

Years Old. And *Fig. 3.* was brought away from the Child Ten Years Old ; both these without any Section.

**IV. An Account of the Tubera Terræ, or Truffles found at Rushton in Northamptonshire ; with some Remarks thereon. By Tancred Robinson, M. D. and R.S.S.**

S I R,

**T**HE *Tubera Terræ* (which you was pleas'd to send me, together with a Draught of them drawn with your own Pencil) observ'd lately at *Rushton* in *Northamptonshire*, by that curious and learned Gentleman *Mr. Hatton*, are indeed the true French *Truffles*, the Italian *Tartuffi* or *Tartuffole*, and the Spanish *Turmas de Tiera*, which are not noted by *Mr. Ray* to be found in our British Soyl. I have seen them thrice as large at *Florence*, *Rome* and *Naples*, where they eat them as a delicious and luxurious piece of Dainty, either fry'd in slices with Butter or Oil, Salt and Pepper ; or else out of Pickle, and often boy'd in their Soup. Of these there are three or four Species mentioned by *Matthiæolus*, *Imperati*, *J. Bauhine* and *Mentzelius*.

These observ'd in *England* are all included in a studded Bark or Coat, the Tubercules resembling the *Capsules* or Seed-Vessels of some *Mallows* and *Alcea's* ; the inward substance is of the consistence of the fleshy part in a young Chestnut, of a paste Colour, of a rank or hircine Odour, and unfavoury, streaked with many white Veins or Threds, as in some Animals Testicles ; the whole is of a globose Figure, though unequal and chinky.

What

What these *Trubs* are, neither the Ancients nor Moderns have clearly informed us; some will have them *Callosities*, or *Warts* bred in the Earth: Others call them subterraneous *Mushrooms*. If you could ever find *Vestigia* or Marks of a Stalk, or of Fibres, or Capillaments about their outsides, I should be then almost tempted to guess, that they are the Product of some Bulbose or Tuberose Plant, perhaps a *Satyrion* or *Orchis*, or some other Root of that numerous Tribe, many of which have a Seminal Smell.

I conjecture that these *Tubera Terræ* were found after the late Thunder and Rains; for some of the Ancients call'd them *Ceraunia*, to which *Juvenal* seems to allude, *Sat. V.*

*Post hunc raduntur Tubera, si ver  
Tunc erit, & facient optata tonitrua cœnas  
Majores: tibi habe frumentum, Alledius inquit  
O Libye: disjunge boves, dum tubera mittas.*

They are most tender in the Spring; though after Showers and sultry Weather they may be plentifully found in the Autumn: the Wet swells them, and Lightning may dispose them to send forth their particular Scent so alluring to the Swine.

*Ludovicus Romanus*, *Navigat. Lib. i. cap. 7.* affirms, That Thirty Camels Load of these *Truffles* or *Trubs* brought from *Armenia* and *Asia Minor* have been all sold at *Damascus* in two or three days. The manner of finding and rooting them up may be read in *Mr. Ray's Itinerary of Italy*, p. 403, 404. and in his *Catal. Stirpium Exot.* at the end of his Travels, p. 109.

I need not tell you the Uses to which the *Greeks* and *Romans* apply'd these Vegetable Bodies, nor how they are dress'd and eaten at this day. *Pliny*, *Martial*, *Plutarch*, *Athenæus*, *Galen*, *Apicius*, &c. may be consulted

for the first; *Nonnus*, *Bruyerinus*, *Ciccarellus*, &c. for the last.

## POSTSCRIPT.

After the writing of the foregoing Letter, I received Intelligence, that Mr. *Hatton* observ'd Fibres issuing  
*V. Fig. 4.* out of some of these *Tubera*, which lay Spit deep under ground; so that perhaps they may be *Plantæ sui generis*, and their sulcated *Papillæ* analogous to, if not Seed-Vessels. You know several Vegetables bear their Seed near the Root, as the *Trifolium subterraneum tricoccum reticulatum flosculis longis albis*; most of the *Arachydnæ's*, and some other *Legumes*, which flower above, but seed under ground. As to the *Truffles* lying so deep, that is common to many Roots that shoot up Stalks above the Earth. To instance only in that *Lathyrus tuberosus*, call'd commonly *Chamæbalanus* and *Terræ Glandes*; in English, *Pease-Earthenut*, digg'd up and eaten by the poor People, *Non nisi altâ fossione inveniendæ*, says *John Bauhine*. But for a clear History of these, our Judicious Mr. *Ray* may be consulted, *Histor. Plant. Vol. I. p. 895, 899, 918, 919, 942.*

The Roots of our *Bulbocastanum* (of the Umbelliferous Tribe) commonly call'd *Kepper-Nuts*, *Pignuts* and *Ger-nuts* in the North, lie very deep, and fatten Hogs, which are very greedy of them. I have often observ'd the Shepherds and Boys in *Torkshire* digging them up for a delicate Dish: Perhaps this is the *Nucula Terrestris Septentrionalium* of *Lobel*, and the *Apios* of *Turner*.

Fleetstreet, Aug. 29.  
 1693.

