

XXII. *Some Remarks on a Parthian Coin with a Greek and Parthian Legend, never before published. In a Letter from the Rev. John Swinton, M. A. of Christ-Church, Oxon. F. R. S. to the Rev. Thomas Birch, D. D. Secret. R. S.*

Reverend Sir,

Read Mar. 24,
1757.

AS we know little of the reigns of the latter Parthian kings, and less still of their coins; an attempt to strike out even the least new light on either of those heads will not, I persuade myself, prove unacceptable to the Royal Society. In this persuasion, I do myself the honour to send you a few conjectures upon another brass Parthian medal, in my possession, as remarkable, on account of the double legend it contains, as the former, which I endeavoured a little to illustrate about a year ago. This medal, which certainly merits the attention of the curious, is in very good conservation, and approaches near the size of those of the middle Roman brass. It exhibits the head, or effigies, of a Parthian king, with a beard, diadem, and hair formed into such curls as I never yet observed upon any ancient coins. Under the effigies, the Greek letters ΒΑCΙΑΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑC ΜΟ, which demonstrate the piece to be Parthian, appear; and, on the reverse, a *Victory*, done something after the Roman manner, tho' the workmanship is pretty rude, presents itself to our view, together with a legend in a language and

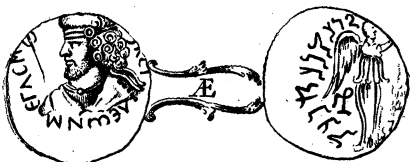
and character at this time unknown. The legend consists of ten complete elements, placed behind the *Victory* above-mentioned; besides which there is one in the field of the medal, being probably the initial letter of the name of the city where the coin was struck. The metal, tho' termed by me brass, discovers something of a composition similar to that of his Grace the Duke of Devonshire's medal of Vologeses III. as described by (1) Sig. Haym. This coin, of which I herewith transmit you a draught most accurately taken (*See* TAB. IV. *Fig.* 1.), having not yet, as I apprehend, been published; you will permit me now to offer a few cursory remarks upon it, drawn up in the shortest and most concise manner possible.

1. The Greek legend, had all of it appeared, would undoubtedly have been either ΒΑCΙΑΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑC ΜΟΝΝΗCΗC, or ΒΑCΙΑΕΥC ΒΑCΙΑΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑC ΜΟΝΝΗCΗC; of which I should chuse the former, notwithstanding it is such Parthian Greek, as the round of the medal seems not to have been capable of containing the latter. It will be, at first sight, observed, that this legend is different from those of the Parthian coins hitherto described; which are exhibited in the (2) genitive, not the nominative, case. The last two letters MO leave no room to doubt, tho' the O is not so extremely well preserved, that the piece was struck when Monneses sat upon the

(1) Nicol. Haym Roman. *Del. Tesor. Britan.* Vol. ii. p. 36, 37. In Londra, 1720.

(2) J. Foy Vaill. in *Asfacid. Imper.* Parisiis, 1728. *Numism. Antiqu. Colléct. a Thom. Pembroch. et Montis Gomer.* Com. P. 2. T. 76. Nicol. Haym Roman. ubi sup. p. 30—38.

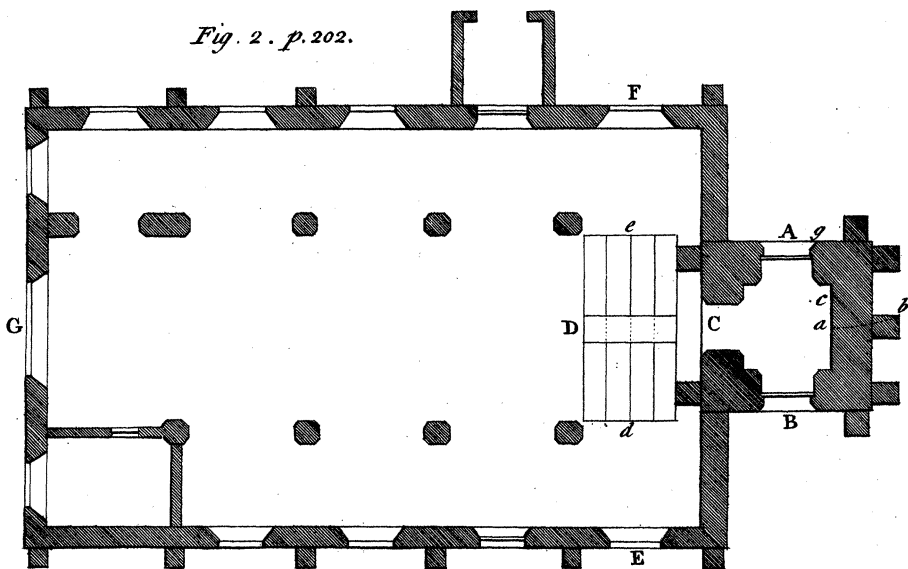
Fig. 1.



