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A Biographical Dictionary

Containing An Historical Account Of All The Engravers, From The Earliest Period Of The Art Of Engraving To The Present Time; And A Short List Of Their Most Esteemed Works. ... To Which Is Prefixed, an Essay On The Rise And Progress Of The Art Of Engraving, Both On Copper And On Wood. ...

Strutt, Joseph

London, 1785

An Essay on the Art of Engraving with a full Account of its Origin and Progress.

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AN
E S S A Y
ON THE
ART OF ENGRAVING,
WITH A FULL ACCOUNT
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ORIGIN AND PROGRESS.

CHAPTER I.

The Excellency of the Art of Engraving; the Qualifications requisite for an Engraver; the different Modes of Engraving; and some Observations concerning the Criticisms upon Prints.

SECT. I. **T**HE improvement of the Arts has ever been considered as an object of great importance, by the enlightened part of mankind; and there is no nation in the world, where the art of engraving is held in higher esteem, or more generously encouraged, than in England. Hence it is, that Great Britain, at this time, abounds with artists, equal in number, and superior in abilities, to those of any other country. A view then of the rise and progress of an art, of such national consequence, naturally becomes interesting, not only to the engravers themselves, but to all who profess the love of it. And if England can lay no claim to the invention of engraving, we shall prove at least hereafter, that her pretensions to the early exercise of it are as justly founded, as those of the Italians or the Germans.

With respect to the use and excellency of the art of engraving, I beg leave to subjoin the following observations. They were drawn up by a gentleman of great taste, and are the result of a critical examination of the works of the greatest masters; and will, I trust, be still more acceptable to the public, as they are not the remarks of an engraver, but of a gentleman; no otherways interested in the cause, than as a man of science, and a lover of the arts.

“Of all the imitative arts, painting itself not excepted, engraving is the most applicable to general use, and the most resorted to from the necessities of mankind. From its earliest infancy, it has been called in, as an assistant in almost every branch of knowledge; and has, in a very high degree, facilitated the means of communicating our ideas, by representing to the sight whatever is capable of visible imitation; and thereby preventing that circumlocution, which would ill explain, in the end, what is immediately conceived from the actual representation of the object.”

“From the facility of being multiplied, prints have derived an advantage over paintings, by no means inconsiderable. They are found to be more durable; which may,
VOL. I. B “however,



“ however, in some degree, be attributed to the different methods in which they are preserved. Many of the best paintings of the early masters have generally had the misfortune to be either painted on walls, or deposited in large and unfrequented, and consequently damp and destructive buildings; whilst a print, passing, at distant intervals, from the *porte feuille* of one collector to that of another, is preserved without any great exertion of its owner: And hence it happens, that whilst the pictures of Raphael have mouldered from their walls, or deserted their canvases, the prints of his friend and contemporary, Mark Antonio Raimondi, continue in full perfection to this day, and give us a lively idea of the beauties of those paintings, which, without their assistance, had been lost to us for ever; or, at least, could have been only known to us, like those of Zeuxis and Apelles, by the descriptions which former writers on these subjects have left us.

“ Perhaps there are no representations, which interest so strongly the curiosity of mankind as portraits. A high degree of pleasure, of which almost every person is susceptible, is experienced from contemplating the looks and countenances of those men, who, by their genius or their virtues, have entitled themselves to the admiration and esteem of future ages. It is only in consequence of the facility, with which prints are multiplied from the same engraving, that this laudable appetite is so frequently gratified. Whilst the original portrait is limited to the wall of a private chamber, or adorns some distant part of the world, a correct transcript of it, exhibiting the same features, and the same character, gives to the public at large the full representation of the object of their veneration or esteem.

“ In this country, where the genuine paintings of the ancient masters are extremely scarce, we are much indebted to prints for the truth of our ideas, respecting the merits of such masters. And this is no bad criterion, especially when the painter, as is frequently the case, has left engravings or etchings of his own. With respect to the principal excellencies of a picture, a print is equally estimable with a painting. We have there every perfection of design, composition, and drawing; and the outline is marked with a degree of precision, which frequently excels the picture; so that where the merit of the master consists more particularly in the knowledge of these primary branches of the art, his prints may be better than his paintings; as was notoriously the case with Peter Testa, who, possessed of every excellence of a painter, except a knowledge in the art of colouring, acquired that reputation by his etchings, which his paintings never could have procured him.

“ A knowledge of the style and manner of the different masters is only to be obtained by a frequent inspection, and comparison of their works. If we were to judge of Raphael himself from some of his pictures, we should be disposed to refuse our assent to that praise, which he has now for so many centuries enjoyed. Every master has at times painted below his usual standard, and consequently is not to be judged of by a single picture; and where is the collection, that affords sufficient specimens of any of the elder masters, to enable a person to become a complete judge of their merits?---Can we from a few pictures form an adequate idea of the invention and imagination of a painter,---of the inexhaustible variety of form and feature, which is the true characteristic of superior excellence? But let us look into a collection of prints after any eminent artist, engraved either by himself or others, and we shall then have an opportunity of judging of his merits, in the first and indispensable qualifications of a painter. If we find grandeur of design, united with elegant composition and accurate drawing, we have the strongest testimonies of superior abilities; and from a general comparison and accurate observation of a number of such prints, we may venture to form to ourselves a decisive opinion, respecting the merit of such masters. On examining the prints after Raphael, we find, that his first manner was harsh, and Gothic; in short, a transcript of his master Perugino; but that from some fortunate circumstance, he afterwards adopted that sublime and graceful manner, which he ever retained.

“ Wherever a painter has himself handled the graver, his prints are most generally impressed with the same character as his paintings; and are therefore likely to give us a very accurate idea of his style. The prints of Albert Durer, Rembrandt, and Salvator

vator

“vator Rosa, are all such exact counterparts of their paintings, that at this time, when the
 “colouring of their pictures is often so far changed, as to answer little farther purpose,
 “than that of light and shadow, they become in a manner their rivals; and, in the gene-
 “ral acceptation of the world, the prints of some of these artists have been as highly
 “valued, as their paintings.

“Independent of the advantages which prints afford us, when considered as accurate re-
 “presentations of paintings, and imitations of superior productions, they are no less valuable
 “for their positive merit, as immediate representations of nature. For it must be
 “recollected, that the art of engraving has not always been confined to the copying other
 “productions, but has frequently itself aspired to originality, and has, in this light, pro-
 “duced more instances of its excellence, than in the other. Albert Durer, Goltzius,
 “and Rembrandt, amongst the Dutch and Germans; Parmigiano and Della Bella,
 “amongst the Italians, and Callot amongst the French, have published many prints,
 “the subjects of which, there is great reason to suppose, were never painted. These
 “prints may therefore be considered as original pictures of those masters, deficient only in
 “those particulars, in which a print must necessarily be inferior to a painting.

“The preceding distinction may perhaps throw some light on the proper method of
 “arranging and classing a collection of prints, which has been a matter of no small dif-
 “ficulty. As an art imitating another, the principal should take the lead, and the design,
 “composition, and drawing in a print, being previous requisites to the manner of execu-
 “tion, and finishing; prints engraved after paintings should be arranged under the name
 “of the painter: and every person, who looks upon engraving only as auxiliary to
 “painting, will consequently adopt this mode of arrangement. But when engraving is
 “considered as an original art, as imitating nature without the intervention of other
 “methods, then it will certainly be proper to regulate the arrangement, according to the
 “names of the engravers.

“The invention of printing, in the fifteenth century, was undoubtedly the greatest
 “acquisition, which mankind ever made towards the advancement of general science.
 “Before that event, the accumulated wisdom of ages was confined to the leaves of a
 “few mouldering manuscripts, too expensive to be generally obtained, and too highly
 “valued to be often trusted out of the hands of the owner. History affords us many
 “instances of the difficulty, with which even the loan of a book was procured, and of sure-
 “ties being required to be answerable for its return; but the discovery of printing broke
 “down the barriers, which had so long obstructed the diffusion of learning; and the rapid
 “progress in civilization, which immediately took place, is itself the happiest testimony
 “of the great utility of the invention. What printing has been, with respect to general
 “science, engraving has been to the arts; and the works of the old Italian masters will
 “be indebted to engraving for that perpetuity, which the invention of printing has
 “secured to the Jerusalem of Tasso, and the tragedies of Shakespeare and Corneille.”

SECT. II. Of all the species of engraving, that of historical subjects is the
 most noble, and requires the greatest exertions of genius and application to bring it
 to perfection. But before I enter into an enquiry concerning the necessary qualifications
 to form a good historical engraver, I wish to make, what appears to me very necessary,
 a proper distinction between taste and judgment, abstractedly considered, as relative to the
 arts, particularly the executive part of them.

Judgment I conceive to be the result of a uniform habit of thinking, founded upon some
 given principle, received into the mind, as the standard of excellence, from which a
 comparison is formed, and things are admitted as perfect or imperfect, in proportion as
 they approach to or recede from those ideas of beauty, by which the mind is prepossessed.
 Hence it appears, that a man of judgment only will be a mannerist, in a greater or less
 degree; and this proportion must also depend upon the number of the objects the artist
 unites together, upon which he forms those decided ideas in his mind. If the object be
 single, of course his ideas will be unvaried; and the same style of execution will appear
 continually, and cannot fail of disgusting at last, though excellent in itself to a superior
 degree.



This habit of thinking, and expressing the thoughts, may be acquired by practice, whether it relates to the speculative notion of prints, or the manual execution of them.

Taste, I should wish to define, as the effect of a natural genius, or propensity in the mind, by which it is led to assimilate to itself a diversity of such forms as are generally allowed to be beautiful, and place them in such points of view, as shall render them agreeable to the eye. And this propensity must exist in the mind, previous to the application of the foreign aids of instruction and study, which, though they may, and certainly do, cultivate and improve the genius, can never bestow it. A blind man might as soon reason concerning the beauty of colours, and a deaf man upon the harmony of sounds, as a superior artist be produced by dint of study only. A neat, stiff, laboured engraving he might accomplish; but a spirited, free, and unaffected performance, is far beyond the reach of simple industry. It is the union of genius and judgment, which completes the artist; and without them both he can never be superlatively great.

On this account, we frequently see a man possessed of great judgment in drawing, and every other requisite for the execution of a plate, excepting taste, produce a cold, formal work; and though we cannot help perhaps admiring the patience of the artist, and the precision, with which he has finished the engraving; yet this admiration is mixed with a sort of pity for him. We conceive a painful idea of drudgery, which still increases, in proportion as we examine the performance; and we are obliged to confess, that it is no more equal to the animated works of genius, than the motionless statue of the animal, to the living animal itself.---To be convinced of this, let us compare the works of Jerom Wierix, or any of the precise German masters, with those of Henry Goltzius, or Gerard Audran. Upon the same principle it is, that all the learning in the world, exclusive of an animated conception, could never make a Shakespeare or a Milton.

These observations naturally lead me to others equally important, by which I mean to prove a manifest difference between neatness and high finishing, which are too frequently confounded. The first of these consists in the precision and exactness of the mechanical execution of a plate; the second, in the harmony and powerfulness of the effect, and a judicious distribution of the light and shadow. It is true, some proportion of neatness is also requisite, in order to produce a highly finished effect; but a print, on the other hand, may be extremely neat, and yet, when held at a distance, have all the appearance of a slight sketch. To elucidate these observations, I must again have recourse to the old engravers, and more particularly Jerom Wierix and his followers with respect to neatness; and the Sadelers, Cornelius Cort, and Villamena, nay, we may add Henry Goltzius himself: in all the works of these artists, though executed in a masterly manner, we find the lights left clear and broad, not in masses, but frequent spots, equally powerful upon the distances, as upon the principal objects, which confuses the subject, and fatigues the eye. These, when compared with the more modern engravings of Drevet and Edelinck in France, and of Woollett, with other great artists in our own country, (where the management of the *clair-obscur* has certainly been carried to a very superior pitch of excellence) will sufficiently manifest the difference.

From nature an historical engraver should possess strong mental faculties, a lively genius, and a just eye for proportion. To these he must add great application; the most excellent models of the art he ought constantly to have before him; and, above all things, he should acquire a thorough grounded knowledge of the human figure. Harmony of effect, and the management of the *clair-obscur*, are also to be considered as absolutely necessary. And having acquired a facility of managing the point, or graver, or rather of both, let him always bear in memory, that however he may suppose himself arrived at a superior degree of excellence, it will be greatly to his discredit, as an engraver, if he forgets to pay that attention to the picture he copies, which is due to its author; and, instead of giving us the style of the painter, exhibits one of his own. For though he should justly avoid the servile manner of a Chateau, he certainly ought not, on the other hand, to take the unwarrantable liberty of a Dorigny, who, engraving from Raphael, forgot the master, and transmitted to us his own mannered designs, under the sanction of that celebrated name. I need not, I hope, apologize for adding, that I con-



sider Gerard Audran, without exception, as the greatest historical engraver that ever existed; and I think his works will abundantly prove, that he possessed, in a superior degree, every one of those requisites, which I have mentioned, in the character of an engraver, as drawn above.