Tours, &c.

Tancred Robinson.

Fig:1.

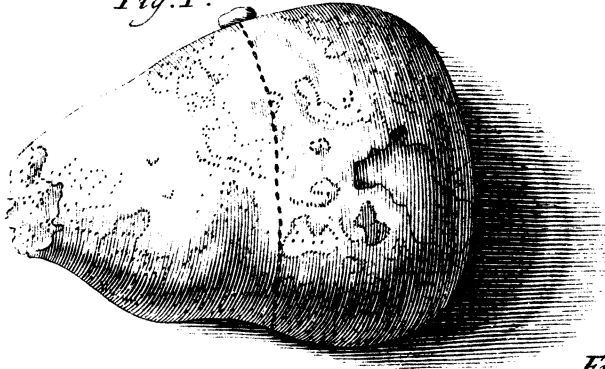


Fig:2.

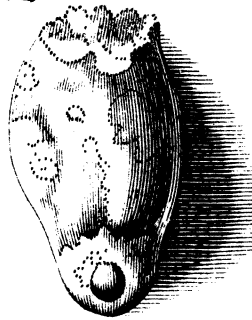


Fig:3.

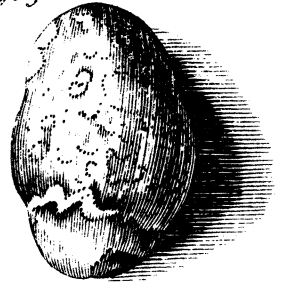


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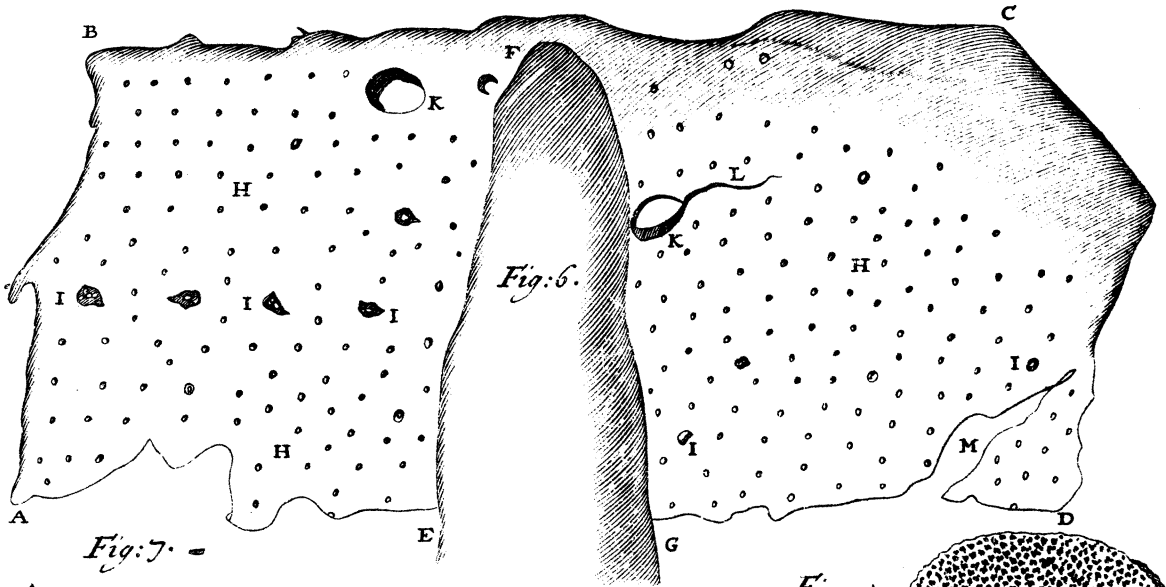


Fig:7. -

Fig:5.

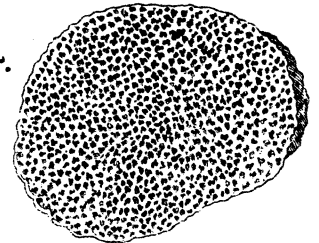


Fig:4.

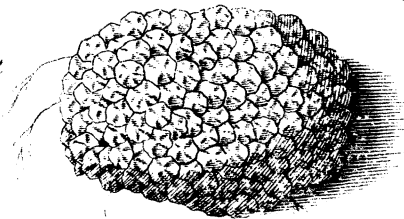


Fig:9.

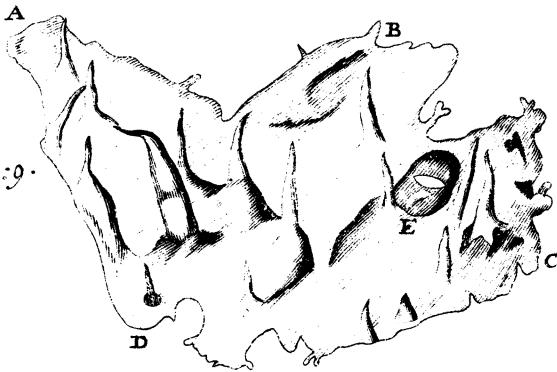


Fig:8.