Num. Partib. apud Joannem Swinton, A.M. Oxoniens. R.S.S.

	Palm.	Heb
<i>Daletb</i>	ד	ד
<i>He</i>	ה	ה
<i>Mem</i>	מ	מ
<i>Nun</i>	נ	נ
<i>Schn</i>	ש	ש
<i>Pe</i>	פ	פ
<i>Alepb</i>	א	א

Fig. 2. p. 202.



10 0 10 20 30 40 50

Scale of Feet, 20 - 1 Inch -

Parthian throne. It is true, indeed, the first element of the prince's name is not so apparently a *Mu*; tho' it resembles that letter, even as preserved on this very medal, much more than any other of the Greek alphabet. It is however totally unlike the *Alpha* near it, as well as all the other forms of that element to be met with in Montfaucon (3), and bears not the least resemblance to *Beta* (4), particularly the *Beta* which ought to have been impressed on this piece; as most evidently appears from a particle of that letter, visible in its proper place. From whence we may infer, that the character I am considering must be *Mu*; as *Alpha*, *Beta*, and *Mu*, were the only initial letters, according to Dr. Vaillant (5), of the names of the Parthian kings reigning after the introduction of the *Omega* of the minuscular form, as it here occurs, upon the Parthian coins. But Monneses was the only one of those princes whose name began with *My*, and consequently the two last Greek elements on this medal are part of his name. The metal and size of this piece, as none belonging to the other Parthian monarchs seem to have been yet met with of the same form, which exactly agree with those of Monneses's (6) coin published by Dr. Vaillant, may likewise be urged, as an additional argument of no small weight, in support of my opinion.

(3) Montfaucon. *Palæograph. Græc.* p. 123, 124, 125. Parisiis, 1708.

(4) *Idem* ibid.

(5) J. Foy Vaill. *ubi sup.*

(6) J. Foy Vaill. *ubi sup.* p. 335, 341.

2. That the Greek and unknown legends on this medal are either of the same or a similar import, will be acknowledged by all versed in this kind of literature extremely probable. The Greek and Phœnician legends on the same (7) coins of Tyre and Sidon, as I have, upon examination, found, and shall hereafter more fully evince, clearly correspond. The Latin and Punic legends on Juba's medals, as has been by me formerly proved (8), very well agree. The sense (9) I have assigned the legend in unknown characters, exhibited by the reverse of my former Parthian coin, with, I flatter myself, some appearance of truth, sufficiently answers to the Greek one preserved by other medals of the same prince. We may therefore be permitted to suppose, that both the legends handed down to us by the coin before me related to Monneses, and conveyed the same, or at least extremely similar, ideas to the Parthians and the Greeks. Nothing can be more consonant to reason, tho' we must not directly assume this as a postulate, than such a supposition.

3. This notion will likewise receive a farther accession of strength from the characters of which the unknown legend is composed. The first of them so nearly approaches one of the forms of the Pal-

(7) Montfauc. ubi sup. p. 118, 119. Hadrian. Reland. *Palæstin. Illustrat.* Tom. ii. p. 1014, 1015, 1055. Trajecti Batavorum, 1714. I have a Latin dissertation in the press here, almost printed off, containing an explication of a considerable number of coins of Tyre and Sidon, with Phœnician legends upon them.

(8) *De Num. quibusd. Sam. et Phœn. &c. Dissert.* p. 53—56. Oxon. 1750.

