See how Nature is disposed for the nonce to devise full wittily in this and such like pastimes to play with mankind, thereby not only to make herself merry, but to set us a wondering at such strange miracles. . . . [N]either are we to argue and reason how and why Nature hath done this or that. Sufficient it is that her will was so, and thus she would have it.

Pliny the Elder

**7-P2) Pliny, “Natural History” (c. 70 C.E.)**

Peoples of the North: The Hyperborei

Beyond those hills and beyond the north pole, there is a blessed and happy people (if we may believe it) whom they call Hyperborei, who live exceedingly long, and many fabulous and strange wonders are reported of them. In this tract are supposed to be the two points or poles about which the world turneth about, and the very ends of the heavens' revolution. For six months together they have one entire day; and night as long, when the sun is clean turned from them: but their day beginneth not at the spring Aequinoctial (as the lewd and ignorant common people do imagine) and so continueth to the autumn: for once in the year, and namely at our mid-summer when the sun entereth into Cancer, the sun riseth with them: and once likewise it setteth, even in

mid-winter with us, when the sun entereth Capricorn. The country is open upon the sun, of a blissful and pleasant temperature, void of all noisome wind and hurtful air. Their habitations be in woods and groves, where they worship the gods both by themselves, and in companies and congregations: no discord know they; no sickness are they acquainted with. They never die, but when they have lived long enough: for when the aged men have made good cheer, and anointed their bodies with sweet ointments, they leap from off a certain rock into the sea. This kind of sepulture, of all others is most happy.

North Sea Islanders

There be also named the isles Oonae, wherein the inhabitants live of birds' eggs and oats. Others also, wherein men are born with horse feet, called thereupon Hippopades. Others again of the Panoti, who being otherwise naked, have mighty great ears that cover their whole bodies.

Britain

Over against this tract, lieth Britannia, between the north and the west: an island renowned, both in Greek and Roman records. Opposite it is unto Germany, Gaul, and Spain, the greatest parts by far of all Europe, and no small sea between. Albion it was some time named, when all the islands were called Britanniae, of which anon we will speak. [...] In circuit, it containeth 3,825 miles. And now for these 30 years well near, the Roman captains grow into farther knowledge thereof, and yet not beyond the forest Caledonia, as near as it is. Agrippa supposeth, that it is in length 800 miles, and in breadth 300. Also that Ireland is as broad, but not so long by 200 miles. This island is seated above it, and but a very short cut or passage distant from it, to wit, 30 miles from the people Silures. Of other islands in this ocean, there is none by report, in compass more than 125 miles. [...] The farthest of all, which are known and spoken of, is Thule; in which there be no nights at all, as we have declared, about mid-summer,
namely when the sun passeth through the sign Cancer; and contrariwise no days in mid-winter: and each of these times they suppose, do last six months, all day or all night. *Timaeus* the historiographer saith, that farther within forth, and six days sailing from Britain, there lieth the island Mictis, in which white lead groweth: and, that the Britains do sail thither in winter vessels covered with leather round about and well sewed. There be that make mention of others beside, to wit, Scandia, Dumna, and Bergos, and the biggest of all the rest Nerigos, from which men sail to Thule. Within one day's sailing from Thule, is the frozen sea, named of some Cronium. [. . . ]

Peoples Of The South: Mount Atlas

But in the coast and borders thereof, 50 miles from Lixus, there runneth Subur a goodly plenteous river, and navigable, near to the colony Banasa. As many miles from it is the town Sala, standing upon a river of the same name, near now unto the wilderness, much infested and annoyed with whole herds of elephants, but much more with the nation of the Autololes, through which lieth the way to Atlas the most fabulous mountain of all Affricke. For writers have given out, that this hill arising out of the very midst of the sea sands, mounteth up to the sky, all rough, ill-favoured, and overgrown on that side that lieth to the shore of the ocean, unto which it gave the name: and yet the same is shadowy, full of woods, and watered with veins of spouting springs that way which looketh to Affricke, with fruitful trees of all sorts, springing of the own accord, and bearing one under another, in such sort, that at no time a man can want his pleasure and delight to his full contentment. Moreover, that none of the inhabitants there are seen all day long: all is still and silent, like the fearful horror in desert wilderness: and as men come nearer and nearer unto it, a secret devotion ariseth in their hearts, and besides this fear and horror, they are lifted up above the clouds, and even close to the circle of the moon. Over and besides that the same hill shineth oftentimes with many flashes of fire, and is haunted with the wanton lascivious Aegipanes and Satyres, whereof it is full, that is resoundeth with noise of haut-boys, pipes and fifes, and ringeth
again with the sound of labors, timbrels, and cymbals. These be the reports of great and famous writers, to say nothing of the labours and works both of Hercules and Perses there: and to conclude, that the way unto it is exceeding great, and not certainly known.