The illiberal reflections, which, by ignorant pretenders to the art, have been cast upon the engravers, hardly merit an answer, and particularly, when not mentioned under proper restrictions; namely, that they deserve not the name of artists, but are to be considered as mere copyists. Now, not to mention the works of Albert Durer, Lucas Van Leyden, Goltzius, Parmigiano, Della Bella, Callot, and a variety of other masters, which are perfectly original, we may examine those only, which are professedly copies from the pictures of other masters. And then we must observe, that every translator of a poem, however meritorious, falls precisely under the same censure; but how little understanding must that man possess, who would tell us, that Hobbes displayed as great an exertion of genius, in his *Homer done into English*, as Pope, in the elegant translation, which he has given us of that poet, and which is not more generally than justly admired. Admitting (which, I believe, is far from being true,) that the first has adhered to the precise and literal meaning of each word, compared with the original, can it be said, he felt what he wrote, or that the least spark of poetical animation can be found in the whole work? whilst the other enters, as it were, into the soul of the poet, (if I may be allowed the expression) and writes, as Homer might have been supposed to have done, had he been a native of England. What the poet has to do with respect to the idiom of the language, the engraver has also to perform in his translation, for so it may be called, of the original picture upon the copper; with this manifest disadvantage, that he has only one colour given him to express the same harmony and powerfulness of effect, which the painter so happily produces with variety. Would Raphael have spoken so disrespectfully of Marc Antonio, Rubens of Bolswert, or Le Brun of Gerard Audran?—The respect which they paid to these admirable engravers, plainly evinces the contrary.

SECT. III. Prints may naturally be arranged under three general heads: I. Historical and Emblematical Subjects; II. Landscapes; III. Portraits. And all these may easily be subdivided at pleasure.

The different modes of engraving are the following:

In STROKES cut through a thin wax, laid upon the copper, with a *point*, and these strokes bitten or corroded into the copper with *aqua fortis*. This is called *etching*.

In STROKES with the graver alone, unassisted by *aqua fortis*. In this instance, the design is traced with a sharp tool, called a *dry point*, upon the plate; and the strokes are cut or ploughed upon the copper with an instrument, distinguished by the name of a *graver*.

In STROKES, first etched, and afterwards finished with the *graver*: by this expedient the two former methods are united.

In DOTS without strokes, which are executed with the point upon the wax or ground, bitten in with the *aqua fortis*, and afterwards harmonized with the *graver*; by the means of which instrument small dots are made; or with the graver alone, as in the flesh and finer parts, unassisted with the *point*.

In DOTS, first etched, and afterwards harmonized with the *dry point*, performed by a little *hammer*, called *opus mallei*, or *the work of the hammer*, as practised by Lutma and others.

In MEZZOTINTO, which is performed by a dark barb, or ground, being raised uniformly upon the plate, with a toothed tool. The design being traced upon the plate, the light parts are scraped off by instruments for that purpose, in proportion as the effect requires.

In AQUA TINTA, a newly invented method of engraving. The outline is first etched, and afterwards a sort of wash is laid by the *aqua fortis* upon the plate, resembling drawings in Indian ink, bistre, &c.

On WOOD, performed with a single block, on which the design is traced with a pen, and those parts which should be white carefully hollowed out; and this block is afterwards printed by the letter-press printers, in the same manner as they print a book.

On



On wood, performed with two, three, or more blocks; the first having the outlines cut upon it; the second is reserved for the darker shadows; and the third for the shadows, which terminate upon the lights; and these are substituted in their turn, each print receiving an impression from every block. This mode of engraving is called *chiaro-scuro*, and was designed to represent the drawings of the old masters.

On wood and on copper: in these the outline is engraved in a bold, dark style upon the copper; and two or more blocks of wood are substituted to produce the darker and lighter shadows, as before.

SECT. IV. In criticising upon prints, the following observations may not be unworthy of notice, so far, at least, as they have any tendency to prevent an over-hasty decision with respect to their merit; for certainly no artist is so liable to accidents, which may lead the unwary to misjudge of his works, as the engraver. His plates may be badly printed: copies may be imposed upon the collector for originals; and retouched impressions of no value may be sold for genuine. Neither are these all the disadvantageous circumstances, which should come under our consideration. The works of the artist himself may be unequal, especially when they are exceedingly numerous. In this case, it is absolutely necessary for the collector to see all, or the greater part of the engravings by such a master, or perhaps a prejudicial judgment may be formed from his worst prints, whilst the most excellent remain unseen.

The works of all the old masters lie under these manifest disadvantages; but none more particularly so, than those known by the name of little masters, who are chiefly German artists, and distinguished by the epithet of *little*, from the diminutiveness of their works. Their plates, whilst in good condition, have often been badly printed; but the impressions most generally met with, are such, as are spoiled by retouching, so as not to retain the least shadow of that excellence, which distinguishes the print in its original state.

For these causes I conceive, no decided opinion ought to be formed of the works of an engraver, in general, and of the old masters, in particular, till a number of their prints, and those too fine impressions, have been carefully examined. If these rules were candidly attended to, I am sure the latter would stand much higher in the public estimation, than they do at present.

Prints, if they be original works, may be considered as beautiful, I. With respect to the drawing, the spirit of the composition, or the management of the *claire-obscur*, exclusive of the mechanical part of the execution; and of this species are the painter's etchings; or II. Principally for the excellence of the mechanical part of the engraving, as in the works of Wierix, Beham, and others of the German school especially; or III. For the correctness of design, and freedom of execution, as in those of Henry Goltzius and his contemporaries; or IV. For the beauty of the finishing; and V. When they are copies from the paintings of others, the more striking resemblance they bear to the originals, from which they are taken. And no prints ought absolutely to be thrown aside, if they excel in any one of these particular beauties, however they may be deficient in another. For want of this discrimination, we too frequently see many of the most valuable works of the old masters, and etchings of the finest painters, passed over with contempt by the unskilful, when nothing can be more certain, than that the etchings of Guido, and other great artists, are as excellent in their way, as the most highly finished and striking engravings of Edelinck, Nanteuil, or Poilly.

Neither is it reasonable entirely to condemn the works of an artist, because he followed the established taste of his country. This was a fault too much authorised by custom; but indeed originality of taste is much confined; few, very few, have possessed it; and even of those, all have not been successful. If the style of drawing or composition is not agreeable to the ideas we have formed of excellence in our own mind, shall we entirely pass over the beauties, which may be found either in correctness of drawing, neatness, or harmony of effect? The fertility of invention, and variety of character, which appear in the works of Albert Durer, make great amends for his want of that simplicity and correctness, which is the characteristic of the Italian schools; and his skill in the mechanical
part

part of the art deserves every possible encomium. Upon this principle, a person, fond of a powerful effect, would throw aside the works of Henry Goltzius, because they are not equal, in that respect, to those of Rembrandt Gerretz, disregarding, at the same time, the superior excellence, and correctness of drawing, which they possess, and the astonishing freedom of execution with the graver, by none out-done, if ever equalled by any.

CHAPTER II.

The Antiquity of the Art of Engraving, and by whom it appears to have been first practised.

THOSE productions of art, by which the mind is delighted or improved, naturally interest our affections. We feel, as it were, an obligation incumbent on us, and are solicitous of tracing out the man, to whom we stand indebted for the gratification we have received. And it appears to be a tribute justly due to him, to rescue, if possible, his name from oblivion, and place the laurel he deserves upon his brow. If we fail in this, the art itself becomes the object of our researches. We wish to know, at what period it was invented, and where it originated. If it should be said, this knowledge does not contribute to the improvement of the art, or add to the merit of its author, yet the desire of attaining it proves, at least, the decided part we take in their favour, and is a convincing argument, that our hearts are sufficiently warmed with gratitude to repay the obligation we conceive ourselves to lie under, if it were in our power.

But researches of this kind, especially with respect to an art, which has gone through so many changes as that of engraving, and may be divided into so many different branches, are by no means to be neglected; for they may not only be pleasing to those, who interest themselves in its cause; but by showing the variety of modes, which have been practised, in its gradual advancement from its infancy to its present maturity, may be usefully considered by the artists themselves, and prove perhaps productive of improvements hereafter, which at present are not thought of.

There is no art, that of music excepted, which can positively claim a priority to that of engraving; and though its inventor cannot be discovered, there is little doubt of its existence long before the flood. Tubal Cain, the son of Lamech, according to Moses, was the first artificer in metals. It is said of him, in the original, that he was,

למש כל-חרש נחשת וברזל

The whetter or sharpner of all instruments of copper and of iron. And these words imply great skill in metallurgy; for the working of iron, and setting an edge upon copper, so as to make instruments fit for use, are proofs, that Tubal Cain was no small proficient in that art. To what degree of perfection he carried the mechanical part of his profession, cannot be discovered; but we may reasonably suppose, his performances were rude, and simple in their forms, and that he consulted use, rather than elegance or beauty; and probably had no leisure to ornament them with unnecessary decorations. But as his descendants increased, and the number of workmen was multiplied, new inventions were naturally brought forward, and comparative merit, of consequence, would enhance the value of one man's performances, in preference to those of another. Hence neatness, and even elegance, progressively became necessary; and the love of finery, so generally prevalent in the human mind, easily led men to prefer those works, which were most handsomely decorated. The ornamental parts of dress, as clasps, buckles, rings and diadems; also cups, and other household furniture, together with the arms of military chieftains, were probably enriched with the first specimens of engraving. These, in the remotest periods, appear to have been ornamented in this style, even among the most barbarous nations: rude portraits are mentioned, as carved and engraved upon the shields, and other accoutrements of war.

The



The immediate descendants of Tubal Cain may lay a claim to the invention of the art of engraving, which appears to me to be well founded, and certainly prior to any exhibited in profane history, unless the Grecian Vulcan really was, as some have thought, no other person than Tubal Cain, distinguished by another name. To what length the exercise of this art was carried by our Antediluvian progenitors, is totally unknown. Soon after the flood, if ancient records are to be credited, it had, as well as sculpture, made a considerable progress. I shall however pass over the works of the old Greek and Roman writers, concerning the history of these early periods; for the facts, as related by them, are not only exceedingly doubtful in themselves; but convey no certain intelligence.

Terah, the father of Abraham, lived in the days of Nimrod, and he is said to have been the first man after the flood, who fabricated carved images; and the carving of that remote æra, in many instances bore a great resemblance to engraving, and frequently is not distinguished from it. These possibly might be the very images, which Rachel afterwards stole from her father Laban, and are called תרפים *Teraphim* by the sacred historian; and by Laban himself distinguished by the name of Gods; for he says to Jacob,

למה גנבת את-אלהי

Why hast thou stolen away my Gods? And these are supposed to have been personal representations of the Deity.

Moses, when he speaks particularly concerning the art of engraving, does not mention it by any means as a new invention, but seems to consider it as too well understood among the Israelites, to need any previous description. For though Bezaleel and Aholiab are the first names, mentioned professedly as engravers, and by way of commendation of their excellence, it is said, that *God filled them with wisdom of heart to work all manner of work of the engraver, &c.* Yet this does not by any means apply the invention of the art to either of them; for indeed, prior to the commencement of the workmanship for the tabernacle, it is said of Aaron, that he fashioned the calf he had made *with the graving tool.* It is highly probable, that this art, among a variety of others, as, casting of metals, forming of images, carving in wood and stone, working embroidery, &c. was learned by the Israelites in Egypt. The Egyptians were certainly famous at that time for their knowledge; for which reason St. Stephen, speaking in praise of Moses, says, *he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.*

There are several words, used by the sacred historian to express the works of the engraver; among which the following are more particularly applicable to my purpose. The first occurs, Exodus xxviii. verse 9. פתח signifies *to make an opening or incision*; and hence comes the noun פתח with its plural פתוחים engravings; in the Septuagint it is rendered by *κοιλια*.---In the 11th verse of the same chapter we have also, חרש the name of the engraver, one of the original senses of the root is *to plough up*; so that he is called *the plougher*; and frequently the word אבן *a stone*, is added for distinction, and both together may be properly translated *the plougher or engraver in stone.* No word can express more perfectly the operations of the engraver on copper or other metals in the present day, when performed simply with the graver, (which is of all modes the most ancient,) than the verb *to plough*; though it is true, the word חרש is principally applied to the mechanic in general, but his way of working is usually distinguished. To these we may add, קלע which occurs in the 6th chapter of the first book of Kings, and is used to express the *hollowing out of the carved work upon the cherubim, palm trees, and open flowering in the sanctuary, which were afterwards filled up with gold.* This word in the Latin Vulgate is rendered *sculpsit*; by others *cœlavit*: and by Junius *incidit*.

The tables which God delivered to Moses are said, Exodus xxxii. 16. to be *the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God* חרות engraved upon the tables. In the Chaldee and Syriac versions the word is used in the same sense. The Seventy render it *αερολαμψου*, engraved; and the Latin Vulgate *sculpta*; and St. Paul, 11 Cor. ii. 7. *ιστιοποιηται*, engraved. Both פתח and קלע are expressed in the Syriac version by the words גלה or גלה from whence evidently the Greek word *κοιλια*. I shall only add the following remarkable passage from the book of Job, ch. xix. ver. 23, 24. which Mr. Evelyn says, comprehends and alludes to all the sorts of ancient writing and engraving, both plates, stone, and style.