(9) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. xlix. p. 593—607.

myrene *Pe*, as it appears in (10) Mr. Dawkins's alphabet, that we may without scruple ascribe to it the power of that letter. The second is so like the Palmyrene and the Chaldee *Daletb* (11), that it ought indubitably to pass for that element. The third differs something, tho' not greatly (12), from one of the forms of the Palmyrene *He*. The fifth, which likewise occupies the eighth place, is by no means remote from the figures of the (13) Palmyrene and Chaldee *Nun*. The sixth occurred in the third place before. With regard to the seventh, it seems to me pretty strongly to resemble some forms of the Palmyrene *Mem* (14), and even exactly to answer to that of the same letter in (15) one of the Palmyrene inscriptions preserved amongst those celebrated remains of antiquity commonly, tho' perhaps improperly, stiled *The Ruins of PERSEPOLIS*. The ninth is the *He* touched upon before. The tenth, which also succeeded the third, if the powers of the other elements have been rightly determined, must be *Schin*. Nor does this character, if we view it in a certain position, appear very remote from a rude form of that letter. This legend then, according to what is here advanced, as it now remains, consists of the words
 - - - - PADESHANE MONESH, PADESHAN

(10) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. xlvi. p. 693.

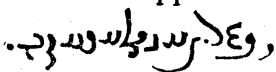
(11) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. xlvi. p. 693, 740.

(12) *Philosoph. Transact.* ubi sup.

(13) *Philosoph. Transact.* ibid.

(14) *Philosoph. Transact.* ubi sup. p. 693, 740.

(15) Chard. *Voyages en Perse, &c.* Tom. iii. p. 119. A Amsterdam, 1711. *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. xlix. p. *597, *598.

EMONESH, or (16) PADESHAN AMONESH, that is, MONESH, or AMONESH, ---- OF KINGS; the word PADISHAH, or rather PADESHAH, as it seems to have been written and pronounced by the (17) antient Persians, in the Pehlawian, Pehelawian, or Bastanian, that is, the old Persic, tongue, denoting (18) KING. That NI, or NE, was sometimes a masculine plural termination in the antient Persic, seems to appear from the word, or rather words,  BIR. ZEIVESHNI, LON-GÆVI, which occurs in Dr. Hyde (19). And that the vowels A and E were sometimes prefixed to the Persic proper names, in the remoter periods of time,

(16) That the plural termination of PADESHAH, or SHAH, which, according to Khojah Afdhalo'ddîn, denoted originally the same thing, was AN, or perhaps ANE, in the days of Ammianus Marcellinus, there is good reason to believe; the word SAANSAA, KING OF KINGS, having been then used by the Persians, and handed down to us by that author. The term ΣΑΑ, SAA, equivalent to the Persic SHAH, KING, likewise occurs in Agathias, a writer of the sixth century. Should my explication of the Parthian legend of the coin before me meet with the approbation of the learned, it will perhaps be granted me, that the plural of PADESHAH, or PADESHA, amongst the Parthians was PADESHAN, if not PADESHANE, in the second century after CHRIST. Hyd. *Hist. Rel. Vet. Pers.* p. 416. Khojah Afdhalo'ddîn, D'Herbel. *Biblioth. Orient.* p. 767. Hadr. Reland. *Dissert.* viii. de *Vet. Ling. Pers.* p. 221, 222. Ammian. Marcellin. Lib. xix. cap. 2. Agath. Lib. iv. p. 135, 136. Parisiis, 1660. Ezech. Spanhem. *De Præstant. et Us. Numism. Antiquor.* Tom. i. p. 463--466. Lond. 1706.

(17) Hyd. *Hist. Rel. Vet. Pers.* p. 79. Oxon. 1700.

(18) D'Herbel. *Biblioth. Orient.* p. 699, 767. Hyd. ubi sup. Hadr. Reland. *Dissert.* viii. de *Vet. Ling. Pers.* p. 147. Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1707.