The Inhabitants of Ethiopia

Those Atlantes, if we will believe it, degenerate from the rites and manners of all other men: for neither call they one another by any name: and they look wistly upon the sun, rising and setting, with most dreadful curses, as being pernicious to them and their fields: neither dream they in their sleep, as other men. The Troglo-dites dig hollow caves, and these serve them for dwelling houses: they feed upon the flesh of serpents. They make a gnashing noise, rather than utter any voice, so little use have they of speech one to another. The Garamants live out of wedlock, and converse with their women in common. The Augylæ do no worship to any but to the devils beneath. The Gamphasantes be all naked, and know no wars, but sort themselves with no foreigner. The Blemmyi, by report, have no heads, but mouth and eyes both in their breast. The Satyres besides their shape only, have no properties nor fashions of men. The Aegipanes are shaped, as you see them commonly painted. The Himantopodes be some of them limber-legg'd and tender, who naturally go creeping by the ground. [. . .]

All Ethiopian general was in old time called Aetheria: afterwards Atlantia: and finally of Vulvan's son Aethiops, it took the name Ethiopia. No wonder it is, that about the coasts thereof there be found both men and beasts of strange and monstrous shapes, considering the agility of the sun's fierce heat, so strong and powerful in those countries, which is able to frame bodies artificially of sundry proportions, and to imprint and grave in them divers forms. Certes, reported it is, that far within the country eastward there are a kind of people without any nose at all on their face, having their visage all plain and flat. Others again without any upper lip, and some tongueless. Moreover, there is a kind of them that want a mouth, framed apart their nostrils: and at one and the same hole, and no more, taketh in breath, receiveth drink by drawing it in
with an oaten straw, yea, and after the same manner feed themselves with the grains of oats, growing of their own accord without man's labour and tillage for their only food. And others there be, who instead of speech and words, make signs, as well with nodding their heads, as moving their other members. There are also among them, that before the time of *Ptolomeus Lathyrus* king of Egypt, knew no use at all of fire. Furthermore, writers there be; who have reported, that in the country near unto the moors and marshes from whence Nilus issueth, there inhabit those little dwarfs called Pygmei. [. . .]

The region above Sirbithim, where the mountains do end, is reported to have upon the sea coast certain Aethyopians called Nisicastes and Nisites, that is to say, men with three or four eyes apiece: not for that they are so eyed indeed, but because they are excellent archers, & have a special good eye in aiming at their mark, which lightly they will not miss. *Bion* affirmeth moreover, that from that clime of the heaven which beareth above the greater Syrtes, & bendeth toward the South Ocean sea, they be called Dalion, to wit, the Cisorians and Longopores, who drink and use rain water only. And beyond Oecalices for five days journey, the Usibalks, Isudians, Pharuseans, Valians and Cispians. All the rest are nothing but deserts not inhabited. But then he telleth fabulous and incredible tales of those countries. Namdy, that westward there are people called Nigroe, whose king hath but one eye, and that in the middle of his forehead. Also he talketh of the Agriophagi, who live most of panthers' and lion's flesh. Likewise of the Pompaghi, who eat all things whatsoever. Moreover, of the Anthropophagi, that feed of man's flesh. Furthermore, of the Cynamolgi, who have heads like dogs. Over and besides, the Artabatites who wander and go up and down in the forests like four-footed savage beasts. [. . .]

Peoples of the Northeast: More Human Oddities

That there be Scythians, yea, and many kinds of them that feed ordinarily of man's flesh, we have showed already in our former discourses. A report haply that
would be thought incredible, if we did not consider and think withal, how in the very middle and heart of the world, even in Sicily and Italy, here hard by, there have been such monsters of men, namely the Cyclopes and Lystrigones: nay, if we were not credibly informed, that even of late days, and go no farther than to the other side of the Alps, there be those that kill men for sacrifice after the manner of those Scythian people; and that wants not much of chewing and eating their flesh. [. . .]