מִי־יִתֵּן אִפּוֹ וַיִּכְתְּבוּן מִלִּי מִסְפֵּר וַיִּחְקוּ:
 בַּעֲטֵי בְרוֹזֵל וְעֵפְרַת לְעַד בַּצּוֹר יִחְצְבוּן:

which literally rendered in English will read thus: *Who shall give (or ordain) now, that my words shall be drawn (or written?) who shall give, that in a book (or memorial) they shall be delineated. That with a pen (or graver) of iron and lead, they shall be hewn out in the rock for ever?* In this passage the word עֵט may signify any small instrument of iron, used either as a stylus or pen to mark upon wax or other ductile substances; and also as a graver to cut out and engrave upon metals, in the same manner as Moses, Exodus xxxii. verse 4, uses the word חֶרֶט adding the affix כּ, that is, *with a slender instrument of iron*, Aaron fashioned the brazen calf, which the Seventy translate *ἰδὲ στυλῶσκαρον*; and in the Chaldee we have the word צִפְפָּא *stylus sculptorius, or the engraving tool*, as it is properly translated in our English bible. In the Syriac version it is rendered טַפְסָא *Typha*; and the Samaritan gives it a larger signification, calling it only a *marking tool*.

A sufficient number of words, besides these already quoted, might be produced from the above languages, equally applicable to the art of engraving. But after all, it is, doubtless, very difficult to determine how far the work of the ancient engraver may bear a resemblance to that of the artist of the present day; because the words above-mentioned are equally applicable to carving and chasing. The best mode of explaining them, will therefore be, to have recourse to the reliques of antiquity, and learn from them, if possible, how far these arts may have been blended together, and with what propriety we can suppose them, in many cases, to refer to the works of the engraver only.

C H A P T E R III.

The Remains of Antiquity considered.—The military Accoutrements of the barbarous Nations ornamented with Engravings.—An Egyptian Figure of Isis described.—The Description of an Etruscan Patera and Parazonium.—The Style of Engraving among the Anglo-Saxons.—The Brasi Plates on Tomb-stones of ancient Date.—Variety of Religious and Domestic Ornaments executed by the Engraver.

The first engravings, professedly mentioned as such, are those which we have already spoken of, executed by Aholiab and Bezaleel, for the decoration of the Tabernacle, and the ornaments for the dress of Aaron. It is particularly said, that upon the plate of gold, which he wore upon his tiara or mitre, the words קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה *holiness to the Lord*, were engraved. But these productions of the art, as has been before observed, are by no means to be considered as of original invention. The art itself certainly existed long before, to whatever degree of perfection it might be advanced by them.

The first specimens of engraving, we may reasonably conclude, were nothing more than rude portraitures, expressed by simple outlines, such as are described by Herodotus to have been traced upon the shields of the Carians, who ornamented their arms in this manner, long before the custom was adopted by the Grecians. The ancient Celtic and Gothic nations, even in their most barbarous states, are said, in like manner, to have engraved, upon their military accoutrements, rude delineations expressive of their valour.

The hieroglyphical figures of the Egyptians afford us perhaps the most ancient remains of engraving on metal; and I mean now to confine myself entirely to that branch of the art. They are not uncommonly met with; and many of them were immured as a sort of talismans, in the coffins of the mummies. We have several very beautiful specimens of these figures at the British Museum; and one in particular, in brasi, which bears every mark of great antiquity. It represents *Isis*, and is carved in alto relievo. The goddess appears standing upon two crocodiles; holding in each hand two serpents, a creature like a scorpion, and a four-footed animal. From the tails of the crocodiles arise two ornaments. Upon the top of one is a bird; but the representation on the top of the other is so obliterated by time, that it cannot easily be ascertained. The flat part or ground of the relief, together



with the bottom edges, and back part of it, are ornamented with figures and symbolical characters, executed entirely with the graver, without any other assistance; the backs of the crocodiles, and the heads of the four footed animals, are also finished with the same instrument, in a very careful manner. This valuable curiosity was purchased from the collection of Matthew Duane, Esq. It is four inches high, and three inches four tenths broad at the bottom, from which it gradually decreases to the the breadth of three inches at the top.

The Phœnicians probably learned the art of engraving from the Egyptians; and their coins, which are said to be the most ancient extant, prove they were by no means indifferent artists. From Phœnicia it reached Greece, where, in Homer's time, it was carried to a considerable degree of perfection. But it is generally believed, that neither Egypt, Phœnicia, nor Greece, can produce any remains of sculpture, painting, and engraving, prior to those of Etruscan original. The beautiful vases and other curious reliques of the antiquities of that people, collected by Sir William Hamilton, and at present deposited in the British Museum are sufficient proofs of this assertion. In this noble collection, among other valuable specimens of the art of engraving, are the two, represented upon the frontispiece of this volume. That at the bottom is supposed to be part of the sheath of a *parazonium* or dagger. It is more than three inches and three quarters wide at the top, and decreases gradually to an inch and quarter at the bottom. Its present length is eight inches and an half. The story engraved upon it, appears to be taken from Homer. The trophy at the bottom, is symbolical of war. Above the trophy, two warriors are delineated with a woman, who seems to accompany them with great reluctance, which, I conceive, may represent Paris, with his accomplice, conducting Helen to the ship, in order to make their escape to Troy; and at the top, the messenger, a servant of Menelaus, is relating to his lord the ungrateful behaviour of his Trojan guest. The figures are exceedingly rude, and seem to indicate the very infancy of the art of engraving: for they are executed with the graver only, upon a flat surface, and need only to be filled with ink, and run through a printing press (provided the plate could endure the operation) to produce a fair and perfect impression. "The print so produced," says Monsieur D'Ankerville (who has drawn up a descriptive catalogue of the antiquities collected by Sir William Hamilton), "would certainly be the most ancient of all, that are preserved in the collections of the curious; and demonstrate to us, how near the ancients approached to the discovery of this admirable art, which in the present day forms so considerable a branch of commerce. We may indeed say that they did discover it; for it is evident, from the valuable relique of antiquity before us, that they only wanted the idea of multiplying representations of the same engraving. After having conquered every principal difficulty, a stop was put to their progress by an obstacle, which, in appearance, a child might have surmounted. But in the course of the arts, it is much easier for the workman to conceive, what he can do himself, than foresee to what lengths the labours, which he executes, shall be carried in futurity, or to what unknown uses they may be properly applied. For it happens very rarely indeed, that the first inventors of an art have conceived all the subsequent consequences, which may be derived from it. It is those rather who follow, and know how to profit from the exertions of others, who generally pass for the inventors."

Upon the same plate is the representation of another valuable specimen of ancient engraving, greatly superior to the former in workmanship. It is a *patera*, or instrument used by the priests in their sacrifices: and is supposed, with great reason, to have belonged to an altar, dedicated to Hercules, who is represented upon it combating, as it appears to me, with Hippolite the queen of the Amazons, whose girdle he was enjoined by Eurytheus to unloose, and take from her. But M. D'Ankerville, the gentleman mentioned above, conceives it to represent Minerva, leaning upon the head of that hero, and pressing him forward in the arduous paths of glory. His bow and quiver are behind him. It is precisely seven inches in diameter, and about half an inch thick, and apparently made of brass; but the ornaments and borders are inlaid with silver. "It is," says the above author, "without contradiction, the richest and most remarkable remnant of anti-
quity,

“quity, and of all the Etruscan bronzes the best executed, and most happily preserved.” Under each figure is an inscription in the Etruscan character, which probably is the name of the personage represented above it. Part of that under Hercules is obliterated; what remains may be read HERECCEL. The second and last letters under the female figure are uncommon; and their power has never been properly ascertained. The others are M.*ACV*. The reader will easily perceive, that the letters which compose these inscriptions must be read from the right hand to the left, which is a strong proof of their great antiquity. The figures and ornaments upon this valuable antiquity are carved in low relief; but the hair of the woman, the ornamental parts of the drapery, and the smaller folds, are evidently the work of the graver only.

It is impossible to say, which of the two specimens, given upon this plate, is the most ancient. Judging from the rudeness and simplicity of the Dagger Sheath, one would be inclined to decide in its favour. But the Patera has also every external mark of great antiquity; and the mixed manner of workmanship, which appears upon it, consisting of carving and engraving, Homer and Hesiod seem to have been well acquainted with, and, I think, it is clearly alluded to, by the first, in his elaborate description of the shield of Achilles; and by the last (if the poem be by him) in that of Hercules. That those shields were supposed to have been ornamented with engraving, has been constantly understood by the generality of authors, both ancient and modern. Quintilian, speaking of the former, says expressly, in *caelaturâ chpei Achilles*, “the engraved shield of Achilles.” That the figures were partly carved, and protuberated more or less, both the descriptions sufficiently indicate. The shields are expressly said to have been inlaid with different metals, in order to vary the colour and appearance of the several objects; and this is in some measure the case with the Patera. The shields of the seven chieftans, who fought against the Thebans, are described by Æschylus as ornamented with emblematical figures, *ισχυματισται*, expressed upon them, which seems to refer to the same kind of workmanship. They were also inlaid with different metals, for the sake of ornament and distinction.

It is extraordinary enough, that both Homer and Hesiod, who have so minutely described the shields of Achilles and Hercules, with all the ornaments belonging to them, and the metals with which they were inlaid, have neither of them used any decisive words, expressive of engraving, carving, or inlaying. The translators of Homer, however, many of them, have not scrupled to substitute the word *engrave*, without any other authority, than the reasonableness of the supposition, that they might have been the work of the engraver. And if they confine themselves to such parts, as are evidently engraved upon the Patera, and other ancient reliques of antiquity, they are, I believe, certainly right. But if they conceive the whole to have been executed in that manner, exclusive of carving, I am not of their opinion. Granting, however, the argument either way, I cannot think that they are perfectly justifiable, in using so determined a word, without explaining the sense in which they would have it understood.

The two specimens I have given in the frontispiece, are sufficient to explain the manner in which the ancients engraved. But the curious reader may meet with many others, if he pleases to consult the works of antiquity, published by Montfaucon, Franciscus Gori, and a variety of other excellent writers upon the subject of antiquity.

It is impossible to say, how early the art of engraving existed among our British and Saxon ancestors. In the earliest account of them we find, that they traced rude delineations upon their shields, and other military accoutrements of war. And such remains, as are found in the ancient tumuli, and places of sepulture belonging to them, frequently bear the marks of the graver. But if other proofs were wanting, their coins would be abundantly sufficient, which are evidently no other than impressions from engravings, cut upon iron, or steel. These indeed are exceedingly rude; and if a judgment were to be formed from them, concerning the state of the arts in England, even after the conquest, the sentence would be very unfavourable, with respect to the abilities of the artists. But these are by no means proper examples of the engravers skill, any more than they are of the sculptors.

Under the protection of that good and excellent monarch, Ælfred the Great, the arts began to manifest themselves in a superior degree, notwithstanding the load of intestine troubles, which destroyed the nation. He not only encouraged such artists, as were in England at



that time, but invited others from abroad to assist them. And the works of the Anglo-Saxon goldsmiths, who were the principal engravers of that day, were held in the highest esteem, not only in England, but also upon the continent. The shrines and caskets, which they made for the preservation of the reliques of saints, and other pious purposes, are said to have been curiously wrought in gold, silver, and other metals, adorned with engravings, and ornamented with precious stones, in so excellent a style, as to excite the admiration of all who saw them.

It is greatly to be desired, that a sufficient number of specimens of the works of the artists of this early period, could be produced, by which a complete judgment might be formed of the perfection, to which they arrived. There is, however, yet preserved, in the Museum at Oxford, a very valuable jewel, made of gold, richly adorned with a kind of work resembling filigree, in the midst of which is seen the half figure of a man, supposed to be Saint Cuthbert. The back of this curious remnant of antiquity is ornamented with foliage, very skilfully engraved. I have given a more particular description of this jewel, which was made at the command of Ælfréd, with a faithful representation of it, in the second volume of the Chronicle of England, published some few years ago.

Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury, who died, A. D. 988, is in particular mentioned by the historians as an artist. He was a designer and a painter, and practised the working of metals, whether of gold, silver, iron, or brass, in the greatest perfection. He also frequently ornamented his works with images and letters, which he engraved thereon. Osborn, his biographer, says of him, *præterea manu aptus ad omnia, posse facere picturam, literas formare, sculpello imprimere, ex auro, argento, ære, et ferro, quicquid liberet operam.* But we must consider, that these are the inflated praises of a monkish bigot; for he, who could add the title of saint to the name of Dunstan, would not hesitate to call him a Raphael in painting, or an Audran in engraving. We have indeed a specimen of his drawing, in an ancient manuscript, preserved in the Bodleian library at Oxford, which I copied for my first volume of the Manners and Customs of the English; but if his engravings were not superior to his drawing, we have little to regret in the entire loss of them.