(19) Hyd. ubi sup. p. 326.

is abundantly manifest, from the words SFITAMAN, ESFINTAMAN, or ESPINTAMAN, the (20) name of either the father or one of the ancestors of Zerâtusht; XERXES, (21) AXERXES, or AXERSES, and others of the same kind, that might, with equal facility, be produced. Whether therefore we read this legend - - - PADESHANE MONESH, PADESHAN EMONESH, or PADESHAN AMONESH, we cannot greatly err. As the coin was not so perfectly struck, part of the Greek legend is thereby apparently lost; from whence, and the evident want of a word there, we may conclude, that the Parthian legend, for Parthian by the explication here laid down it appears to be, on the correspondent part of the reverse, must have met with the same fate. What that Parthian term was, I cannot take upon me to say; but the whole legend was probably something like THE GREAT KING MONNESES, MONNESES THE KING OF KINGS, or MONNESES (22) THE GREAT KING OF KINGS; all which titles are intirely consonant to those assumed by the Parthian kings (23), and transmitted down to us on their other coins. The Persian, or Parthian, termination of the proper name MONNESES, and others that occur, was ESH. This may be inferred from the legend now before me, in conjunction with Scripture (24), and has

(20) Hyd. ubi sup. p. 18, 312.

(21) Matth. Hiller. *Onomast. Sacr.* p. 619. Hadr. Reland. ubi sup. p. 259—262.

(22) Nicol. Haym Roman. ubi sup. p. 33.

(23) J. Foy Vaill. & Nicol. Haym Roman. ubi sup. & alib.

(24) *Esth.* c. x. v. 1.

been remarked by some good authors (25). That the Greeks also expressed the *Schin* by their *Sigma*, and superadded another termination to such words, is sufficiently manifest from the Persian, or Parthian, ARSHAK (26), which was converted into ARSACES by the Greek writers. I must farther observe, that, according to Herodotus (27), the antient letters of the Persians were those used by the Assyrians; which I take to have been the same with the elements that prevailed amongst the Syrians, and formed the alphabet of the Palmyrenes. Nay, we may collect from (28) Epiphanius, that a considerable part of the Persians used the Palmyrene characters as late as the decline of the fourth century after CHRIST. All which being maturely weighed, I cannot forbear thinking the interpretation of the Parthian legend here laid down in a good degree probable. I am far however from insisting upon the truth of it. I shall only beg to be indulged the liberty of proposing it to the consideration of our most illustrious Society, and leave the fate of it intirely to the decision of so very eminent a part of the learned world.

4. But however my explication of the Parthian legend may be received, I believe it will scarce be denied, that the coin was struck in the reign of Monnesés, one of the Parthian kings; this point

(25) Scalig. *Prolegom. in Lib. de Emend. Temp.* p. 41. Col. Allobrog. 1629. & *Can. Isag.* f. 317. Matth. Hiller. ubi sup. p. 619, 620.

(26) Moses Chorenens. *Hist. Armen.* Lib. ii. iii. Theophil. Sigefer. Bayer. *Hist. Osrhoen. &c.* p. 97. Petropoli, 1734.

(27) Herodot. Lib. iv. c. 87.

(28) Epiphani. *Adv. Hær.* Lib. ii. Tom. ii. p. 629. Paris. 1622.

having been so clearly evinced, by the reasons above alledged. It may not be improper here to remark, that the republic of letters has been obliged with the publication of two of this prince's medals; the first of which was (29) coined in the year of the Parthian æra 422, and the other in 425 (30). Neither of them however exhibits the *Victory* impressed on the reverse of mine. That symbol, adopted by the Parthians in imitation of the Roman manner, must undoubtedly have alluded to some victory, or at least some remarkable advantage, gained by the Parthian forces over the Romans, a little before the piece was struck. What that advantage was, when and where obtained, and whether history conspires with the medal, in order to settle this point, I am next to inquire.

5. Monneses, if Dr. Vaillant (31) may be credited, ascended the Parthian throne in the year of the Arfacidæ 422, nearly coincident with the 166th of CHRIST, when M. Aurelius and L. Verus presided over the Roman world. But so far were the Parthians at that time from gaining any victories over the Romans, that they were every where worsted by them, and put to the rout. A Roman army, under the command of Avidius Cassius, had penetrated into Mesopotamia and Assyria, ravaged those provinces, laid Seleucia in ashes, taken Ctesiphon, and levelled the royal palace there with the ground,

(29) J. Foy Vaill. ubi sup. p. 339.

