

# The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, April 23. 1692.

Since we are bound by our former Promises to vindicate our selves in this Paper against the Calumnies of some persons, we shall here be as good as our word desiring the pardon of the sober part of Mankind, that we should be concern'd at their Abuses, who have publickly Lampon'd God Almighty himself, whose best qualification is an unreasonable Grin, and an ill tim'd Laugh, at every one that is not of their Species, we mean, animated with a reasonable Soul, and not with a Spirit of Burlesque, who condemn all mankind that are for improving others Notions, calling it stealing, &c. not considering at the same time that they plunder their very Being; for they could not subsist one moment (we mean as Authors) without being notoriously guilty of Plagiarism, at the Expence of others Study, as we shall give some Instances before we end this Paper, reserving many more for another occasion. — But now for the Vindication of our Design, which is again stigmatiz'd since our last promise of defending it, in these words: *The Athenians in their Proposals for a Natural History, speak of a Rainbow appearing in an entire Circle: Query, Which is the greater Rarity, Sence in an Athenian Mercury, or such a Rainbow?* For the first, we own we ask'd such a Question in our Proposals, but in our Sence there's much difference betwixt a Query after unusual appearances, and a downright position: But since it is again mention'd by way of Censure, and that others may be unsatisfied in it, we have to tell the World, that that particular Query was put in upon this occasion. A Gentlemans Friend of our Society travelling in the West of England, in a Valley betwixt two high Hills, extending Eastward and Westward, the Sun just setting where there fell a small shower of Rain, which he affirms did by means of the Situation of the place give the unusual Phenomenon of an entire Circular Rainbow. We could mention other Rainbows that have been seen above half Circular, as Monsieur Richer in his Voyage to *la Cayenne* gives an Account of, as also of a Rainbow that appear'd in the form of a Pillar, which was communicated to the World by Monsieur du Rondel, 13. Sept. 1684. which two Phenomena's would appear perhaps as ridiculous to our Censurers as the first; and since they pretend to be great Naturalists, we should be glad if they'd give the World the reason of these Meteors, but they must not find it in the 8. Chap. of *Descartes Meteors*, where they borrow'd their last Discovery, not considering it has bin much better done by Mr. Marriot in his Treatise of Colours; so much for the first part. Next as to our having made use of Dr. Plati's Draught for our Natural History, we desire the World to compare 'em both, and they'll find above one half that has not the least relation to the Drs. Draught; and as for the latter part, there's as much of him in it as there is of his in the History of the *Royal Society*, p. 155. and no more, which is what would be the Natural result of any considerate Persons that should joyn to think upon such a Subject. As to our Capability of performing our Promise, the World shall soon have a Specimen of it in one of our Papers, upon which we are willing to venture the Merit of the Cause.

Quest. 1. **H**ow is it to be made out, that the Lacedemonians were (as the Author of the Book of the Maccabees informs us) of the Stock of Abraham, and so a kin to the Jews?

Ans. This beloved Name that is so often trump't up thro' in the Company of *Pytisma*, *Fus Nigrum*, or any other *Blind*, to be talk'd on, can scarce be any kin to Abraham the Father of the Faithful, since all Lacedemonians both Ancient and Modern believe nothing of the Bi-

ble: But to History, 'tis suppos'd this passage is grounded upon *Maccab. cap. 12. 21.* The Opinion of *Grotius* upon this obscure place is, That the *Lacedemonians* descended from the Ancient *Pelasgi*, which came out of *Arabia* into *Greece*, and which he thinks were the Posterity of some of the Children of *Abraham* and *Ketura*, Mr. *Morinus* shows that this was impossible, since the *Pelasgi* went into *Greece* before the second Marriage of *Abraham*, and he would rather make use of the Offspring of *Esau* to explain this Mystery; he proves that there was a People in *Thrace* which were call'd *Edones*, or *Edonii*, which he supposes was a Colony of *Idumeans*, or Children of *Edom*, that is *Esau*, for (as he proves) the *Pelasgi* inhabited *Thrace* and *Thessalia*, before they went into *Greece* and *Peloponessus*. Now being assur'd by many Authors, (says he) that the *Edonians* were establish'd in *Thrace*, 'tis easie to conclude they were joyn'd with the *Pelasgi*, and made one people: So that if the *Lacedemonians* descended from the *Pelasgi*, they descended also from the *Edonians*. *Morinus* also tells us that the *Idumeans* were establish'd in *Thrace*, when *Joshua* took possession of the Land of *Canaan*, when many *Canaanites* retreated into *Europe*, under the Conduct of *Cadmus*. In short, our Opinion is the same as *Morinus*'s, which fully answers the Question, 'till any one can disprove it, or show a better, for we are certain 'tis yet the best that is extant.

Quest. 2. Why the Text in *St. Johns first Ep. relating to the Trinity* is wanting in most of the old Manuscripts in all Languages?

