

XXXIII. *Explication of a most remarkable Monogram on the Reverse of a very antient Quinarius, never before published or explained. In a Letter to M. 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 Apatifti at Florence, and of the Etrulcan Academy of Cortona in Tuscany.*

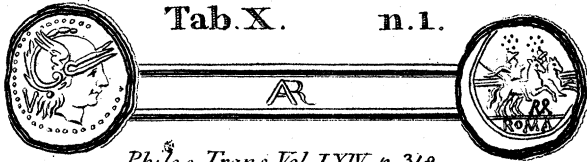
DEAR SIR,

I.

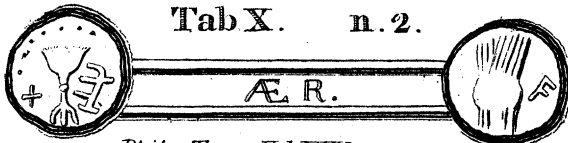
Redde, Nov. 11, 1773. **H**AVING given a draught and short account of a very antient **QUINARIUS**, with a most remarkable and uncommon monogram on the reverse, which the Royal Society did me the honour to publish in a former volume of the *Philosophical Transactions* (1), I shall now beg leave to resume the subject; and, in order the more fully to evince what was there advanced, submit a farther

(1) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. LXII. Tab. II. n. 3. p. 61, and 64, note \*.

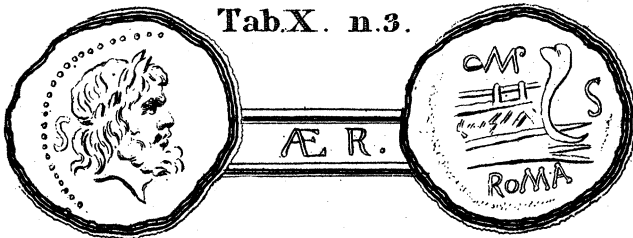
and



*Philos. Trans. Vol. LXIV. p. 318.*



*Philos. Trans. Vol. LXIV. p. 325.*



*Philos. Trans. Vol. LXIV. p. 326, 327.*

and more particular account of this curious piece to the consideration of that most respectable body. And this I am the more inclined to do, as an explication of the monogram here mentioned may not improbably enable us to explain a legend on the reverses of other antient (2) Roman coins, which has hitherto been deemed by some learned men almost, if not altogether, inexplicable.

## II.

The piece before me is a very antient, or rather an original, QUINARIUS, extremely well preserved. It has on one side a female head in an helmet, with the letter v behind, standing for FIVE, the number of asses it contains; and on the reverse *Castor* and *Pollux*, or, according to Sig. OLIVIERI, two *Castors*, on horseback, with seven stars over each of their helmets, or caps. In the exergue we discover the word ROMA, formed of very antient characters; and under the belly of one of the horses the monogram, which distinguishes this quinarius from all the other similar pieces that ever fell under my view or observation. Nor have I ever met with it in any author I had occasion to consult, or peruse. To me therefore it cannot but appear in the light of an inedited coin.

## III.

The Romans first coined silver money, according to (3) Pliny, with whom (4) Livy, in this point,

(2) Joan. Baptist. Biancon. *de antiq. litt. Hebræor. et Græcor. Libel.* p. 74, 75. Bononiæ, 1748.

(3) Plin. *Nat. Hist.* Lib. xxxiii. cap. 3.

(4) Liv. *Epit.* Lib. xv.

agrees, in the 485th year of the city. Some of the earliest pieces, of which several still remain in the cabinets of the curious and the great, exhibited a female galeated head on one side, as does the quinarius I am considering; and on the reverse (5) *Castor* and *Pollux*, or, as Sig. OLIVIERI calls them, \* two *Castors*, as both these figures are horsemen, such as clearly and distinctly appear upon my coin. Wherefore, as the letters forming the word ROMA, in the exergue, are antique enough, at least, for the time when silver was first coined at Rome, or five years before the (6) commencement of the first Punic war, we may fairly suppose my QUINARIUS to be either coeval with, or, as I rather imagine, a little anterior to the commencement of that war.

## IV.

The monogram on the reverse of this quinarius, so extremely remarkable for the number of letters it contains, we shall find, upon a close and attentive examination, to exhibit the word ROMANORO, the masculine genitive case plural of ROMANVS, in the days of C. DULIUS and L. SCIPIO, the son of BARBATUS, towards the close of the fifth century of Rome; some time after the completion of which, the Romans converted the (7) last syllable RO into

(5) P. Joubert, *Science des Medaill.* c. 5. Annib. degli Abati Oliver. in *Sag. di Dissertaz. Academic. &c. di Corton.* Tom. IV. p. 134. In Roma, 1743.

\* Castor and Pollux, or the Dioscuri, Διόσκουροι, are sometimes both denominated Castor, as we learn from Pliny and Arnobius, not to mention other antient authors of good repute. Plin. *Nat. Hist.* Lib. X. c. 43. Arnob. *Contra Gent.* Lib. IV.

(6) Plin. ubi sup.