Soon after the conquest, a new species of engraving was introduced into England, much more perfect in itself, than any which had preceded it; and, in every respect, distinct from the work of the carver or the chaser. In the former ages, the engraver seems to have united both those professions to his own; but, in the present instance, he seems to have depended upon the graver only. I am now speaking of the brass plates, so frequently found in our churches, upon the tomb-stones, which are usually embellished with the effigies of the person, to whose memory they are dedicated; and were probably invented to supply the place of sculpture, being, without doubt, considerably cheaper than carved images, whether in high or low relief; and for this reason I suppose they came into such general use. I cannot pretend to say, at what period they were first introduced into this kingdom; but they are certainly of a very early date. In the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries especially, they were so generally adopted, that there is scarcely an old church, of any consequence in England, which cannot produce some specimen of this kind. The English, indeed, appear to have been famous for these engravings, and, I believe, no nation in Europe can produce a greater variety of them.

They are executed entirely with the graver, the outlines being first made; and the shadows are expressed by strokes, strengthened in proportion as they require more force, and occasionally crossed with other strokes, a second or third time, precisely in the same manner, as a copper-plate is engraved for printing. They were usually laid flat upon the stones, to which they belonged, and exposed to the feet of the congregation, constantly passing over them. They were, of necessity, executed in a coarse manner, and the strokes very deeply cut into the metal, especially if the engraver was desirous that his works should endure for any considerable time. Very neat or exquisite workmanship cannot therefore be expected. But however, some few of them may be found, which bear no small evidence of the abilities of the workmen, by whom they were performed.

By those very artists, who executed the monumental effigies, we may reasonably suppose, were engraved the bosses and clasps for the monastic books, boxes, shrines, and ornaments for the altars of churches; also cups; and a variety of other furniture of metal, as well
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for religious as secular purposes. Hence we see the art of engraving was not only discovered, but practised, ages before it entered into the idea of man to conceive, to what great and noble uses it might be applied.

CHAPTER IV.

The first Discovery of producing Impressions from Engraved Plates considered; and the Claim of the Germans and Italians to this Invention, examined; with an Account of the most ancient Engravings of each Country, and a curious Specimen of the Workmanship of an Artist supposed to be a Native of England.

HAVING proved, in the preceding part of this Essay, the great antiquity of engraving, it remains now to consider the art in a far more extensive point of view, and to examine, when it was professedly executed for the purpose of producing specimens on paper; which happy invention increased its reputation, and rendered it more generally useful. The consequence it now acquired with the public, occasioned its separation from the shop of the goldsmith, and worker in metals, with whom it seems to have remained for many ages, as a branch of their profession; and the engraver by himself was properly considered, as an artist of the first rank.

The Germans and the Italians both lay claim to the invention of the art of taking impressions, from engraved plates, on paper. The former place their dependance upon the antiquity of the works which they produce; as the engravings of the old masters of that country; the latter upon the positive assertion of Georgio Vasari, who attributes it to Maso Finiguerra, a Florentine artist; and declares, that it was accidentally discovered by him about the year 1460.

Professor Christ mentions several old engravings, evidently the production of some German artist; one of them dated as early as 1465; the rest 1466 and 1467; which account, respecting the two latter dates, is confirmed by M. Heineken, an excellent and able writer upon this subject, whose publications are frequently referred to in the course of this work. These, it seems, were the earliest German prints they could produce with dates; whereas the first dated engravings in Italy, are said to be the geographical charts for an edition of Ptolemy, published at Rome, A. D. 1478. The plates for the large edition of the Poems of Dante, invented by Boticelli, and engraved by him, or Baldini, did not appear till 1481. Hence we find the difference of twelve years, between the date of the Italian engravings, and those produced in Germany.

It is indeed remarkable, that no print has hitherto been produced by the Italians, which can with the least degree of certainty be attributed to Finiguerra. Neither has there been found in the foreign collections any engravings of a prior date to those mentioned above; but others rudely executed, and without date, are mentioned however as proofs of the exercise of the art, as well in Italy, as in Germany, before the publication of those prints which were dated. But it would be highly improper to place an implicit faith upon an evidence so doubtful; for if there be no date to a print, it is totally impossible to ascertain the time precisely, in which it was executed; for its rudeness, and the indifference of its workmanship, are by no means to be considered, as certain proofs of its antiquity; though in some cases they may have their weight, especially when strengthened by other corroborating circumstances: yet even then a positive decision in their favour ought to be very cautiously made.

From the simplicity of Andrea Mantegna's style, I wonder not, that he has been often considered, as one of the most early engravers. For I own, before I was convinced by experience of the contrary, I concluded, that his manner of engraving was, of all others, the most ancient. One of the earliest specimens of this kind of workmanship, which I have seen, is faithfully copied, plate V. of this volume. If the F. which appears upon the pedestal close to the hand of the seated figure, be granted to stand for Finiguerra, the print must be considered as a very valuable acquisition; for it would incontestibly prove, that this species of engraving, which was practised in Italy only, was more ancient than any other adopted in that country, and

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in some measure exculpate Vafari for attributing the invention to Finiguerra, even if it should hereafter be proved, that the Germans practised the art of taking impressions, from engravings prior to the Italians. But this interpretation of the letter F. is not without some difficulty. It is expressly said by Vafari, that Baldini was instructed by Finiguerra, and Boticelli again by Baldini. Yet if we look at the plates, executed by one or both the last artists for the great edition of Dante, dated 1481, we shall find the strokes, which constitute the shadows, laid this way or that indiscriminately, as the engraver thought proper, and crossed with second strokes almost continually, and sometimes with thirds, as the reader may see upon plate VII. which is a faithful copy of one of the engravings for Dante. The style of the engraving, plate V. is precisely the same as was afterwards adopted by Andrea Mantegna, see plate VI. which is taken from a print executed by him. The outline is first cut upon the copper in a very powerful manner, and the shadows are expressed by simple strokes, running from one corner of the plate to the other, without any crossing, or considerable variation, precisely in imitation of drawings made with a pen. Now, if Finiguerra worked in this style, it is not reasonable to suppose that his immediate disciple, Baldini, or Boticelli, instructed by Baldini, should have so totally differed from it.

It is as confidently reported, on the other hand, that Andrea Mantegna learned the art of engraving from the works, if not from the instructions, of Finiguerra, or his scholars. If this be true, it will also appear incredible, that he should not in some measure have followed the style of his instructors. The print, plate V. has every external appearance of being executed prior to the works of Mantegna; the mechanical part of whose engravings is far superior, firmer, and more decided. It is therefore highly probable, that from this master, whoever he might be, Mantegna received his first instructions. This species of engraving was carried to a still further degree of perfection by John Antonio Brixianus, and other artists of that time. After which period it died away, and we hear no more of it. And that this style of workmanship was not the most ancient, we need only to refer to the oldest dated prints, and beyond them to the brass plates on-tombs, and other specimens of the art, for centuries past, and we shall find the strokes, promiscuously laid upon them, forming the shadows, and crossed or recrossed without the least restraint.

According to what has been said, it appears, that 1465 is the earliest date affixed to any print, produced by the Germans, except indeed one mentioned by Sandrart, in his Academy of Painting, which he says he had seen bearing date ten years earlier, and marked with a cypher, composed of an H. and an S. joined to the cross-bar of the H. precisely in the same manner, as that used by Hans Schauflein. But even the most sanguine of his own countrymen, cannot help allowing their suspicion of a mistake in the date; and some have said, it should have been written 1477, which others think is still too early. It is readily allowed that an older master than Schauflein did exist, who used the same monogram; but his prints in general bear the evident marks of being copies from others, and by no means, from the manner of their execution, justify the supposition of their being the works of a master, greatly anterior to the year 1500. The subject of the print mentioned by Sandrart, is a *girl caressing an old man while she steals his purse from him*. This subject, it is well known, was frequently engraved, both on copper and on wood, by a variety of ancient masters; but, except Sandrart, I never heard of any one, who had seen the print alluded to. A fuller account of this artist, with his works, may be seen in the second volume, under the article Schauflein. The story, that Peter Schoffer invented the art of engraving on copper, and taking impressions from plates of that metal, does not bear any similitude to the truth; neither have we the least plausible reason given, in support of such an assertion.

With respect to the edition of the Ptolemy, printed at Rome in the year 1478, we must take notice, that the plates were not engraved by Italian artists, but by Conrad Sweynheim, and Arnold Buckinck, both of them Germans. The former, as appears from the dedication, first brought, not only the art of taking impressions from engraved plates, but that of printing also, to Rome; where he died, three years after the commencement of the work; which was at length completed by the latter; and the plates for this book are supposed to have been begun, about the year 1472. It will doubtless seem very extraordinary, that the art of engraving should have been discovered at Florence, so early as 1460, and yet unknown twelve years afterwards at Rome, where it was first introduced by foreign artists. It

appears from this circumstance, that though Finiguerra, Boticelli, and Baldini, all of them Florentines, possessed the secret, they did not divulge it speedily; and hence, as a good presumptuous proof, it may be urged, that such Italian engravings, as are to be found prior to the year 1472, are by the hand of one or other of these artists. If this be granted, and great plausibility, at least, is on its side, it will follow that the originals, from whence the plates II. and III. are taken, are so. These curious and valuable specimens of ancient engravings, which, I believe, are unique, must have been executed as early as the year 1464; a very short interval, from the time, which Vafari gives us for the invention of the art; and are considerably more early, than any hitherto produced, though all the great foreign libraries have been repeatedly searched for that purpose. Two of them, I thought, were sufficient, to shew the style in which they are executed; but the set consists of eight plates, namely, the seven planets, and an almanack by way of frontispiece, on which are directions for finding Easter from the year 1465 to 1517 inclusive; and the dates regularly follow each other, which plainly proves, that there can be no mistake with respect to the first; and we may be well assured, in this case, the engravings were not antedated; for the almanack of course became less and less valuable, every year. A full description of all these engravings will be given in the seventh chapter of this Essay.

If we are inclined to refer these plates to either of the three Italian artists before mentioned, we shall naturally suppose them to be the work of Finiguerra, or Baldini; for they are not equal, either in drawing or composition, to those ascribed to Boticelli; which we know at least were designed by him; and as Baldini is expressly said to have worked from the designs of Boticelli, it will appear most probable, if they are to be attributed to any one of these three artists, they belong to the former. The reader must be left to judge for himself, whether he conceives them to be sufficiently well executed; for he is to remember, that Finiguerra is spoken of by Vafari, as a man of no small ability. I own, after all, if I could but tell to whom one might reasonably ascribe these curious plates, I should yet be tempted to suppose the original of the plate No. V. was really the production of Finiguerra's graver.

We have now seen what pretensions the Italians have laid to the invention of the art of engraving, and have proved, by producing undoubted specimens, that it did exist nearly about the time stated by Vafari. With respect to what he has said, concerning the art of taking impressions, from engraved plates being invented by Finiguerra, the ingenious observations of M. Heineken are well deserving of notice. "According to Vafari," says he, "and others, his countrymen, it was the goldsmith Finiguerra, who invented this art about the year 1460; and perhaps he was not mistaken, if he speaks of Italy only. It is very possible, that the art of engraving should have been long practised in Germany, and unknown in Italy. The Italians, those of Venice excepted, had very little correspondence with the Germans. For this reason, Finiguerra might discover this art, without knowing, that it had been already invented in Germany. All the merchandizes of this country were sent from Antwerp to the Italians, who were much better acquainted with the people of the Low Countries, than those of the other provinces. For this cause, Vafari supposed that Martin Schoen, who was born at Culmbach, and resided at Colmar, was a Fleming, and constantly calls him Martin of Antwerp."

We shall now proceed to examine, what claim the Germans can bring, prior to that of the Italians; and in that case we shall have recourse to their works. The earliest dated print I ever saw produced by this school, is copied, plate I. and the date is evidently 1461. And we shall see, however faulty it may be with respect to the drawing, or defective in point of taste, the mechanical part of the execution of it has by no means the appearance of being one of the first productions of the graver. We have also several other engravings, evidently the works of the same master, and concerning which the same observations may be justly made. Besides, the impressions are so neatly taken from the plates, and the engravings so clearly printed in every part, that, according to all appearance, they could not be executed in a much better manner, in the present day, with all the conveniencies, which the copper-plate printers now possess, and the additional knowledge they must necessarily have acquired, in the course of more than three centuries. Hence we may fairly conclude



clude, that, if they were not the first specimens of the engraver's workmanship, they were much less the first efforts of the copper-plate printer's ability. Not that plates being badly printed is any certain proof of their antiquity; but we can hardly imagine, that the first attempts to take impressions from engravings should immediately have arrived at perfection; and that at a time, when we cannot suppose them to have been aware of every circumstance, necessary to insure success; especially when we find it no easy matter, in the present day, at all times, to procure good impressions from our plates.

The artist to whom we owe this singular curiosity was, without doubt, a goldsmith. And indeed, it is certain, that the art of engraving plates, for the purpose of printing, first originated with those ingenious mechanics, or else with the engravers, who executed the brass plates for the monuments; but as I have said before, I do by no means suppose, that this print is the first specimen of engraving, even if we should allow its author to have been the inventor of the art. There are other plates, some of which I shall specify hereafter, that, I think, bear evident marks of priority, particularly those of the master, who used the Gothic initials F. and S. separated by a very singular mark, and who is called by Abbé Marolles. Francois Stofs, or Stoltzhirs; but upon what authority does not appear.