Ans. This is another Insinuation for Atheism, like that of *Josephus*, and as Atheistically determin'd of late by some persons. If the last Gentleman that has treated of this Subject had not been the blindest Plagiary in the World, he would have consulted the Contexts in the Bible, where he might have found the Sence imperfect without this very Verse, the 8th. v. naturally requires it, *If there be three that bear witness on Earth, the like in Heaven.* But to clear the Case, and to prove that the old Manuscripts have this verse in 'em, *Ihacius* under *Theodosius*'s Reign produced this place against the *Arrians*, in Anno 308. *vid. Gerh. Harmon. Evang. Jerom* says, all read this Verse in his time; but to convince our continual Decryer of Scripture, let him read more in *Pools Synopsis* to this purpose.

Quest. 3. Gentlemen, Reading in a late Author of our own Nation, I find him in every point preferring the Ancients before the Moderns; but particularly he expresses so much Contempt of the Musick of the present Age in respect of that of Antiquity, that mov'd my Curiosity so far as to trouble you for a Resolution of this following Question, (I having always before thought the preference in Musick, incontestable with us by any Age at what time soever.) *Qu. What were the Excellencies of the Ancient Musick, which could give it a just Preference to that of this Age?*

Ans. This Question is improper, since 'tis not distinguish'd whether the Natural Genius, or acquir'd Art of the Ancients or Moderns is preferable. That the Art is much more perfect and refin'd now, is plain from *Dr. Wallis*, and others, who have gone so far as to reduce *Audibles* into *Visibles*, or *Visibles* into *Audibles*; that is, any curious piece of Building may be exactly represented by Musical Notes, which shall bear such proportion to one another as the parts of that Building do, *et vice versa*; but as for Genius, since that's only Natural, we can't say we exceed the preceding Ages, for a small prospect of their faculty that way, take the following Relation, *Camer. oper. Subc. 2. cap. 81. p. 320.* There was a *Mucisian* in *Denmark* that did so excell in this Art, that he was wont to boast that he could with his Musick set his Hearers besides themselves, or make 'em

in merry, penfive or furious, as he pleas'd, which he also perform'd upon tryal at the Command of one of the Danish Kings, viz. Ericus the 2d. surnamed the Good. We doubt we can find no such Instance now, and those that plead against our Opinion, must produce the like, or they do nothing.

Quest. 4. Why the famous Passage in Josephus, concerning our Saviour is wanting in many Manuscripts, and in some written on the Margin?

Ans. We have in a late Mercury sufficiently vindicated the Authority of Josephus, and show'd that this present suggestion is as false as that in the preceding 2d. Question, we refer the Reader to our last Answer, which solves all the Objections that have been yet brought against his Testimony, besides we have added one new proof of our former Assertion in the latter end of the next Answer.

Quest. 5. Why Seneca, Suetonius, Tacitus, and other Writers of the first Century, take no notice of any Miracles wrought in Judea, or any other part of the Roman Empire, either by Christ, or the holy Apostles?

Ans. We suppose you have read over Tacitus, and find nothing of the Miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles in express words: But what's the meaning of *Annales* X. Chap. 1. 15. there he tells us, That Nero falsely accused a certain people hated for their Malificium; (and a little after) the Author of that Name (viz. Christian Religion) was Christ. Now if Christians, the Disciples of Christ, who expos'd themselves for his sake cou'd agere malificium, do Witchcraft, for so the Heathen call'd the Miracles of healing, casting out Devils, &c. why might it not be true, that our Saviour who gave this power, also had it, and exercis'd it himself; but our Author passes by other Instances of our Saviours Miracles, and does not thoroughly examine our Testimonies out of Suetonius and Pliny. There's one thing more that we have to desire of this Author, viz. To prove that passage in Josephus to be false, which mentions the *Vail of the Temple to be rent in sunder* at our Saviours Death, for unless he confutes that, all the pains that he has taken to disprove his other Testimony signifie nothing, for one confirms the other.

Quest. 6. Why the Heathen Historians tell us so often of miracles wrought by their own Emperors, and why they called them Gods?

Ans. Its impossible that Greatness shou'd be without Flattery, especially where it is countenanc'd, there it runs on to the Extravagancies mention'd in the Question. A certain late Author tells us upon this Subject, That the Herodians flatter'd Herod, and wou'd have perswaded him that the Prophecies relating to the Messiah belong'd to him. This Gentleman will be very obliging to us, if he'll produce such an Opinion besides his own in Print. 'Tis probable that the Original of calling persons Gods, was from the Custom of the Jews, who call'd their Prophets so, as being Representatives of God, and bearing his Message; and thus our Saviour expounds the Custom, *If ye call them Gods to whom the Word of God came, &c.* We believe it will be hard to produce any Nation that had this Custom, who had not some Correspondence with the Jews, and from them borrow'd this once pertinent word, and by degrees turn'd it into an ill sense, tho' tis not probable but Statues of famous persons were idoliz'd by posterity amongst the Heathens, as is now the daily Custom of the Romish Church.