Above those, are other Scythians called Anthropophagi, where is a country named Abarimon, within a certain vale of the mountain Imaus, wherein are found savage and wild men, living and conversing usually among the brute beasts, who have their feet growing backward, and turned behind the calves of their legs, howbeit they run most swiftly. These kind of men can endure to live in no other air nor in any other clime else than their own, which is the reason that they cannot be drawn to come unto other kings that border upon them, nor could be brought unto Alexander the great: as Beton hath reported, the marshal of that prince's camp, and who also put down his feasts and journeys in writing. The former Anthropophagi or eaters of man's flesh whom we have placed about the North pole, ten days journey by land above the river Borysthenes, use to drink out of the skulls of men's heads, and to wear the scalps, hair and all, instead of mandelliions or stomachers before their breasts, according as Isogonus the Nicean witnesseth. The same writer affirmeth moreover, that in Albanie there be a sort of people born with eyes like owls, whereof the sight is fire red: who from their childhood are grey headed, and can see better by night than day. [. . .]

Peoples of the East

But principally above all other countries, India and the whole tract of Ethiopia is full of these strange and miraculous things. And first and foremost, the beasts bred in India be exceeding big, as it may appear by their dogs, which for proportion are much greater than those in other parts. And trees be growing there to that tallness, that a man cannot shoot a shaft over them. The reason hereof is the goodness and fatness of the
ground, the temperate constitution of the air, and the abundance of water: which is the
cause also that under one fig tree (believe it that list) there may certain troops and
squadrons of horsemen stand in convert, shaded with the boughs. And as for reeds,
they be of such a length, that between every joint they will yield sufficient to make boats
able to receive three men apiece, for to row therein at ease. There are to be seen many
men above five cubits tall: never are they known once to spit: troubled they are not with
pain in the head, toothache, or grief of the eyes; and seldom or never complain they of
any sorance in other parts of the body, so hardy are they, and of so strong a constitution
through the moderate heat of the sun.

Over and besides, among the Indians be certain philosophers, whom they call
Gymnosophists, who from sun rising to the setting thereof are able to endure all the day
long, looking full against the sun, without winking or once moving their eyes, & from
morning to night can abide to stand sometimes upon one leg, and sometimes upon the
other in the sand, as scalding hot as it is. Upon a certain mountain named Milus, there
be men whose feet grow the other way backward, and of either foot they have eight
toes, as Megasthenes doth report. And in many other hills of that country, there is a kind
of men with heads like dogs, clad all over with the skins of wild beasts, who in lieu of
speech used to bark: armed they are and well appointed with sharp and trenchant nails;
they live upon the prey which they get by chasing wild beasts, and fowling. [. . .]

Likewise, that there is a kind of people named Monoscelli that have but one leg
apiece, but they are most nimble, and hop wondrous swiftly. The same men are also
called Scioptodes, for that in hottest season of the Summer, they lie along on their back,
and defend themselves against the sun’s heat with their feet: and these people as he
saith are not far from the Troglodites. Again, beyond these westward, some there be
without heads standing upon their necks, who carry eyes in their shoulders. Among the
western mountains of India the Satyres haunt (the country wherein they are is called the
region of the Cartaduli), creatures of all other most swift in footmanship: which one
whiles run with all four; otherwhiles upon two feet only like men: but so light-footed they are, that unless they be very old or sick, they can never be taken. [. . . ]

Higher in the country, and above these, even in the edge and skirts of the mountains, the Pygmaei Spythamei are reported to be: called they are so, for that they are but a cubit or three shaftments (or spans) high, that is to say, three times nine inches. The clime wherein they dwell is very wholesome, the air healthy, and ever like to the temperature of the Spring: by reason that the mountains are on the north side of them, and bear off all cold blasts. And these pretty people Homer also hath reported to be much troubled and annoyed by cranes. The speech goeth, that in the springtime they set out all of them in battle array, mounted upon the back of rams and goats, armed with bows and arrows, and so down to the seaside they march, where they make foul work among the eggs and young cranelings newly hatched, which they destroy without all pity. Thus for the three months that their journey and expedition continueth, and then they make an end of their valiant service: for otherwise if they should continue any longer, they were never able to withstand the new flights of this fowl, grown to some strength and bigness. [. . . ]

