

Received November 14, 1768.

XL. *Observations on an inedited Coin, adorned with two Punic Characters on the Reverse. In a Letter to Mathew Maty, M. D. Sec. R. S. from the Rev. John Swinton, B. D. F. R. S. Custos Archivorum of the University of Oxford, Member of the Academy degli Apatisti at Florence, and of the Etruscan Academy of Cortona in Tuscany.*

Good Sir,

Read Dec. 24,
1768. **A**BOUT three months since, a friend of mine (see TAB. XII. n. 5.) brought me a small brass medal, exhibiting on one side the head of a woman, decked with ears of corn; and on the other a horse standing still, and looking behind him, or towards his tail, one of the usual symbols on the reverses of such Punic coins. The medal is pretty well preserved, and adorned with two Punic characters; one of which is placed near the horse's breast, and the other under his belly. Neither of them seems to have suffered much, if at all, from the injuries of time.

These two Punic letters may, as I apprehend, be safely pronounced *Aleph* and *Koph*, and must be considered as forming the first part of the name of

VOL. LVIII.

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some noted city, either in Sicily or Africa. The learned, at least that part of them the most conversant in the branch of literature I am now upon, have frequently, if not generally, attributed such pieces as that before me to the island of Sicily. But M. l'Abbé Barthelemy, who differs from all other antiquaries in many of his notions, seems to reprehend me for adopting such a supposition; though he has himself ascribed several Punic coins, embellished with similar characters, to Sicilian towns. But it matters not where such pieces as this, with Punic characters upon them, first appeared, provided they were struck in places either dependent upon or in alliance with the Carthaginians. And that they were struck in places either dependent upon or in alliance with the Carthaginians, M. l'Abbé will not, I presume, deny; if he should, the symbols themselves, in conjunction with the characters preserved on these coins, would render this point sufficiently clear.

With regard to the coin I am now considering, as I cannot meet with any antient noted city of Africa, that had a mint erected in it, and a name beginning with the letters this piece exhibits; I cannot prevail upon myself, at least for the present, to attribute it to any town in that part of the world. I should rather think it might have belonged to Agrigentum, a very celebrated antient city of Sicily, where money was coined, when that part of the island in which it was seated either appertained to the Carthaginians, was in alliance with that people, or had some commercial connections with them. The most antient part of Agrigentum was denominated

minated ΑΚΡΑ, or ΑCRA, as we learn from the authors cited by (1) Bochart; and that the same name was used by the Carthaginians, it is by no means unreasonable to suppose. Perhaps the later Greek name ΑΚΡΑΓΑΣ, or some other appellation similar to it, might also have been in vogue amongst them. In either of which cases, the Punic elements *Aleph*, *Koph*, would very well answer to the Greek letters *Alpha*, *Kappa*; as the latter of those letters is well known not seldom to have been equivalent to the (2) Phœnician, and consequently the Punic, *Koph*.

This seems still farther to appear from the draught of a medal of Agrigentum, published by (3) Paruta, with those two characters, and those two only, upon it. As the *Alpha* and *Kappa* there may, with great reason, be deemed equipollent to the two Punic elements on the coin here described; such an equipollence, or rather coincidence, of characters will be looked upon as an additional proof of the truth, or, at least, the probability, of the notion I would now recommend to the consideration of the learned world.

It must be here remarked, that under the chin of the female head a globule presents itself to our view; which may be considered as an uncial mark, denoting the weight or value of the piece. Such globules as this (4) not infrequently occur on the

(1) Boch. *Chan. Lib. I. c. xxix. p. 610, 611. Francofurti ad Moenum, 1681.*

(2) *Philosoph. Transact. Vol. LIV. p. *138, *139.*

(3) Fil. Parut. *La Sicil. Num. in Num. di Gergent. n. 9.*

(4) Honor. Arigon. *Numism. quæd. cujuscunq; form. & metal. &c. in Antiq. Urb. & Populor. Numism. cum not. numeral.*

Etruscan, Greek, and Roman coins; but I remember not to have met with any author who has observed, that they appear sometimes on the Punic. I have another Carthaginian medal (see TAB. XII. n. 6.), with such a globule on the reverse; from whence we may conclude, that this uncial mark was used, on certain occasions, on both sides of the Punic coins. That the globule exhibited by the piece before me may be supposed an uncial mark, seems apparent, not only from the size of the medal itself, but likewise from the difficulty of accounting for it on any other supposition. If what is here advanced should meet with the approbation of the learned, it will be a farther proof that the coin was struck in Sicily; in which island, (5) and it's neighbourhood, many such antient pieces first appeared. That this, however, was really the case, I must by no means take upon me positively to affirm.

Tarvisii, 1741. Fil. Parut. ubi sup. pass. Anton. Francisc. Gor. *Mus. Etrusc.* p. 419—431. Tab. CXCVI. CXCVII. alique scriptor. plur.

(5) *Iidem* *ibid.* Many antient pieces, struck in Sicily, Magna Græcia, Etruria, &c. are adorned either with one or more of these globules; which are, with great reason, taken for uncial marks by the learned. The coins of Agrigentum, in particular, frequently exhibit such marks. One of the medals of that city has been published, by Paruta, with a single globule upon it, extremely similar to that handed down to us by the Punic medal considered here. Some of the globules on the Sicilian pieces, published by Paruta, are exceeding small; and, in this respect, greatly resemble that preserved by the Punic coin I have been endeavouring to explain. Fil. Parut. *De Sicil. Num.* in *Num. di Gergent. di Drag. Fium. & alib.*

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But to whatever town or country my medal originally appertained, it undoubtedly evinces the character I formerly took for *Koph* not to be *Aleph*, as some have supposed it to be, but in reality to be endowed with the power of *Koph*; though it has been ranked amongst the (6) forms of *Aleph*, in my Siculo-Punic alphabet, by mistake. As both those elements are not only visible, but tolerably well preserved, and as it were placed in contrast, on this coin, the truth of the point in question will the more clearly appear. I shall only beg leave to add, that if the piece was struck at Agrigentum, as I am inclined to believe it was, it must have been of a pretty early date, as the Carthaginians seem to have had no particular connections with that city for at least a century before the destruction of their republick; and that I am, with great consideration and esteem,

Good Sir,

Your very faithful,

and most obedient,

humble servant,

Christ Church, Oxon.
Nov. 12, 1768.

John Swinton.

(6) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. LIV. Tab. xxiv. p. 409.