(30) Maffei, in *Gall. Antiqu. Quæd. Select. Epist.* 22. p. 106. Parisiis, 1733.

(31) J. Foy Vaill. ubi sup. p. 334, 335, 336, 339.

according

according to Dio (32), the preceding year. Nay, it appears both from (33) Capitolinus and the Roman (34) coins, that M. Aurelius and L. Verus triumphed over the Parthians, the very year after Monneses, as (35) Dr. Vaillant will have it, came to the crown. All which that celebrated antiquary acknowledges to be true; and adds, that Monneses concluded an infamous peace with the Romans, ceding to them the whole province of Mesopotamia, for which he was soon after deposed by his subjects. Here then we can discover not the faintest traces of a reason for the appearance of a *Victory* upon the medals of this prince. Nor does any thing like a reason for such an appearance, in antient history, occur, before the 950th year of Rome, corresponding with the 197th of CHRIST; when the Parthians, animated by the civil dissensions, which reigned amongst the Romans, Albinus and Severus then fiercely contending for the empire, entered Mesopotamia with a powerful army (36), and reduced to their obedience most of the cities of that

(32) Dio, Lib. lxxi. p. 802. *Imperator. Romanor. Numism. &c. Stud. & Cur.* Francisc. Mediobarb. Birag. p. 218. J. Foy Vaill. *Can. Chronologic. Reg. Parthor.* p. 41.

(33) Jul. Capitolin. in *M. Antonin. Philos. et in Ver.*

(34) *Imperator. Romanor. Numism. &c. Stud. & Cur.* Francisc. Mediobarb. Birag. S. R. I. Com. &c. p. 220. Mediolani, 1683.

(35) J. Foy Vaill. ubi sup. & in *Arsacid. Imper.* p. 338.

(36) Dio, Lib. lxxv. p. 853. J. Foy Vaill. in *Arsacid. Imper.* p. 356. & in *Can. Chronologic.* p. 42. Ludovic. Du Four de Longuerue, Ab. S. Joan. de Jardo ad Melod. et Sept. Font. in *Therasc. Annal. Arfacidar.* p. 51. Argentorati, 1732. Erasim. Froelich, S. J. S. in *Dub. de Minnisar. Aliorumque Armen. Reg. Num. et Arfacidar. Epoch. nuper vulgat.* p. 66. Viennæ Austriæ, 1754.

province.

province. Now if, with F. Corfini (37), we admit the commencement of the Parthian æra to have happened in the 525th year of Rome; the 425th or 426th year of the former and the 950th of the latter of those æra's, wherein the Parthians undertook the Mesopotamian expedition, will nearly coincide. But it may be proved from a medal of Monneses, described by the (38) Marquis Scipio Maffei, in opposition to (39) Dr. Vaillant, that this prince was not dethroned in the year of the Arsacidæ 423, but had two years afterwards the management and direction of the Parthian affairs: wherefore, notwithstanding what has been advanced to the contrary by that antiquary, he might still have sat one or two years longer upon the Parthian throne. This may likewise be inferred from Dio, who mentions Vologeses as presiding over the Parthians, not in 198, but in 199, about two years after their irruption into Mesopotamia. All which being with proper attention considered, it will appear extremely probable, that the medal I have been endeavouring to explain was coined either in the 425th or 426th year of the Parthian æra, that is, the 197th of CHRIST; that the authority of (40) Arrian, (41) Justin, and (42) Athenæus, on which

(37) Edv. Corfin. Cl. Reg. Scholar. Piar. in Acad. Pisan. Humanior. Litterar. Profess. *De Minnisar. Aliorumq; Armen. Reg. Num. et Arsacid. Epoch. Dissertat.* p. 13—29. Liburni, 1754.

(38) Maff. in *Gall. Antiqu. Epist.* 22. p. 106.

(39) J. Foy Vaill. ubi sup. p. 338.

(40) Arrian. in *Parthic.* apud Photium, *Cod.* 58. & apud Syncell. in *Chronograph.* p. 226.

(41) Just. Lib. xli. c. 4.

(42) Athen. *Deipnosoph.* Lib. iv. c. 13.