Martin Schoen, a painter, engraver, and goldsmith, who was born at Culmbach, and resided chiefly at Colmar, is said, with great appearance of truth, to have worked from 1460 to 1486, in which year he died. This artist was apparently the disciple of Stoltzhirs; for he followed his style of engraving, and copied from him a set of prints, representing the *passion of our Saviour*. So that, allowing Stoltzhirs to have preceded his disciple only ten years, this carries the æra of the art back to 1450, without having any recourse to the fabulous relation of some authors upon this subject, who speak of one Luprecht Rust, as the master of Martin Schoen, absurdly declaring, that he was an engraver on wood. Admitting therefore, that such an artist really did exist, it is by no means reasonable to suppose, that he should teach the art of engraving on copper to another, when he was not, according to their own account, acquainted with it himself. Martin Schoen never engraved on wood, as far as I have heard; but his works on copper, it is well known, are very considerable.

Israel van Mechelen, or Meckenen, whose engravings are as multifarious, as those of Martin Schoen's, was born at Mecheln, a small village near Bocholt, where he chiefly resided. The latter is a town situated upon the banks of the Aa, in the bishoprick of Munster, in Westphalia. He died, A. D. 1523. According to the tradition of the inhabitants of Bocholt, the father of this artist was a goldsmith, and his baptismal name was Israel. Hence M. Heineken concludes, that he also was an engraver, and that a great part of the prints, attributed to the son, belong to him. "An attentive examination," concludes that author, "will make it appear, that all these prints are not by the same hand. I am almost certain, that Israel the father engraved several, those especially, which have the greatest marks of antiquity, and are executed in a rude style, approaching nearest to the work of the goldsmith. Nor (adds he) will I deny, but that the son may have commenced originally as a goldsmith, by armorial bearings, foliages, crosses, and other ornamental works. But as he was a painter, as well as an engraver, and a man of tolerable abilities in the art of design, considering the time in which he lived, it is not at all astonishing, that among the prints produced by his graver, we should find some by no means wanting in merit." How far these observations may be considered as just by the experienced collector, I cannot pretend to say: For my own part, I see no reason to divide the works of this artist; nor can I find, upon strict examination, any other difference in the prints, which I have seen attributed to him, than what one might reasonably expect to find in the works of any one man, who with his own hand performed so great a number of engravings. Of course, his most early productions are the rudest, and manifest the least skill; but all of them are equally defective in point of drawing, especially when he attempted to express the naked parts of the figure.

It is certainly true, that the manner of engraving, adopted by Martin Schoen, differed exceedingly from that of Israel van Mechelen. The works of the former are more firm

firm and determined, and, upon the whole, greatly superior. Let any one take the trouble of examining the print, representing St. Anthony carried into the air by the demons, which was first engraved by Martin Schoen, and afterwards copied by Israel, and the question will be readily decided in favour of the former, without adding the anecdote, recorded by Vafari, that Michael Angelo was so pleased with this engraving, which is truly a master-piece of Schoen's, that he copied it in colours. The inferiority of Israel van Mecheln, when compared to Martin Schoen, as an artist, is by no means any proof of his priority in point of time. The only advantage, which M. Heineken gains by making the father of Van Mecheln an artist, as well as himself, is a greater length of time for the execution of those works, attributed to him; and upon this supposition he says, "I place the engravings of the two Israels between the years 1450 and 1503." The son was certainly a more modern artist than Martin Schoen; and we have a print by him, which bears so late a date as 1502. He was contemporary with Albert Durer; and some have supposed, that he visited that artist at Nuremberg. Sandrart attributes to Israel Van Mecheln, the invention of engraving, and tells us, that his first prints were executed about the year 1450. If this account indeed be true, it must make much in favour of M. Heineken's conjecture, concerning the engravings of the father; but the argument at present unfortunately wants sufficient proof, to be admitted as absolutely conclusive; and, until some more satisfactory account shall be produced, I cannot help declaring, that I am of a different opinion. The earliest dated print, which I have seen by Israel van Mecheln, is in the collection of Dr. Monro. It represents the Virgin and Child, with four angels. The engraving is rude, and coarser than the works of that artist are in general; and the date is 1480. He engraved however, I believe, something earlier than this period. In the same collection, is preserved a circular print, where the Deity appears surrounded by an ornamental border, in which the symbolical representations of the four Evangelists are depicted with St. Jerom, and three other saints. Upon the desk of St. Jerom, who is seated and writing, is the date 1466. There are several copies of this plate, and one of them by Israel Van Mecheln, apparently not greatly posterior to the original, which probably was executed by the same master as the print, dated 1461, mentioned already in the present chapter.

What has been said will, I doubt not, sufficiently prove, that there is the greatest reason to believe, that the art of taking impressions from engraved plates was practised in Germany, before it reached Italy; especially if we agree with Vafari, who expressly declares, it did not appear in that country before the year 1460; when, on the other hand, we may, I think, with the greatest justice, place it at least ten years earlier among the Germans.

Before I conclude this chapter, I beg leave to recommend to the attention of my readers a very curious specimen of English engraving, as ancient, according to all external appearance, as any of those produced in the course of this Essay, the Patera and Parazonium sheath, represented in the frontispiece, excepted. (See plate No. 4.) And it is to be observed, that this print is not a copy, as the others are, but an impression from the original plate, which is in my possession, and was purchased, in the course of last winter, in a sale, consisting of coins, medals, prints, and a variety of other curiosities, at the auction rooms belonging to Mr. Hutchins. A particular description of this plate, and of all the others already referred to, will be found in the seventh chapter of the Essay, to which they are annexed.

England has constantly been omitted in the list of those countries, which have produced ancient engravers. Our own authors had nothing to offer upon the subject in the least satisfactory. Evelyn indeed says, "the art of engraving, and working from plates of copper, which we call *prints*, was not yet appearing or born with us, till about the year 1490." By the word *us* he evidently means the moderns collectively in contradistinction to the ancients, whose works he had, in the preceding chapters, been speaking of, and not the English alone; nor indeed does it refer to them at all, as any one will be convinced, who peruses the context, but to the æra of the first invention of engraving, which he himself soon afterwards clearly explains. M. Heineken however has mis-

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taken



taken this passage, and, in fact, one cannot much wonder that he should, where he says, according to Evelyn, "the art of engraving on copper was exercised in England about the year 1490." But, according to our own authors, the first book, which appeared with copper cuts in England, was the *Birth of Mankind*, otherwise called the *Woman's Book*, dedicated to queen Catherine, and published by J. Raynalde, A. D. 1540. Yet it is by no means certain, that these plates were engraved in England, or the work of English artists. Chambers must have given himself very little trouble to examine the state of the arts in England, when he ignorantly asserted, in his dictionary, that engraving was first introduced here by John Speed, being brought by him from Antwerp in the reign of James the First.

Indeed no one seems to have supposed, that we could lay even the most distant claim to a rivalship (much less to a priority) with respect to the early practice of engraving, with any of the continental nations, famous for the arts. But when we consider, how many engravers we had in England, about the time in which the discovery of taking impressions from copper-plates was made, as the many monumental engravings, remaining in our churches to this day, sufficiently testify (and a little examination of these early specimens of the art will prove how well they are adapted to the purpose of printing), we shall readily conceive, that, if they did not themselves discover this mode of multiplying their works, they would at least have instantly adopted it, as soon as the knowledge of such an invention had reached them.

There can be little doubt of the antiquity of the engraving here produced; and that it was made for the purpose of printing, the letters being reversed upon the plate sufficiently prove. So that if it should be urged, though I see no kind of reason for such a supposition, that the plate itself was executed abroad, at the command of some English devotee, it must at least be granted, that the mode of taking impressions from it, was understood in England, or the plate could not have been of any use to the owner of it; and that the engraving was the work of some English artist, or executed at the desire of some English personage, no one, I conceive, will doubt, on examining the contents of the inscriptions. They consist of particular invocations to all saints, comprehended in seven compartments, the initial letters of each invocation or prayer being ornamented with the representation of the personages to whom it is addressed. The first is to the Virgin Mary; the second, to the Archangels, Angels, and Celestial Powers; the third, to the Patriarchs and Prophets; the fourth, to the Apostles Peter and Paul, &c. the fifth, to the Martyrs and Confessors of the Faith. This prayer is first addressed to Thomas Beckett, whose murder is represented in the midst of the initial letter; then to Edward the Confessor, or Edward the Martyr; and the name of Stephen, mentioned in the last line, refers also, without doubt, to some other favourite English saint. The sixth petition is to the Popes and Prelates of the church; and the last to the Virgins, and holy Women distinguished for their piety. The whole is concluded with a general prayer, including an address to all of them, and a petition to God, that their merit and example may tend to the salvation of the person, who is represented as offering it up to Heaven, in behalf of himself, and the church of which he was a member. The address to the English Saints, in the fifth petition, plainly, I think, determines the country to which it belonged; and the names of more English personages may easily be traced out in the sixth and seventh prayers. If the person at the bottom could be discovered, I have little doubt, but the date of this singular curiosity might be nearly ascertained. The style of the drawing, and the manner in which the little figures are composed, being placed in the initial letters, bear an exact resemblance to the illuminated delineations, which we meet with in manuscripts of the fifteenth century, especially towards the commencement of it; and the writing also has every appearance of an equal antiquity. It is evidently stamped upon the plate with small punches, and retouched afterwards with the graver. The figures are executed entirely with the graver, in a very slight and unskilful manner; which seems evidently to prove the inability of the artist, who, perhaps being used to the execution of large figures on monumental brass plates, met with no little difficulty in contracting his design, and expressing it in so small a compass. Yet though this print is so very indifferently executed,

executed, it has been considered as not sufficiently rude for a first attempt. To this objection I answer: First, with respect to the drawing and composition, many designs much superior may be seen, delineated in manuscripts, as early as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; consequently greatly prior to this. And secondly, with respect to the mechanical part of the execution of the engraving, many specimens of ancient workmanship with the graver may be produced, considerably more early, and much more skilfully performed.

M. Heineken observes, that, prior to the commencement of printing, the images and portraitures of saints were impressed on slips of paper, resembling playing cards, and put into the hands of the ignorant, to amuse them, whilst, at the same time, they reminded them of their religious duties, and the benefit they might receive from the prayers of those holy personages, agreeably to the superstitious opinions of the time. And this very print seems to prove, that the most early impressions from copper-plates were devoted to the same pious purposes. In this point of view, the present engraving may justly be considered as one of the most early specimens of the art, which has as yet been produced. With these observations, I shall conclude this long, and I fear tedious chapter, leaving them entirely to the determination of my readers, how far they are to be considered as worthy of their attention.

CHAPTER V.

The peculiar Style of the German School, and an Examination of the Works of the Artists belonging to that School; especially with respect to the Mechanical Part of the Execution of their Engravings, from the Year 1461 to 1500.

BEFORE I enter upon the subject of this chapter, it will, I conceive, be very necessary for me to explain, as clearly as possible, my own ideas of *beauty* and *elegance*, and the acceptation, in which I wish the expressions *stiff* and *Gothic*, which occur so frequently in the course of this work, should be received, as applicable to historical compositions in general.

Beauty, I conceive, consists not only in a variety of forms, but in a variety of elegant forms. straight lines convey the idea of solidity and strength, without motion, and are therefore very improper for any figure, which in itself is supposed to be capable of motion. For this cause it is, that a figure standing upright, with both the legs, and both the arms, precisely in the same position, and the head neither inclining to the right nor to the left, will be called a *stiff* figure, without requiring the examination of the artist's eye.

A variety of forms, judiciously contrasted with each other, naturally convey the idea of motion; and though the figure be represented as standing still, the same idea still subsists in the mind; and we conceive it could move, if it pleased: the reason is easily given. For, as all our ideas of external objects are acquired from the objects themselves, it follows, that, as we see no animal motion without variety of form, the same variety of form, represented in a picture, should produce the same idea of motion, or of the possibility of motion; so that, strictly speaking, *stiffness* is a something we conceive to be improperly formed for motion. And the more or less this idea is prevalent in the mind, the more or less we consider the object of our contemplation as censurable.

Hence it is we call those draperies *stiff*, or *Gothic*, in which the folds do not fall into such forms, as we naturally expect they should. Every appearance of studied exactness, in the disposition of them, is a constraint upon the easy flow of motion; and the more or less we discover it, we praise or condemn it in the same proportion. The common eye is no mean judge in this particular; for the common eye cannot help observing the ordinary appearances of simple nature, and judges accordingly, without any previous bias.

Much has been said with respect to elegance in the general form of the human figure. I have observed, that in the most estimable antique statues, the outlines of all the parts are expressed by large convex and small concave lines. I am not singular in this observation; from an artist of the first rank in this kingdom, whose friendship I am honoured with, I first received it; and repeated examination has abundantly confirmed the fact. It is evident, at least to me, that exact lines of any kind, even if they be drawn in the ser-



entine form, cannot give the perfect expression of beauty and elegance; for these, if traced precisely, will have a formal appearance; and if they convey the idea of motion at all, it is the constrained motion of the jack-worm, rather than that of an animal, which can freely move itself at its own pleasure.