Quest. 7. Finding by your Mercuries that you pretend to resolve Questions about Musick, I desire you will tell me the reason why a string sounds, when another that is an Unison or an Octave to it be touched?

Ans. A certain Author who has bin pleas'd to censure what we have done upon this Subject, (whither we refer the Reader,) and to give his own Judgment, after something previous which every body knows, wou'd make this Demonstration, That supposing 2 strings A and B equally extended, &c. "A being put in motion, and "by the percussion of the Air putting B in Motion, (but "not a word how) B likewise must continue so, because when it has ended one Vibration, A beginning "with it, is ready to give it a second; A strange discovery, only there's this wanting, why A shou'd not put

other Notes in motion as well as B, or why it works more upon B being equally extended than C, D, which (supposing 'em to be lower Notes) ought to be more sensible of the percussion of the Air than higher: But Equi vibrations can't be the cause of one string sounding when another does, since 'tis plain, that if one string be struck vehemently, and another have no motion in it but what it receives by percussion of the Air, one must move faster than another, and consequently the Vibrations must be unequal. All that our Author has brought for a demonstration, reaches no further than this, that if 2 strings be equally extended, &c. and be both struck equally, their Vibrations will be equal, and consequently they must be Unisons, which every Body knew before, but we believe the Author himself might have found out some better reason, than this which he stole out of *La Musique des Anciens*: suppos'd by some to be writ by Mr. Perault.

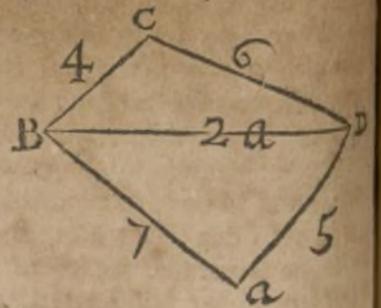
Qu. 8. In what manner were the Gallies of the Ancients built? What were the ordines remorum, and how placed one over the other? Or in any other posture, it being almost incredible, that 40 Banks of Oars (for so many had Ptolomie's Gally mention'd by Athenæus) could be placed in that posture?

Ans. This is of no use to the World now, but such as have a Curiosity in this matter, may consult Athenæus upon it.

Qu. 9. The Athen. in their proposals for a natural Hill speak of a Rainbow, appearing in an entire Circle: Query. Which is the greater Rarity, Sense in an Athenian Mercury, or such a Rainbow?

Ans. See the beginning of our Paper for an Answer to this. And now we wou'd advise our Censurer to be a little modest for the future, than to condemn others for Plagianism, whilst he is a thousand times more guilty of it himself, witness what we have already mention'd as also Tannequi le Fevre for all the splutter about Josephus, Mr. Ray for Fern-seed, Lubin for Pyrismate Lubin Orbem, Dupin for Job, in short, every thing that's done (unless some Nonsensical Banter which wou'd ill belong to any body else) from some body that we cou'd produce; we shall speedily take occasion to bring a certain Scotch Mathematical Author above-board, who is pretty good at the same trade, if we hear any more of him.

Quest. 10. The 4 sides and Area of a Trapezium (having no right Angles nor parallel lines) being given, a Theorem is required to find the Diagonal. Let the Trapezium be this:



Ans. That the Trapezium a. b. c. d. whose 4 sides are given, are not parallel the one to the other, nor any Right Angles, that the side  $ab = 7$   $bc = 4$  &  $cd = 5$  &  $da = 5$ , the Area also given 29. Req. to find the Diagonal DC. Suppose  $DB = 2a$ .

Then the Area of  $\triangle dba$  will be  $\sqrt{37aa - aaaa}$  and by the same, the Area  $\triangle dbc$  will be  $\sqrt{26aa - aaaa}$  the sum of those 2 Areas is  $\sqrt{37aa - aaaa} + \sqrt{26aa - aaaa}$

$$\text{which last after due Reduction gives } aaaa - \frac{106208}{3485}aa = \frac{810004}{3485}$$

$$\text{then by supposing } \frac{106208}{3485} = b \text{ \& } \frac{810004}{3485} = c$$

$$\text{The Equation stands thus } aaaa - baa = -c$$

$$\text{Which last gives } a = \sqrt{\frac{1}{2}b + \sqrt{\frac{1}{4}bb - c}} = \frac{1}{2}db$$

$$\text{And consequently } 2a = \sqrt{\frac{1}{2}b + \sqrt{\frac{1}{4}bb - c}} = \frac{1}{2}db$$

Which was Required to be done.

We have in this Paper, according to our Promise answer'd all the Questions we have promis'd and resolve to continue answering all Questions whatever, that so we may render our Undertaking perfect.