See how Nature is disposed for the nonce to devise full wittily in this and such like pastimes to play with mankind, thereby not only to make herself merry, but to set us a wondering at such strange miracles. And I assure you, thus daily and hourly in a manner playeth she her part, that to recount every one of her sports by themselves, no man is able with all his wit and memory. Let it suffice therefore, to testify and declare her power, that we have set down these prodigious and strange works of hers, showed in whole nations. And then go forward to discourse of some particulars, approved and known in man. [. . . ]
Fig. 7-P2.1) Pliny’s Strange Races from Distant Regions
Menstruation

But to come again to women, hardly can there be found a thing more monstrous than is that flux and course of theirs. For if during the time of this their sickness, they happen to approach or go over a vessel of wine, be it never so new, it will presently sour: if they touch any standing corn in the field, it will wither and come to no good. Also, let them in this estate handle any grasses, they will die upon it: the herbs and young buds in a garden if they do but pass by, will catch a blast, and burn away to nothing. Sit they upon or under trees while they are in this case, the fruit which hangeth upon them will fall. Do they but see themselves in a looking-glass, the clear brightness thereof turneth into dimness, upon their very sight. Look they upon a sword, knife, or any edged tool, be it never so bright, it waxeth duskish, so cloth also the lively hue of ivory. The very bees in the hive die. Iron and steel presently take rust, yea, and brass likewise, with a filthy, strong, and poisoned stink, if they lay but hand thereupon. If dogs chance to taste of women's fleures, they run mad therewith: and if they bite anything afterwards, they leave behind them such a venom, that the wounds are incurable: nay the very clammy slime bitumen, which at certain times of the year floateth and swimmeth upon the lake of Sodom, called Asphaltites in lurie, which otherwise of the own nature is pliable enough, soft and gentle, and ready to follow what way a man would have it, cannot be parted and divided asunder (for by reason of the viscosity, it cleaveth and sticketh like glue, and hangeth all together, pluck as much as a man will at it), but only by a thread that is stained with this venomous blood. Even the silly pismires [ants?] (the least creature of all others) hath a perceivance & sense of this poison, as they say: for they cast aside and will no more come to that corn, which they have once found by taste to be infected with this poison. [. . .]
Recipes & Cures: Radishes

All radishes breed wind wonderful much, and provoke a man that eateth them to belch. A base and homely meat therefore it is, and not for a gentleman’s table, especially if it be eaten with other [roots], as beets: marry if a man take them with unripe olives cordite, he shall neither belch nor rift wind so much, nor yet so sour and stinking will his breath be afterwards.

Garlic and Onions

Moreover, if you would have garlic, onions, and such like, not to smell strong and stink so as they do, the common opinion and rule is, that they should not be set or sown, but when the moon is under the earth, nor yet be gathered and taken up but in her conjunction with the sun, which is the change. But Menander, a Greek writer, saith, that there needs none of all these ceremonies for the matter: for if a man would not have his breath stink with eating of garlic, let him do no more (quoth he) but take a beet-root roasted in the embers, and eat it after, it shall extinguish that hot and strong flavour, and cause the breath to continue sweet. [. . . ]

The Artichoke

Also, by the testimony of Hesiodus and Akaeus, if it be taken in wine, it inciteth to wantonness and fleshly pleasures. These poets do write, that when this herb doth flourish and is at the best, then grasshoppers chant loudest and sing most shrill: and women at such a time be most desirous of men’s company and hottest in lust, so contrariwise men are most loathe to turn unto them, and least able to content their appetite: as if Nature to satisfy the pleasure of these good wives, had provided against that faint season the help of the artichoke, as a viand most powerful at this time to set their husbands in a heat, and to enable them to that business. [. . . ]
A Cure for Warts

Some there be, who for to be rid of all kinds of warts, take as many chick peas as there be warts, and with every one of them touch a wart, and that, upon the first day after the change of the moon: which done, they tie the foresaid peas or chicks in a little linen rag, and fling them away backward behind them: and they are persuaded that the warts will be gone by this means. 

A Cure for Dislocation

The grass or herb near unto which a dog lifts his leg and pisseth, if it be plucked out of the ground without touching a knife or iron instrument, cureth any dislocation or bone out of joint, most speedily.