F. Corfini principally founds his notion, may be intirely depended upon; and, in fine, that the arguments he makes use of on this occasion, to (43) evince the truth of his scheme, however they may be opposed by F. Frœlich, and the medal before me mutually strengthen and support one another.

6. I must not forget to remark, that F. Corfini thinks, without a proper foundation, that the piece of Monneses published by Dr. Vaillant may be considered either as a Parthian or (44) an Armenian coin. This, I say, he takes, without a proper foundation, to be the case. For the medals of the Armenian kings, such as that he has obliged the learned world with a draught of, and a most excellent dissertation upon, discover a taste far different from that which is exhibited by Dr. Vaillant's coin. The air of the face, the curls into which the hair is formed, and in fine every thing else visible upon the former, except the symbols on the reverses, bear little resemblance to what is presented to our view by the latter. As for the titles, impressed on these medals, they are far from being of the same kind; the Armenian princes in this particular approaching nearer the successors of Seleucus (45), and contenting themselves with more plain and simple titles than that lofty one affected by Monneses, according to Dr. Vaillant, in common with the other Parthian kings. To which I may add, that my coin sets this point beyond dispute, by the Parthian characters it has so apparently preserved; all the Armenian medals I have hitherto met with,

(43) Corfin. ubi sup.

(44) Corfin. ubi sup. p. 2.

(45) Erasim. Froel. ubi sup. p. 72.

about three or four in number, as well as that of Baron Stofch (46), which F. Corfini has so learnedly explained, having only Greek legends upon them. What therefore he has advanced, on this head, must be considered as not altogether so consonant to truth; especially, as he seems to have offered nothing of any great weight in support of his opinion.

7. Before I dismiss the present subject, I must beg leave to take notice of the Parthian character on the field of my medal, which is not very unlike the Chaldee (47) or Palmyrene *Aleph*, tho' of something a more complex form. Should this be allowed, that character may be considered as the initial letter of ARSACIA, the name of a city subject to the Parthians, placed by (48) Ptolemy in Media; where, according to (49) Dr. Vaillant, many of the Parthian medals were coined. That city is however believed by some to have been seated on the spot occupied at this time by Casbin, or rather Kazwîn (50), one of the principal towns of the Belâd Al Jebâl, or mountainous part of the Persian Irâk; for a particular account of which place, the curious may have recourse to Golius, and the eastern geographers. As I have already far exceeded the limits proposed to myself, when I began this letter, I shall not now touch upon any other observations relative to the

(46) Corfin. in *Ded. Nob. Vir.* Phil. Venut. p. 5.

(47) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. xlvi. p. 693, 740.

(48) Ptol. *Tab. Urb. Insign.* p. 39. Ed. Hudf. Oxon. 1712.

(49) J. Foy Vaill. in *Arsacid. Imper.* pass.

(50) Hamdalla Ism. Abu'lfed. Mohammed Al Firauzabad. Nâsir Al Tûfi, Ulugh Beik, &c. Golii not. ad Alfragan. p. 200

medal before me, which is the only one I have hitherto met with carrying a Greek and a Parthian legend upon it; but only assure you that I am, with the most perfect regard,

S I R,

Your most obliged,

and most obedient Servant,

Christ-Church,
Oxon. Nov. 29th,
1756.

John Swinton.

XXIII. *An Account of a Red Coral from the East-Indies, of a very singular Kind: In a Letter from Mr. John Ellis, F. R. S. to Mr. Peter Collinson, F. R. S.*

Dear Sir,

Read Mar. 24, 1757. **I** Promised you, in my letter of the 7th of February 1754, published in our Transactions, Vol. xlviii. p. 507. that I would, when I had an opportunity, endeavour to illustrate the tubular structure of the common red coral of the Mediterranean sea, and of some of the keratophyta; which two kinds, tho' evidently of as different natures as stone and horn, yet are, from late observation, found to be fashioned, or raised up into those beautiful forms, by animals of the same class.

This I shall attempt to do, by comparing them with bodies of a similar kind, but of a less compact texture: for which reason I formerly referred you, in the above-mentioned letter, to a figure, which I have given of the herring-bone-coralline, with its animals