Such forms therefore, as convey the clearest idea of those flowing lines, which motion naturally gives, or seem disposed in the fittest order to move, appear to me most elegant and graceful; whilst, on the contrary, those forms, which are apparently unfit for motion, and least varied from one another, I consider as proportionably *stiff* and *Gothic*.

The reason why we have so few great artists amongst the number, which in all ages are pursuing the arts, is, because so few have the eye to see, and the faculty to retain, the beautiful variety of forms, which nature continually produces. Those, not possessed of these abilities, substitute in their own minds, a set of forms, which they themselves approve; and which they use on all occasions. The continual repetition becomes tiresome and disgusting; for variety alone can delight the mind. Those who, by painful attempts at neatness and laboured execution, endeavour to compensate for the want of genius, often fail still more than the mannerist. Nature sets the compasses at defiance; and no rule can be sufficient to instruct that man to draw her correctly, who has not the eye to see her naked as she is, and the idea, first strongly impressed upon his own mind, of what he means to express: For if he feels not the effects of beauty in himself, how can he possibly communicate them to another?

The want of natural simplicity, distinguished by the appellation *Gothic*, was a strong characteristic of the German school, especially at that early period, which we now are proceeding to speak of.

All the ancient German masters were exceedingly defective in drawing, especially when they attempted to execute the naked parts of the human figure. Martin Schoen succeeded the best; and a small upright print by him, representing St. Sebastian tied to a tree, may be produced as a specimen, by no means unfavourable. The body of the figure possesses great merit, and the head is not devoid of expression; but the other extremities are by no means equally well drawn. Drawing from nature seems to have been no part of an artist's education at this time; and as they had not the admirable remains of antiquity to direct their taste, no wonder they fell into a manner, which, however disgusting it may appear to us, was probably considered as excellent by them, who had not the opportunity of examining any works superior to their own.

From the old master, whose prints are marked with an F. and an S. named by Marolles Francois Stofs, or Stoltzhirs, I am greatly inclined to believe, that Martin Schoen learned the art of engraving. It is certain, however, that he not only copied the prints of Stoltzhirs, but imitated his style of engraving also; which indeed he improved to a very great degree. Schoen appears to have had a considerable number of scholars, who followed his manner; but none of them ever equalled him. Among these may be reckoned, Bartholomew Schoen, the elder Schauflein, Francois van Bocholt, Bosche, Wenceslaus of Olmutz in Bohemia, Adam Gamperlin, Pleydenwurff of Nuremberg, Michael Wolgemuth, Mathew Zagel, and Mair, whose works are mentioned under their respective names. To these may be added the following, known by their marks only; who, as they certainly worked during this period, may very properly be mentioned here: as, I. C. and S. and P. P. These letters are separated by a sort of cross. W. H. These letters are separated by a mark, something resembling that of Martin Schoen's. B. M. These initials are separated by a sort of cross. W. h. F. and W. with a sort of cross. T. W. and L. with a flourish, resembling a Gothic Z. All these artists were disciples or imitators of Martin Schoen.

I have given it as my opinion, in the former chapter, that the artist, to whom we owe the curious print copied in this volume, and dated 1461, (See plate I.) was the master, from whom Israel van Mecheln received his instructions in the art of engraving. The manner of Israel van Mecheln differed exceedingly from that of Martin Schoen, especially in the management of the flesh and draperies, which are executed in a neater and more

more laboured style. The strokes are much finer, in general, and often assisted in the finishing with a tender interline; by which they may be constantly distinguished. All the imitators of Israel adopted the same method; particularly the engraver, who subscribed his prints, Z. Wott, or Z. Woll. He executed many of his plates in a very neat, careful style; but they are so miserably defective in point of drawing, and so totally devoid of taste, that few collectors, I fear, will take the trouble of examining them.

We have several engravings by the ancient artist, mentioned above as the master of Israel van Mecheln; but one of them is too singular to be omitted. It represents the Sibyl, showing to the emperor Augustus, the Virgin Mary, with the infant Christ, in the clouds. The figures are loaded with drapery; and the crown, with other parts of the habit of the emperor, is richly ornamented with jewels. In the back-ground is represented a town at a distance; which, M. Heineken informs us, is a view of the town of Culmbach, with the castle of Blesenberg: from which circumstance he conjectures, that the artist was a native of that place; at least, adds he, I am persuaded, that the inventors of the art of engraving did live at Culmbach, or at Nuremberg, or at Augsbouurg. He speaks of this as a very ancient print, and declares, "that every part of it proves it to have been the work of some goldsmith, which perfectly demonstrates the immediate commencement of the art." This print is seven inches and a half wide, by ten inches and a half high. The mechanical part of the execution is precisely the same, as in that which is dated 1461: and the style of drawing, with every other mark of distinction, corresponds so exactly, that I am perfectly persuaded, they were both performed by the same hand. So also are those, I verily believe, marked with an E. and an E. with an S. or else by a disciple, who imitated this master's style of engraving in a most admirable manner. The print mentioned by professor Christ, dated 1465, which, he says, is marked with a C. and an E. joined together, is by the same hand. And though I have never met with a print, so dated, with that mark, yet I have seen the same mark upon another print, with the date 1466; and, I conceive it is an E. and S. joined together in the Gothic style. This print represents the Deity, with Christ and the Holy Spirit, surrounded by many angels, in a sort of gallery; whilst beneath an arch the Virgin appears seated, holding the infant Jesus; and an angel, with other figures, accompanying her; a man and woman are also represented kneeling at her feet. Upon the arch is an inscription in honour of the Virgin. This print is eight inches and a quarter high, by four inches and three quarters wide. I have also seen a St. Sebastian, marked E. S. dated 1467. The Virgin and Child with angels; also a single figure of the Virgin; the Virgin and Child appearing to St. John; and a soderium supported by St. Peter and St. Paul; all marked with the same letters, and bearing the same date. These are in the collection of Dr. Monro; and all apparently by the same hand, though the latter are finished the most. But to return to Israel van Mecheln. Besides Zvoll, he had several disciples, or professed imitators, who lived in this century; after which his style of engraving was nearly lost; and the works of Albert Durer were considered as most worthy of imitation. Among them is Michael Bogner, and the artist who uses the Gothic initials I. A. another, who marks his prints B. M. every way different from him, mentioned before, who used these letters divided by a sort of cross; he also who signed the initials B. R. the letters being divided by a mark bearing some small resemblance to an anchor; and another, who subscribes his prints S. A. but above all, that great artist, Lucas Jacobs, better known by the name of Lucas van Leyden, of whose works we shall give an account hereafter. The engraver, who used the W. distinguished by a sort of cross, worked occasionally in the style of Martin Schoen, and of Israel van Mecheln; and so also did Francois van Bocholt, and some others.

The German engravings therefore, prior to the sixteenth century, may be divided into two classes: Those of Upper Germany, which resemble the style of Martin Schoen; and those of the Low Countries are imitations in, a greater or less degree, of the works of the old master, upon which Israel van Mecheln founded his style of engraving.



CHAPTER VI.

The general Style and Character of Design among the Italian Engravers, and the Extent of their Knowledge, in the Execution of the Mechanical Part of their Plates, examined, from 1464 to 1500.

AS we divided the engravings of the old German school into two distinct classes, we shall do the same, and with still more propriety, with respect to those of the ancient Italian school. As first those which bear the nearest resemblance to drawings with a pen, in which the strokes, that express the shadows, are laid from the one corner of the plate to the other; and this style of engraving was adopted by the artist who executed plate V. also by Andrea Mantegna, Pollaioli, and their followers. Secondly, The engravings in which the strokes are laid to form the shadows, without the least constraint; and crossed with other strokes, as often as the artist pleased, unconfined by any particular rule. In this style the Planets, dated 1461, are executed; one of which is copied plate III. together with the frontispiece belonging to the set, plate II; and are particularly described in the seventh chapter of this Essay. The same method was adopted by Boticelli, and apparently by Baldini; also by an artist, who uses the initials, L. A. F. and by another, who marks his plates with an N. Several others, as will be noticed presently, engraved in both these manners, and that sometimes upon the same plate.

The prints belonging to the Italian school, from the very commencement of the art, are easily distinguished from those engraved in Germany; not only by the visible difference which appears in the execution of the mechanical part of the workmanship, but also by the simplicity of style, with which the former designed the human figure; and this simplicity in some degree is constantly found in the slightest Italian compositions: being professedly acquired by the study of the works of antiquity. But perhaps the distinction between the German and Italian engravings is no where more strikingly evident, than in the drawing of the draperies, and the disposition of the folds. In the one, it is plain and unaffected; the folds are long and flowing, and the turn of the figures has always more or less of that grace, which is so powerfully demonstrated in the statues, bas reliefs, and other remains of the ancients: whilst the Germans, forsaking nature, or contenting themselves with viewing her in disguise, and having no assistance to correct their taste, degenerated into what is called manner, and drew the human figure, not as it really did, but as they conceived it should appear to them.

And the manifest difference in the drawing and composition, as well as in the style of engraving, which appears in the prints, belonging to these schools, may be considered as an argument of some force, in favour of the ingenious opinion of M. Heineken, who conceives, that Finiguerra might have discovered the art of engraving in Italy, without being conscious that it was practised at the same time in Germany, and consequently could not be a new invention. For had one nation taken it from the other, it is reasonable to suppose, that some resemblance would have been easily traced, with respect to the mechanical execution of the work; and when the Germans copied the works of the Italians, we constantly find that it was so. For Boticelli engraved several plates of the Prophets, and Sibyls, soon after the discovery of engraving by Finiguerra, which were imitated soon after by the Germans, in a style much resembling the originals; though the copies have all the appearance of labour, and are executed with much servility. The imitations are also in some circumstances to be distinguished from the originals, by the orthography: as for example, No. XIV. instead of *David*, the name is written *Davit*. These Prophets and Sibyls are single figures, five inches and a half high, by four inches one-eighth in width. The originals are very rudely executed, and bear every mark of priority, when compared with the plates for the Dante. They are also very badly printed, and, without doubt, the first efforts of Boticelli in the exercise of engraving.

The Prophets and Sibyls of Boticelli were also copied by an Italian artist, in a style superior to the originals, and by no means resembling them in the mechanical part; being

being executed very neatly, in the manner adopted by Mantegna. These prints have several Italian verses underneath them; and were apparently the works of Giov. Ant. Brixianus, or some other engraver, contemporary with him, and his equal in point of merit.

Boticelli is spoken of as a man of genius, in the history of the painters. He certainly did not draw incorrectly upon the whole; though the outlines of the figures are frequently overcharged, which gives them too great an appearance of shortness. The limbs and extremities, in particular, are heavy, and often very indifferently marked. It must be remembered, that I speak of him now as an engraver; and these observations refer to him in that character only. His friend Baldini, who worked conjointly with him, or from his designs, is generally allowed to have been deficient in the art of drawing, but superior to him in the management of the graver. There are a set of upright plates, more than sixty of which I have seen, on which are depicted the Seven Planets, the Nine Muses, the Four Ages, the Liberal Arts and Sciences, together with the Trades, and Mechanical Employments of Mankind. They are represented chiefly by single figures, enclosed in a twisted border, and bear every mark of great antiquity. They are little more than outlines, but very neatly engraved, and printed in such a manner, as proves, that the artist knew much better how to engrave, than to take impressions from his plates. I never met with the set complete. Dr. Monro has near forty; and Mr. Thane lent me twenty-one. The names of the planets, muses, arts, trades, &c. are written at the bottom in capitals; and an alphabetical letter is put at the left-hand corner, and the number of the print at the opposite corner, in a line with the name. These prints are seven inches high, by three inches three-eighths in width; and, I verily believe, they are some of the first productions of the graver in Italy, and probably the works of Baldini, assisted perhaps in the designs by his friend Boticelli. An artist, who signed his plates with an L. and an A. joined together, with an F. standing, I presume, for *fecit*, engraved in the same style; so also did another artist, whose signature is a species of N. And both are very ancient. From these masters, it is probable, Giovanna Mariae Brixienfis, the Carmelite of Brescia, learned the art of engraving; for he did not entirely follow his brother, who imitated the manner of Mantegna; but sometimes connected both styles together. And this is the source from which Marc Antonio Raimondi acquired that knowledge, which has rendered him so justly famous, and stamped so high a value upon his excellent performances.