Some Forms of Beauty Treatment

The grape called bumastos, taketh away the hairs about the nipples of nurses' breasts, which spring sometime after they have once borne children: which also otherwise is very good to cleanse the scales, and scurf in the face, and to scour away other spots and pimples arising upon the skin. Gentia, and nymphaea called heraclea, the root also of cyclamen, riddeth all such cutanean specks and blemishes. The grains of wild caraways, called cacalia, incorporated in wax melted or made liquid, lay the skin of the face plain and even, and smooth all wrinkles. The root of acorum, serveth likewise to purify the skin from all outward deformities. Herb willow giveth the hair of the head a yellow colour. Hypericon, which also is named cordon, dyeth it black: likewise cloth ophrys, an herb growing with two leaves and no more, like unto jagged beets or coleworts. Also polemonia setteth a black colour upon hair, if it be boiled in oil. As for depilatory medicines, which are to take away the hair from any part, the proper place to treat of them is indeed among those that pertain especially to women: but nowadays men also are come to it, and use such devices as well as women. The most effectual of
all others be they accepted, that are made of the herb archezastis. The juice of tithymal is likewise very good to fetch off hairs: and yet there be some, who plucked them out first with pincers, and then the said juice incorporat with oil, rub the place often in the hot sun. [. . .]

Sexual Intercourse

As touching carnal knowledge of man and woman, Democritus utterly condemned it: and who so? Because (quoth he) in that act, one man goeth out of another.3 And to say a truth, the less one useth it, the better it is for body and mind both: and yet our professed wrestlers, runners, and such gamesters at feats of activity, when they feel themselves heavy or dull, revive and recover their lively spirits again by keeping company with women. Also this exercise cleanseth the breast and helpeth the voice, which, being sometime before clear and neat, was now become hoarse and rusty. Moreover, the temperate sports of Venus, ease the pains of the reins [kidneys] and loins, mundify and quicken the eye-sight, and be singular good for such as be troubled in mind and given overmuch to melancholy. [. . .]

Human Urine

As for the urine of mankind, diverse authors have treated of it; who as I find, have not only set down their reasons in nature as touching the virtue thereof, but also have been very ceremonious and superstitious in handling that argument; yea and they have written distinctly of the several kinds of urine digested into certain principal heads. And among other things, that they set down the urine of men that are unable for generation, to be singular good by way of injection, to make women fruitful. But to speak of such remedies as we may be bold to name with honesty: the urine of young children who be

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2 Compare della Porta’s remedy, 11-P1) Porta, “Natural Magic”, pp. 000 below.
3 That is, the loss of semen is the loss of a man in potentia. Compare 7-P1) Aristotle, “On the Generation of Animals”, pp. 000 above.
not yet undergrown nor fourteen years of age, is good against the venomous humour of those aspides or adders which the Greeks name ptyades, for that they spit their poison upon the eyes and faces of men and women. [ . . . ]

Being incorporat[ed] with the flower of ervile, it is good for sunburnings: sodden also with boiled leeks to the consumption of the one half in a new earthenware pot which was never occupied, it is excellent to mundify the ears that run with matter, or that have any worms or vermin within them: and verily a stouph [sic] made with the vapour of this decoction, bringeth down the desired sickness of women [i.e., menstruation] Man's urine is much commended for the gout in the feet, as we may see by fullers, who never be gouty, because ordinarily their feet are in men's urine. Stale chamber lie or urine long kept & incorporat[ed] together with the ashes of oyster shells, cureth the red gombe [sic] in young infants, and generally all running ulcers: The same so prepared, serveth in a liniment for eating cankers, burns, and scalds, the swelling piles, the chaps and rifts in the seat and feet, also for the sting of serpents. The most expert and skilful midwives have pronounced all with one resolution, that for to kill an itch in any part of the body, to heal a scald head, to scout away dandruff and scurf in head or beard, and to cure the corroding ulcers in any place, but in the privy members especially, there is not a liquor more effectual than urine, with a little sal-nitre [saltpeter, or potassium nitrate] put thereto. But surely, every man's own water (if I may for reverence of manhood so say) is simply best. [ . . . ]

The magicians expressly forbid in making water, to lay bare the nakedness of that part against sun and moon, or to piss upon the shadow of any person. And therefore Hesiodus giveth a precept, to make water against a wall, or something standing full before us, for fear lest our nakedness being discovered, might offend some God or Angel. To conclude, Hosthanes doth upon his warrant assure us, that whosoever droppeth some of his own urine every morning upon his feet, he shall be secured against all charms, sorceries, and deadly poisons whatsoever.
Women