(7) Joan. Bapt. Biancon. ubi sup.

RVM. But to analyse this extraordinary complex character a little more particularly, the first part of it perfectly answers to the word ROMA, as represented by \* a monogram on several coins of the (8) CALPURNIAN family; and the latter part of it is evidently formed of the letters NORO, the last of which is apparently included in the head or top of the R. As the masculine plural termination of the genitive case was RO, instead of RVM, in the year of Rome (9) 494, when the inscription mentioning L. SCIPIO'S conquest of CORSICA, and reduction of ALERIA, seems to have first appeared; it is highly probable, that the piece in question was either coeval with, or a little anterior to, that year. The inscription is as follows :

HONC. OINO. PLOIRVME. CONSENTIONT. R.  
 DVONORO. OPTVMO. FVISE. VIRO.  
 LVCIOM. SCIPIONE. FILIOS. BARBATI.  
 CONSOL. CENSOR. AIDILIS. HIC. FVET.  
 HIC. CEPIT. CORSICA. ALERIAQVE. VRBE.  
 DEDET. TEMPESTATEBVS. AIDE. MERETO.

\* M. HAVERCAMP calls this curious character the monogram of Rome, meaning the word ROMA, which it very plainly exhibits; and we may, with as much reason, denominate the extraordinary ligature on the reverse of my quinarius the monogram of the Romans, or the complex character that contains all the letters forming the word ROMANORO in it. Sig. Havercamp. ubi supra, p. 68.

(8) Morel. Num. Fam. Calpurn. Tab. IV. num. 16. et Tab. V. Sig. Havercamp. *Comment.* p. 68. Amstelodami, 1734.

(9) Joan. Nic. Func. *De Puerit. Ling. Lat.* cap. v. p. 133, 134. Marburgi Cattorum, 1720.

*Hunc unum plurimi consentiunt Romæ,  
 Bonorum optimum fuisse virum,  
 Lucium Scipionem. Filius Barbatî,  
 Consul, Censor, Ædilis, hic fuit.  
 Hic cepit Corsicam, Aleriamque Urbem.  
 Dedit Tempestatibus ædem merito.*

For a farther account of which very curious inscription, recourse may be had to the authors here referred to, as well as others who have expatiated very largely upon it (10).

## V.

From what has been here laid down it seems highly probable, that my quinarius first appeared about the year of Rome 494, or rather that its first appearance was a little anterior to that year. Which if we admit, it will follow, that the Romans borrowed the monogrammatic way of writing rather from the ETRUSCANS than the GREEKS, as I asserted in (11) one of my former papers; with the first of which nations they were perfectly well acquainted,

(10) Though the events mentioned by this inscription are a year later than those glorious exploits recorded by the Duilian, yet the rudeness of the language announces the former to be much superior to the latter in point of antiquity. This, I doubt not, will be allowed by every sober critic, who examines the language of both with proper attention. Jacob. Sirmund. Hieronym. Aleand. apud Joh. Nic. Func. ubi sup. ut et ipse Joh. Nic. Func. ibid. Vid. etiam Joh. Georg. Græv. Jacob. Facciolat. Patavin. Joh. Georg. Walch. aliosque philolog. pass.

(11) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. LXII. Tab. II 2. 3. p. 61. 64. not. \*.

even

even from the very beginning of their state; whereas they seem to have had little or no intercourse with the other, when the piece in question was coined. It remains, therefore, that what I advanced, (12) in the paper here referred to, is clearly and indubitably true.

## VI.

From the explication of the monogram, on the reverse of the coin in question, we may perhaps discover the interpretation of the word ROMANO, on certain ancient coins, which has hitherto not a little embarrassed the learned. For as it appears from my quinarius, that the Romans impressed the word ROMANORO, for ROMANORVM, as well as ROMA, on some of their most ancient (13) coins; we may either, with Sig. BIANCONI (14), take NO in ROMANO for an earlier termination of the masculine genitive case plural, or make it to stand for ROMANORO, or ROMANORVM, and consequently look upon it as a mutilated gentile name. The latter of these opinions,

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

(13) The ancient coins of cities not seldom exhibit the gentile names, or those of the citizens, instead of the names of the places themselves; such names being frequently found in the genitive case plural, as here, on the reverses of those coins. Of this ΣΜΥΡΝΑΙΩΝ, ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΕΩΝ, SMYRNAEORVM, THESSALONICENSIVM, PAISTANO, for PAISTANORVM, SVESANO, for SVESANORVM, as here, are sufficient proofs, to omit many other similar instances that occur, and might, with equal facility, be produced. Vid. Joan. Vaillant. *Num. Imperat. Augustar. Cæsar. &c.* Amstelodami, 1700. Joan. Bapt. Biancon. ubi sup. alioque quam plurim. scriptor. pass.

(14) Joan. Bapt. Biancon. ubi sup.

however strongly opposed by the learned author above-mentioned, seems to me to be the most eligible of the two.