The print, plate V. is executed in that slight, simple style, which Mantegna afterwards improved. The outline is engraved very powerfully, and the shadows are expressed by strokes, running from one corner to the other of the plate, which are rarely, if ever, crossed. The subject of this print is certainly emblematical. It represents the engraver at work; and Hercules is standing before him, supporting the universe upon his shoulders, to show, that all visible beings are the objects of the artist's imitation. By the figure of Hercules is testified that labour and strength of mind, which are necessary to arrive at perfection. The book, the sphere, and other emblems of learning, are to shew us, that the artist ought to be a man of science; and he is represented as an old man, because a considerable length of time is necessary for study and practice, before he can be supposed to arrive at any very high degree of excellence. The foregoing ingenious interpretation of this print, I owe to a worthy friend; as also several other important observations, which occur in the course of the Essay. By this very artist, we have another print, of nearly the same size, and executed in a manner exactly similar. The subject is also allegorical, and represents Cupid binding the God of War, and claiming his laurels. Probably both might belong to a set of emblems. These two, however, are all I have seen. The last has no inscription, letter, or mark to distinguish it. It is, at this time, in the possession of Mr. Thane.

There is a large print, length-ways, by an engraver, who lived at this period; but used no mark of any kind. It represents the last judgment. Christ, with a multitude of saints and angels, appears above, seated in the air; other angels, on one side, are conveying the spirits of the just men into Paradise; whilst, on the other side, the devils



are thrusting the wicked into separate pits of fire, where they are punished according to the nature of their crimes, which are written on labels above them: as, LUSSURIA, IRA, GOLA, AVARITIA, INVIDIA. It is very rudely executed, and, without doubt, very ancient; yet some of the figures, and most of the heads, are by no means destitute of merit. The maps or geographical charts, mentioned in the fourth chapter of this Essay, as engraved by Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Buckinck, for the edition of Ptolemy, published at Rome, 1478, are also very rudely engraved, according to Heineken, in this style, which he distinguished by the appellation of *traits de zigzag*, or zigzag lines; and in this manner, says he, the goldsmiths usually ornamented their work. The letters, continued he, are executed with much labour, being stamped upon the plate with punches, by the assistance of the hammer. The zigzag mode of workmanship adopted by these artists, seems to prove, in my judgment, that though they were natives of Germany, they learned, however, the art of engraving in Italy, where only it was practised in this style, and never in Germany, or indeed in any other country, that I can recollect. Pollaioli and Andrea Mantegna imitated the foregoing masters; and a fine specimen of the work of the latter is copied on the plate No. VI. subjoined to this Essay. These were followed by Giovanna Ant. Brixianus; an artist, who signs his name I. F. T. and was probably a disciple of Brixianus; together with several others, whose names are totally unknown and undistinguished by any mark.

The two following prints are, without doubt, very ancient, and prior to the sixteenth century. And because of their singularity, I have thought it necessary to describe them, though they have no mark, by which they can be properly distinguished. They are executed in a mixed style, formed in part upon that of Boticelli, and in part upon that of Mantegna. The one represents Judith putting the head of Holophernes into the bag, which her maid holds for her. It is a large print, one foot high, by eight inches and three quarters wide. It is rudely engraved; and the drawing is very defective, especially with respect to the extremities of the figures. The other is seventeen inches and a half long, by twelve in height, still more rudely executed than the former, and by no means more correctly drawn. In the front, we see a woman sleeping upon a bench, whilst a satyr is lifting up the drapery, with which she is covered. Near him is another satyr, apparently frightened by a young man, who is clothed and lying down, presenting to him two flutes, which he holds in his right hand. Towards the left we see a large basin, with water issuing from it; and fishes, ducks, and frogs, are depicted swimming in the stream below. Among the rushes is an inscription upon a scroll, which is perfectly unintelligible to me.

I have a small print, seven inches high, by nearly four inches and an half wide. It represents St. Sebastian, a standing figure, bound to a column. From the manner in which it is executed, I take it to be the work of Boticelli; and if so, it is certainly the finest specimen of this style of engraving, that I ever saw. The figure is carefully drawn, and possesses great merit. Marc Antonio improved upon this style of engraving, and by it acquired such great reputation, that it was presently adopted by nearly all the Italian engravers; whilst that of Mantegna and his followers was totally neglected, soon after the commencement of the sixteenth century.







GENARO. A+DI+XXI+LVNAXXX+
 ADI PRIMO L'ARCVCIONE DXP+
 ADI V+VIGILIA
 ADI+INTRE MAGI+
 ADI+X+SPAYLO+P+HEREMITA
 ADI+XVIII+S+ANTONIO ABATE
 ADI+XX+S+SEBASTIANO
 ADI+XXHS+AGNESA
 ADI+XXV+LA CONVERSION D S PAVLO



FEBRAIO D XXVIII LVNA XXVIII
 ADI DVA S MARIA DELE CANDELE+
 ADI III S BLASIO MARTIRE
 ADI V S ACHATA
 ADI X S SCOLASTICQ VERGINE
 ADI XVIII S VALENTINO MARTIRE
 ADI XXII S PIETRO INCADREGHA
 ADI XXIII LAVIGLIA
 ADI XXIII S MATIA APOSTOLO+

MARZO ADI XXXI LVNA TRENTA
 ADI VII S PERPETVA E FELICITAS
 ADI VIII S QUADRAGINTA MARTIRE
 ADI XII S GREGORIO PAPA
 ADI XXI S BENEDETTO ABATE
 ADI+XXV LANVNCIACIO D S MARIA



APRILE ADI XXX LVNA XXVIII
 ADI ADI XIII STIBVRGO E VALERIAN
 ADI+XXIII S FORSO
 ADI+XXV S MARCO ET VANGELISTA
 ADI+XXVIII S VITALE MARTIRE
 ADI+XXVIII S PIETRO MARTIRE

1510	1511	1512	1513
ADI 31	ADI 20	ADI 11	ADI 27
M	A	A	M

MA' GO ADI XXX LVNA XXX
 ADI P S IACOPO E FILIPPO +
 ADI+III LA T VENEGIONE DI S CROX
 ADI VI S GIOVANNI PORTA LATINA
 ADI VIII LAPARCIONE D SMICHEL
 ADI XIII S BONIFACIO MARTIRE
 ADI XXV S VRBANO MARTIRE
 ADI DETO S EA NOBI PISHOPE ECOFOR
 ADI XXXI S PETRONILLA VIROINIS



1514	1515	1516	1517
ADI 16	ADI 8	ADI 23	ADI 12
ADI A	A	M	A

MAYO DI XXX LVNA XXVIII
 ADI DVA S ERASMO
 ADI XI S BARNABE APLI
 ADI XIII S ANTONIO DAPADVA
 ADI XVIII S STORV GERVASII
 ADI XXIII VIGILIA
 ADI XXIII S GOVANI BATISTA+
 ADI XXVI S TORV IOHANNES E PAVLI
 ADI+XXVIII S PIERO ET S PAVLO

LVGLIO ADI XXXI LVNA TRENTA
 ADI XV S VIRICI E VLITE
 ADI XX S MALGHARITA
 ADI+XXII S MARIA MADALENA
 ADI XXIII S APLINARO ES B OIDA
 ADI XXIII S CRESTINA E VIGILIA
 ADI XXV S IACOPO APLI S XPFANO
 ADI XXVII S PANTALEONE MARTIRE
 ADI XXX S ABOON ET SENE



AGOSTO DI XXII LVNA XXVIII
 ADI P S PIERO TVNCVLA
 ADI TRE LA VENEGIONE DI S STEFANO
 ADI X S LAURENCIO +
 ADI XIII S CLARA
 ADI XV S MARIA +
 ADI+XIII S BARTOLOMEO XPLO
 ADI XXVIII S GOVANI DICOLATO

SETTEMBRE ADI XXX LVNA XXX
 ADI VIII LANATIVITA D S MARIA +
 ADI XIII LAESVLTACIONE D S CROCE
 ADI XX VIGILIA
 ADI XXI S MATEO APLI E VANGELISTA
 ADI XXII S MARICIO MRE
 ADI XXVI S IVSTINA
 ADI+XXVII S COSMA EDAMIANE
 ADI+XXVIII S MICHELE +



OTTOBRE ADI XXXI LVNA XXVIII
 ADI P S REMIGIO
 ADI III S FRANCESCO
 ADI VIII S DIONISIO MARTIRE
 ADI XVI S GHALLO ABATE VANGELISTE
 ADI XXVIII S LVCA VANGELISTA +
 ADI XXXI S VIRSOLA COLASVA COPAGNIA
 ADI XXVII VIGILIA
 ADI+XXVIII S SIMON E S IYDA +

NOVEMBRE ADI XXX LVNA XXX
 ADI I S TVTI ISANTI
 ADI VI S LEONARDO CONFESOR
 ADI XI S MARTINO CONFESOR +
 ADI XXI S ELISABETH
 ADI XXIV S CECILIA VIRGINE
 ADI XXVII S CLEMENTI PAPA
 ADI XXV S CATERINA VIRGINE +
 ADI XXX S ANDREA APLI +



DICEMBRE D XXXI LVNA XXVIII
 ADI III S BARBERA
 ADI VI S NICOLAO CONFESOR
 ADI VIII LACONFITIONE D S MARIA +
 ADI XIII S LUCA VIRGINE
 ADI XXI S TOMAS APLI +
 ADI XXV LANATIVITA D XP +
 ADI XXVIII S STEFANO P MARTIR +
 ADI XXXI S SILVESTRO PAPA

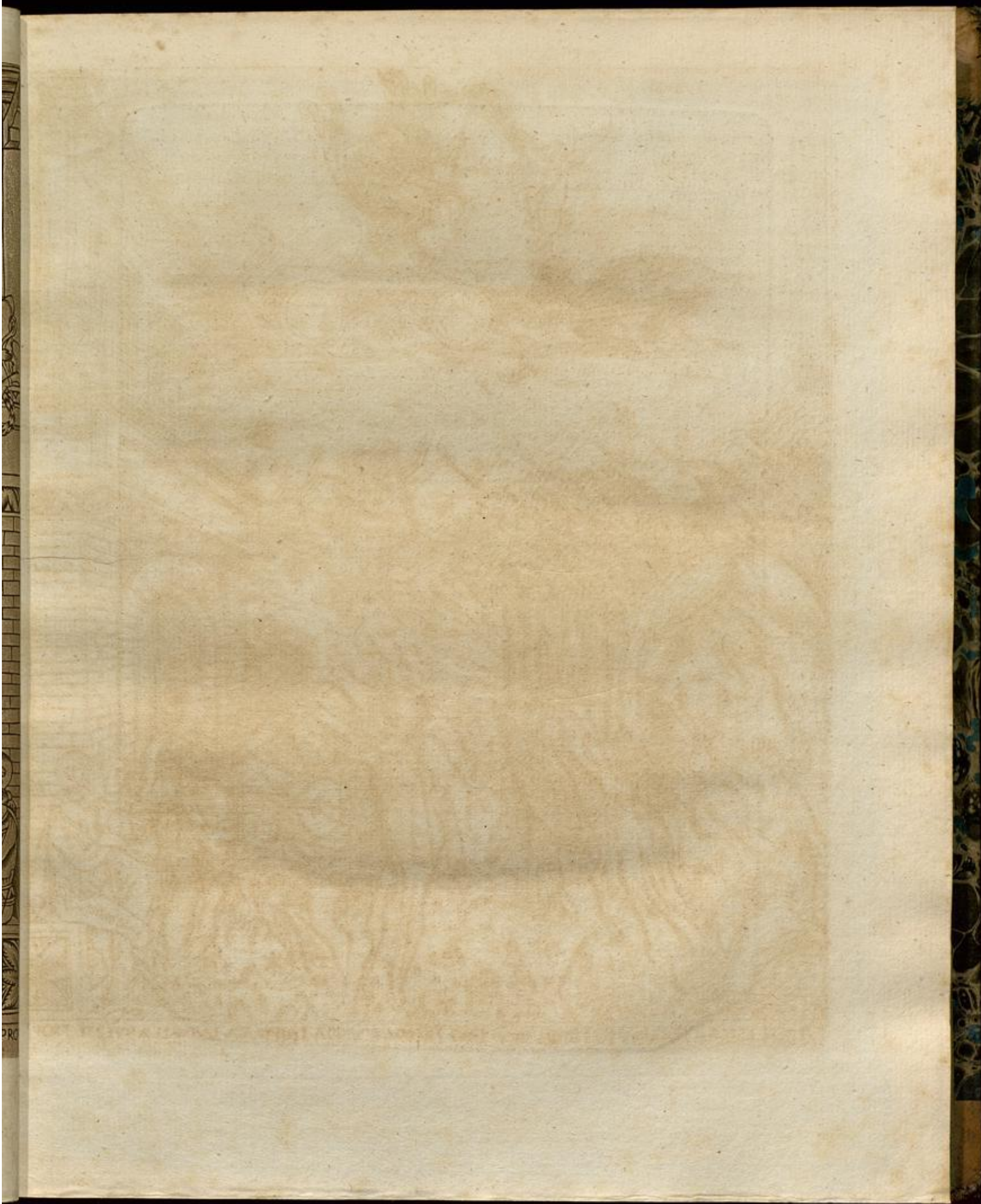
SETV-VI TROVARE QUANDO EL PASOVA ELTE CONVIENE TROVARE EL MESMO CHECORE. QUELO ANNO ETROVERAI ENTENDI CECALITERA
 R. SEINTENDE APRILE EL M. SINTENDE MARCO

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VENERE ESEGNO FEMMINO POSTA NEL TERZO CIELO FREDDA E VMIDA TEMPERATA LA VALE A QVEZTE PRO





Oro de diebus sanctis :

<p>1. Aude mater saluatoris fide flos decot is. unadit q. solacium nunc letare celi chorus In hoc festo & laetans Nostris remedium</p>		<p>Aude petre cum lodovico Paulo epo. Secretari lucens orbis est mala. Et cetera na generalit vestri lita loco. tati nos cum eis. adiuua</p>
<p>2. Aude michael I hac die Gabriel Raphaels miche angelor ordi nes nos precamur no bis pie. scias causa me lodie. supra. celi cardi nes</p>		<p>Aude thoma lives. anglor Et georgi tutor. horum Cum edwa rdo nobili Tu laudat. regē. lorunt et tuant. pole. chorunt Cum. fauore. stephan</p>
<p>3. Aude ve nere. con seratus Gaph ita. m. e uabus. Sac er. regens. lea lo. p. narchis. locatus Et. p. hetic. vire. flatus itac. fure. uobis</p>	<p>Aude m. go katerina margare ta. mada lena. cum burgita brinda. Ansa. fides & xpristina. nos seruando. uie. diu na. gens. celorum iubila. Amen letamur. in. dno. & Et. glia. oēs</p>	<p>Aude presul. o marine Nicholae hugo. linc polle. nobis graciam. et. ben valde. q. sume. iam cu. hui. augustine Da. hupremo. gloriant</p>

Concede quis optores deus ut intercellio. laude dei genitris
marte sanctar q. oide. celestiu. virtutum. & beator. p. iace. har.
prophetar. ap. loz. euangelicar. mar. r. cofelloz. atq. uirgum. & oim. elec
toz. tuoz. nos. ubiq. letificet. ut. di. eoz. merita. recolunt. p. o. c. m. a.
seuctant. P. eundem. ep. m. dominum. nostrum. Amen.