And thus much in some good sort as touching the medicines proceeding from women. As for the rest that are written and reported, they exceed all reason, and there is no end of them. For first and foremost it is said, that if a woman while her monthly sickness is upon her, be set into the wind abroad with her belly naked, she will scare away hailstorms, whirlwinds, and lightnings; yea, and avert any violence of the weather whatsoever. And at sea verily, any woman standing openly against the weather bare, although she have not her fleurs, is enough to secure the sailors and passengers from all tempests. As for the monthly flux itself of women, (a thing in other respects and at all times, as I have shewed before, of a monstrous nature) there be writers who tell and presage wonders thereof, such as be horrible, abominable, and indeed not to be spoken: and yet some of those things I hold it no shame to deliver in writing, namely, if it fall out just in the eclipse of sun or moon, that a woman hath her sickness come down, the same is of a pestilent quality, and apt to breed diseases incurable. Likewise, if haply the time of the change, when the moon is in conjunction with the sun, and those things occur together, the man who meddleth with her during that time, shall not avoid his bane, but it will bring upon him some pestilent malady, remediless.

Moreover, the venom thereof is so strong at that time especially more than at any other, that the presence or breath only of a woman then, will infect and stain any purple cloth. And yet bad enough it is at all times: for whencesoever they are in their fleurs, it skills not in what quarter of the moon, if they go about any field of corn with their nakedness uncovered, ye shall see the cankerworms, caterpillars, beetles, and all such worms and hurtful vermin, to fall from the corn as they pass along. This invention by the saying of Scepsius and Metrodorus, came from the Cappadocians, who being infested with a number of those green flies called cantharides, de[v]ised this means to be rid of them: for they caused their women at the time of their monthly terms (saving the reverence of womanhood be it spoken) to go through the standing corn, with their clothes tucked up around above their waist, and all bare beneath. In other countries yet
they are more mannerly, and in a better respect to the honor of women, put them only to go barefoot for this purpose, with their hair hanging loose about their ears, ungirt, unlaced, and unbraced. Howbeit, great heed must be taken, that they walk not thus at the sun-rising, for then surely all the crops upon the ground will wither and dry away to nothing.

Abortion and Contraception

As for the famous courtesans, Lais and Elephantis, who have written so contrary one unto the other of this argument, and namely, as touching abortions, and of what efficacy the coal of colewort, myrtle, or tamarisk root is, after it hath quenched in the said blood; as also how she-asses will not conceive for so many years as they chance to eat barley corns infected therewith; besides other strange devices that they have set abroa[d]: I think them incredible, and I would not have any credit at all given unto their writings, considering the monstrosities and contrarities which they have put down; whiles the one prescribeth medicines for to make fruitful, and the other ordaineth the very same, to hinder conception and cause them to be barren.

[...]

The Camel

As touching the camel, his brain (by report) is excellent good against the epilepsy or falling sickness, if it be dried and drunk with vinegar: so doth the gall likewise taken in drink with honey: which also is a good medicine for the squinancie. It is said, that a camel's tail dried, causeth looseness of the belly: like as the dung reduced into ashes and incorporat with oil, doth curl and frizzle the hair of the head. [ . . . ]

For a Bone Stuck in the Throat
If a thorn, fish bone, or any other such thing stick in the throat, take the dung of a cat, rub and anoint the place well without-forth, the same (by report) will thereupon come up again, or pass downward. [. . . ]

Goats and Diamonds

Moreover, as touching the concord and discord that is between things natural, which the Greeks call Sympathia and Antipathia (whereof I have so much written in all my books, and endeavoured to acquaint the readers therewith) in nothing throughout the world may we observe both the one & the other more evidently, than in the diamond: for this invincible mineral (against which neither fire nor steel, the two most violent and puissant creatures of Nature's making, have any power, but that it checketh and despiseth both the one and the other) is forced to yield the gauntlet and give place unto the blood of a goat, this only thing is the means to break it in sunder, howbeit, care must be had, that the diamond be steeped therein whilsts it is fresh drawn from the beast before it be cold: and yet when you have made all the steeping you can, you must have many a blow at the diamond with hammer upon the anvil: for even then also, unless they be of excellent proof & good indeed, it will put them to it, and break both the one and the other.

But I would gladly know what invention this might be to soak the diamond in goat's blood, whose head devised it first, or rather by what chance was it found out and known? What conjecture should lead a man to make an experiment of such a singular & admirable secret, especially in a goat, the filthiest beast [. . . ] in the whole world? Certes I must ascribe both this invention and all such like to the might and beneficence together of the divine powers: neither are we to argue and reason how and why Nature hath done this or that[.] Sufficient it is that her will was so, and thus she would have it.