω.

² scripserit, *Petschenig*; scripsit, ω.

¹ *Silva*, and its Greek equivalent *Hyle* (Suet. *Gramm.* x), was used metaphorically of material in a rough form, and of hasty and more or less extempore productions; see Quint. x. 3. 17.

² Of the thirty titles cited by Gellius about one-half can be assigned to their authors, many of whom Gellius himself mentions in various parts of his work; see the Index. There are others which he undoubtedly used, but does not cite, such as the "Παντοδοπή Ἱστορία" of Favorinus. "The Muses" refers not to Herodotus, the books of whose "His-
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tempt to imitate the witty captions which many other writers of both languages have devised for works of the kind. For since they had laboriously gathered varied, manifold, and as it were indiscriminate learning, they therefore invented ingenious titles also, to correspond with that idea. Thus some called their books "The Muses," others "Woods"¹ one used the title "Athena's Mantle," another "The Horn of Amaltheia," still another "Honeycomb," several "Meads," one "Fruits of my Reading," another "Gleanings from Early Writers," another "The Nosegay," still another "Discoveries." Some have used the name "Torches," others "Tapestry," others "Repertory," others "Helicon," "Problems," "Handbooks" and "Daggers." One man called his book "Memorabilia," one "Principia," one "Incidentals," another "Instructions." Other titles are "Natural History," "Universal History," "The Field," "The Fruit-basket," or "Topics." Many have termed their notes "Miscellanies," some "Moral Epistles," "Questions in Epistolary Form," or "Miscellaneous Queries," and there are some other titles that are exceedingly witty and redolent of extreme refinement.² But I, bearing in mind my limitations, gave my work off-hand, without premeditation, and indeed almost in rustic fashion, the caption of *Attic Nights*, derived merely from the time and place of

toxy" the grammarians named from the Muses, but to Aurelius Opilius, cited by Gellius in i. 25. 17. The "Silvae" belong either to Valerius Probus (Suet. *Gramm.* 24) or to Ateius Philologus (id. 10); the "Silvae" of Statius are of a different character. Δειμών was used by Pamphilus, by Gellius himself, and by Cicero of a work of a different kind; the Latin equivalent "Pratum" was used by Suetonius. For further information see the Index.

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inscripsimus, tantum ceteris omnibus in ipsius quoque inscriptionis laude cedentes, quantum cessimus in cura et elegantia scriptionis.

- 11 Sed ne consilium quidem in excerpendis notandisque rebus idem mihi, quod plerisque illis, fuit. Namque illi omnes et eorum maxime Graeci, multa et varia lectitantes, in quas res cumque inciderant, "alba," ut dicitur, "linea" sine cura discriminis solam copiam sectati converrebant, quibus in legendis ante animus senio ac taedio languebit quam unum alterumve reppererit quod sit aut voluptati legere aut cultui
- 12 legisse aut usui meminisse. Ego vero, cum illud Ephesii viri summe nobilis verbum cordi haberem, quod profecto ita est *πολυμαθῆν νόον οὐ διδάσκει*, ipse quidem volvendis transeundisque multis admodum voluminibus per omnia semper negotiorum intervalla in quibus furari otium potui exercitus defessusque sum, sed modica ex his eaque sola accepi quae aut ingenia prompta expeditaque ad honestae eruditionis cupidinem utiliumque artium contemplationem celeri facilique compendio ducerent aut homines aliis iam vitae negotiis occupatos a turpi certe agrestique rerum atque verborum imperitia vindicarent.
- 13 Quod erunt autem in his commentariis pauca quaedam scrupulosa et anxia, vel ex grammatica vel ex dialectica vel etiam ex geometrica,¹ quodque erunt

¹ geometrica; ω; geometria, ς (*A. L. L.* x, p. 240).

¹ A proverb of Greek origin, found in Sophocles, *Frag.* 307, Nauck²: οὐ μᾶλλον ἢ λευκῷ λίθῳ λευκὴ στάθμη. A builder's chalked line leaves no mark on white substances. The abbreviated form *λευκὴ στάθμη* (*alba linea*) in Plato, *Charm.* p. 154 B, and Lucil. 831, Marx.

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my winter's vigils; I thus fall as far short of all other writers in the dignity too even of my title, as I do in care and in elegance of style.

Neither had I in making my excerpts and notes the same purpose as many of those whom I have mentioned. For all of them, and in particular the Greeks, after wide and varied reading, with a white line, as the saying goes,¹ that is with no effort to discriminate, swept together whatever they had found, aiming at mere quantity. The perusal of such collections will exhaust the mind through weariness or disgust, before it finds one or two notes which it is a pleasure to read, or inspiring to have read, or helpful to remember. I myself, on the contrary, having at heart that well-known saying of the famous Ephesian,² "Much learning does not make a scholar," did it is true busy and even weary myself in unrolling and running through many a scroll, working without cessation in all the intervals of business whenever I could steal the leisure; but I took few items from them, confining myself to those which, by furnishing a quick and easy short-cut, might lead active and alert minds to a desire for independent learning and to the study of the useful arts, or would save those who are already fully occupied with the other duties of life from an ignorance of words and things which is assuredly shameful and boorish.

Now just because there will be found in these notes some few topics that are knotty and troublesome, either from Grammar or Dialectics or even from Geometry, and because there will also be some

¹ Heracleitus, Frag. 40 Diels. Cf. Aeschylus, Frag. 286 :
ὁ χρήσιμ' εἰδώς, οὐχ ὁ πολλ' εἰδώς σοφός.

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item paucula remotiora super augurio iure et pontificio, non oportet ea defugere, quasi aut cognitu non utilia aut perceptu difficilia. Non enim fecimus altos nimis et obscuros in his rebus quaestionum sinus, sed primitias quasdam et quasi libamenta ingenuarum artium dedimus, quae virum civiliter eruditum neque audisse umquam neque attigisse, si non inutile, at
14 quidem certe indecorum est. Ab his igitur, si cui forte nonnumquam tempus voluptasque erit lucubrationunculas istas cognoscere, petitum impetratumque volumus, ut in legendo quae pridem scierint non
15 aspernentur quasi nota invulgataque. Nam ecquid¹ tam remotum in litteris est quin id tamen complusculi sciant? Et satis hoc blandum est, non esse haec neque in scholis decantata neque in commentariis
16 protrita. Quae porro nova sibi ignotaque offenderint, aequum esse puto ut sine vano obtrectatu considerent an minutae istae admonitiones et pauxillulae nequaquam tamen sint vel ad alendum studium vescae vel ad oblectandum fovendumque animum frigidae, sed eius seminis generisque sint ex quo facile adolescant aut ingenia hominum vegetiora aut memoria adminiculatio aut oratio sollertior aut sermo incorruptior
17 aut delectatio in otio atque in ludo liberalior. Quae autem parum plana videbuntur aut minus plena in-

¹ ecquid, *Madvig*; et quid, *ω*.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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