## VII.

It has already been remarked, in a former paper, that the old ETRUSCANS used monograms in their writing, on certain (15) occasions. To what was there observed I would beg leave here to add, in corroboration of that remark, that this has been likewise asserted by the famous Sig. GIOVANNI BATTISTA PASSERI (16), one of the greatest Etruscan antiquaries of the present age; and it is certain, that such ligatures, or complex characters, were actually made use of by the earlier Etruscans, in some of their inscriptions, that have even to this day escaped the ravages of time. This has been irrefragably proved by the authors of the *Universal History* (17), who have favoured the republic of letters with three or four of those complex characters, deduced from Etruscan monuments of undoubted integrity and authenticity, dug up in Tuscany, or the antient Proper Etruria. To these we have correspondent types here in OXFORD, which may perhaps be of some service hereafter to the learned world.

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

(16) Joan. Bapt. Passer. apud Anton. Francisc. Gor. in *Mus. Etrusc.* Vol. III. p. 142. Florentiæ, 1743.

(17) *Univ. Hist.* Vol. XVI. p. 45. Lond. 1748.

## VIII.



## VIII.

With regard to monograms in general, it may not be improper to remark, that they were known and used in several parts of the east, from pretty remote antiquity. They occur on some of the Hebrew (18), or Samaritan, and Phœnician coins, as well as on the Greek and Roman. I have an exceeding curious HEBREW, or SAMARITAN, coin, coeval with Simon the Just, prince and high priest of the Jews, with a monogram upon it; of which, as it has never yet been communicated to the learned world, and is anterior to all those struck by that prince hitherto published, I may perhaps send you a more distinct and particular account, in some future paper. That the PHOENICIANS were not unacquainted with monograms, has been admitted by the learned and ingenious M. PELLERIN (19), and is evinced by one or two of the Phœnician inscriptions on the stones found in the (20) ruins of CITIUM. That the ARABS likewise antiently used them, on certain occasions, we learn from (21) the ligatures of the KUFIC letters, and the inscriptions still remaining on several of the earlier ARABIC coins. Nay, they are not disused amongst the modern Arabs, in their common writing, even at

(18) Peller. Let. I. *Sur diverses Medailles*, p. 51—54. A Francfort, 1770.

(19) *Idem* *ibid.*

(20) Poc. *Descript. of the East*, Vol. II. Par. I. Tab. XXXIII. n. 12, 18, 31. p. 213. Lond. 1745.

(21) Vid. *Monarch. Asiatico-Saracen. Stat. &c. illustrat.* à M. Georg. Jacob. Kehr, Sleusinga-Franc. Oriental. Tab. I. et II. p. 1. et alib. Lipsiæ, 1724.

this very day. As for the GREEKS, nothing is more common than ligatures, or monograms, on their coins; some of which F. FRÖELICH has (22) illustrated, and explained. I say, "*some of which* F. Froelich has "illustrated, and explained," as many of them have been intirely unnoticed by him. That the PALMYRENES also had several such ligatures, or complex characters, I have many years since incontestably (23) proved. But for farther satisfaction on this head, recourse may be had to the paper here referred to.

## IX.

With respect to the ROMANS, nothing is more certain than that combinations of two, three, and even four elements, formed into one character, not seldom occur on their coins. More extensive or complex ligatures than the monograms of four letters on their antient medals very rarely appear. I have, however, an inedited *semiffis* of the POMPEIAN family, with the head of SATURN, and behind it the letter s, the mark of the semiffis, on one side; and the prow of a ship, over which a monogram composed of the five letters, Q, P, O, M, P, presents itself to our view. Dr. VAILLANT (24) attributes two similar semiffes, with a monogram, or concatenation of the five letters L, P, O, M, P, upon the re-

(22) Erasim. Frœl. *Annal. Compend. Reg. et Rer. Syr.* Tab. XX. p. 158. Viennæ, 1754.

(23) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. XLVIII. Par. II. p. 693. Lond. 1755.

(24) Jo. Vaill. in num. *Fam. Pompei.* p. 275, 276. Amstelodami, 1703.

verse, to the POMPONIAN family, and asserts them to have been struck in the 533d, or 534th year of Rome. M. HAVERCAMP (25) seems inclined to adopt the same sentiments. But neither the size, weight, fabric, nor forms of the letters of mine will permit us to ascribe it to the Pomponian family, and assign it so early a date; but determine strongly in favour of the Pompeian, and, in conjunction with what has been advanced by HAVERCAMP (26), evince it to have been struck by QUINTUS POMPEIUS, the grandson of Q. POMPEIUS RUFUS and SULLA, a little after the (27) middle of the seventh century of Rome. I could expatiate more largely upon this very valuable piece, which is tolerably well preserved, did not the intended brevity of this paper restrain me, and oblige me now to conclude; which I shall therefore beg leave to do, with assuring you that I remain,

S I R,

Your most humble,

and most obedient servant,

Christ-Church, Oxon.

Oct. 18, 1773.

JOHN SWINTON.

(25) Sig. Haverc. *Comment.* p. 340. Amstelodami, 1734.

(26) Idem *ibid.* p. 342.

(27) Sig. Havercamp. *ubi sup.* p. 342.