De deo et eius rebus

<p>Deus est spiritus invisibilis incorporeus immensus sempiternus omnipotens omniscienter veritas bonitas iustitia misericordia pietas clemencia mansuetudo modestia castitas continentia sobrietas castitas continentia sobrietas</p>		<p>Deus est spiritus invisibilis incorporeus immensus sempiternus omnipotens omniscienter veritas bonitas iustitia misericordia pietas clemencia mansuetudo modestia castitas continentia sobrietas castitas continentia sobrietas</p>
<p>Deus est spiritus invisibilis incorporeus immensus sempiternus omnipotens omniscienter veritas bonitas iustitia misericordia pietas clemencia mansuetudo modestia castitas continentia sobrietas castitas continentia sobrietas</p>		<p>Deus est spiritus invisibilis incorporeus immensus sempiternus omnipotens omniscienter veritas bonitas iustitia misericordia pietas clemencia mansuetudo modestia castitas continentia sobrietas castitas continentia sobrietas</p>
<p>Deus est spiritus invisibilis incorporeus immensus sempiternus omnipotens omniscienter veritas bonitas iustitia misericordia pietas clemencia mansuetudo modestia castitas continentia sobrietas castitas continentia sobrietas</p>		<p>Deus est spiritus invisibilis incorporeus immensus sempiternus omnipotens omniscienter veritas bonitas iustitia misericordia pietas clemencia mansuetudo modestia castitas continentia sobrietas castitas continentia sobrietas</p>
<p>Deus est spiritus invisibilis incorporeus immensus sempiternus omnipotens omniscienter veritas bonitas iustitia misericordia pietas clemencia mansuetudo modestia castitas continentia sobrietas castitas continentia sobrietas</p>		<p>Deus est spiritus invisibilis incorporeus immensus sempiternus omnipotens omniscienter veritas bonitas iustitia misericordia pietas clemencia mansuetudo modestia castitas continentia sobrietas castitas continentia sobrietas</p>











VII



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CHAPTER VII.

A Description of the Eight first Plates referred to in the foregoing Essay.

AS the engravings which accompany this Essay are occasionally referred to in more places than one, it was judged most eligible to put them all together, (the frontispiece excepted) with such a description as was necessary for their explanation, and a reference to the collections from whence they are taken.

THE FRONTISPIECE.

On this plate is represented an ancient Etrurian *patera* or *sacrificing instrument*, and part of a *sheath* for a sword or dagger; these are particularly described page 10 of the Essay; the originals are preserved in the British Museum, and were brought from Italy by Sir William Hamilton.

PLATE I.

The Virgin and Child, a very ancient German engraving; the date which appears under the tree is 1461; the four is very commonly written in this manner in the old manuscripts, and it seems to have continued longer in use among the Germans than the other European nations. The original print from whence this engraving is taken, is in the collection of Dr. Monro, who kindly permitted me to copy it.

PLATES II. AND III.

The original prints from which these two plates are engraved, belong to a set which consists of eight; seven of them represent the seven planets, and the influence those heavenly bodies are supposed to have upon the human constitution. The plate marked with the No. II. served as the frontispiece; it is a sort of almanack, exhibiting a calendar of the saints days, and a calculation of the day on which Easter would fall, from 1465 to 1517 inclusive. Upon twelve small circles in the middle of the plate, are represented the employments for the twelve months of the year, with the zodiacal sign belonging to each month; and the gradual increase and decrease of the days, is expressed by the extent of the shadow upon the border, within which these delineations are inclosed. They are as follows:

January. An elderly gentleman seated at a table, spread with provisions, near the fire, holding a glass with liquor in his hand.

February. The gardener digging his ground.

March. The employment of the two figures represented in this compartment is rather obscure; probably the man is planting shrubs or herbs in the garden, according to the direction of the lady who is standing by him.

April. Hawking and hunting the hare.

May. Running at the ring.

June. Mowing.

July. Gathering in corn and thrashing.

August. Sickness; the doctor is examining the urinal.

September. Gathering grapes.

October. Making wine.

November. Ploughing.

December. Killing of Swine, and providing the good fare for Christmas.

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The following directions are written in Italian at the bottom of the plate: *If you will know when Easter shall be, find the date of the year in this engraving, the letter A. standing for April, and the letter M. for March.*

PLATE III. represents the planet Venus, she appears in the clouds riding in her chariot drawn by doves, accompanied by Cupid, who has just discharged an arrow at one of the ladies standing in the balcony; at a distance we see an unfortunate lover upon his knees, invoking the assistance of the deity; the rest of the figures appear to be immediately under the direction of her powerful influence. On the wheels of her chariot are represented the Bull and the Balance, with these inscriptions: TORO and BILANCE, the signs of the zodiac over which this planet was supposed to preside.

At the bottom of this and six other plates, are inscriptions importing the properties of the planets represented upon them. I shall give the following entirely as a specimen for the whole; one line of it only being copied upon the plate No. III.

VENERE. E SEGNO. FEMININO. POSTA. NEL. TERZO. CIELO.
FREDDA. E VMIDA. TENPERATA LA QVALE. AQVESTE. PROPRIETA.
EAMA BELL. VESTIMENTI. ORNATI. DORO. E DARGENTO. E
CHANZONE. E GAVDII. E GVOCHI. ET. E LACIVA. ET HA DOLCE
PARLARE. EBELLA NELLIOCHI. E NELLA. FRONTE. E DI. CORPO.
LEGGIERI. PIENA. DI CARNE. E DI. MEZZANA. STATVRA. DATA.
A. TVTTI. OPERE. CIRCA. ALLA. BELIZZA. ET. E SOTTO POSTO.
ALLEI. LOTTONE E. IL. SVO. GIORNO. EVENERDI. E LA. PRIMA.
HORA. 8. 15. ET 22. E. LA. NOTTE. SVA. E MARTE. DI. E IL. SVO.
AMICO. E GIOVE. EL NIMICO. MERCVRIO. ET. HA. DVE HABI-
TATIONNI. EL. TORO. DI. GIORNO. E LIBRA. DI. NOTTE. E PER-
CONSIGLIERE. EL. SOLE. E LAVITE. SVA. EX ALTATIONE. EIL
PESCE. ELA MORTE EDVMILIAZIONE. E VIRGO. E. VA. IN IOMESI,
IZSENGI. INCOMIN CANDO. DA. LIBERA. E IN 25. GIORNO. VA
VNO. SENGNO. E IN. VN GIORNO. VA VNO GRADO. E IZ. MINVTI.
E. IN VNA ORA. 30 MINVTI.

I thought two specimens sufficient to be engraved, in order to show the style in which these curious plates were executed. However, I doubt not but that a short description of the rest, will be also very acceptable to many of my readers.

GIOVA, *Jupiter*. He is seated in his chariot in the clouds, with a crown upon his head, and a dart in his left hand; before him is represented Ganymede kneeling, with a small vase in one hand, and a cup in the other. The chariot is drawn by two eagles, and on the wheels are the two signs Sagittarius and the Fishes, with the words SAGITARIO and PISCE. The distance is a mountainous country, with figures on horseback and on foot, hunting and hawking; in the foreground towards the right we see an emperor upon his throne with figures doing him homage; and to the left, three figures representing (as it is supposed) Boccace, Dante, and Petrarch seated in an alcove, &c. with the inscription underneath, beginning thus:

GIOVE. EPIANETA. MASCVLINO. POSTO. NEL SESTO. CIELO!
CALDO. E HVMIDO. TEMPERATO. DI NATURA. DARIA. DOLCE.
SANGVIGNO. SPERANTE. &c.

SOLE, *the Sun*. He is represented splendidly armed, with a crown upon his head, and seated in his chariot, drawn by four horses; upon the chariot wheel is the zodiacal sign of the Lion, inscribed beneath LEO. In the back-ground we see a castle upon an hill, and some figures shooting at a mark with cross-bows; near them are two men praying to a crucifix; others are diverting themselves with mock fights, and a laughable figure of a dwarf is standing by them with a sword under his arm; others again are throwing stones and wrestling, whilst in the front an emperor is seated, and three tumblers are depicted before him, exhibiting their feats of activity. The inscription begins in this manner:

SOLE. E. PIANETA. MASCVLINO. POSTO. NEL QVARTO. CIELO.
CALDO. E. SECHO. INFOCATO. CHOLERICO. DI. COLORE. DORO. &c.
MARTE

MARTE, *Mars*. He is seated in his chariot, drawn by two horses, and represented compleatly armed, with wings upon his head, and a sword in his right hand; upon the wheels of the chariot are expressed the Ram and the Scorpion, two signs of the zodiac, and under them is written ARIETE and SCARPIONE. At a small distance is a castle, with figures fighting before it, and a man is represented ringing the alarm bell; in the fore-ground, a foraging party of soldiers are seen falling upon a company of herdsmen, and seizing their cattle, the inscription begins in the following manner:

MARTE. ESENGNO. MASCULINI. POSTO. NEL QUARTO. CEILO,
MOLTO. CALDO. FOCOSO. ET HA QUESTE. PROPRIETE. DAMARE.
MILIZIA. BATTAGLE. ET UCCISIONI. MALIGNO. DISCORDINATO, &c.

SATVRNO, *Saturn*. He is seated in his chariot, drawn by two dragons, in his right-hand he holds a scythe, and upon the wheels of the chariot are two signs, the Goat and the Water-Bearer, inscribed CAPRICORNO and AQUARIO; the distant country is bounded with mountains, and with castles, and a figure is represented hanging upon a gallows holding a cross in his hands; near to the spectator is seen a man ploughing with two oxen, in a large space, overflowed with water, and other men are thrashing corn in the open field. Towards the left appears an hermitage surmounted with a cross, and the hermit is seated at the door, near which is a man cutting wood, and two other labourers with their tools; in the fore-ground, to the right, is a prison, and before it a man seated with his legs and arms in the stocks, and two grotesque figures are standing in the front; towards the left are men killing hogs, one of which is hanged upon a tree. The inscription at bottom begins as follow:

SATVRNO. E PIANETA. MASCVLINO. POSTO, NEL SETIMO.
CIELO. FRIDDO. E SECHO. MA. ACCIDEITAL MENTE. HVMIDO.
DI NATVRA. DI TERRA, &c.

MERCVRIO, *Mercury*. He is represented in his chariot, holding his caduceus and drawn by two birds like hawks; on the wheels of his chariot are two zodiacal signs, the Virgin and the Twins, inscribed VIRGO and GEMINI; we are here presented with the inside of a city; in the back-ground is a view of a street, and in the front, towards the right, a large building, which the workmen are decorating with ornaments; below appears the potter with a variety of small vessels, and in the front the sculptor carving a head in stone; above him are two philosophers holding a celestial sphere, and near them a table covered with viands; in the buildings towards the left, we see a musician playing upon an organ; it is singular enough that the bellows, by means of which the instrument is supplied with wind, resembles the common bellows which we have in our houses at this day; in a compartment below, are two figures at a table writing, and a third is regulating a clock. The perspective, in which science the artist had here an opportunity of shewing his abilities, is most dreadfully defective. The inscription at the bottom begins in this manner:

MERCURIO. E PIANETA. MASEVLINO. POSTO NEL SECONDO-
CIELO. ET SECHO. MA PERCHE. LA SUA. SICCITA. E MOLTO
PASSIVA LVI. E FREDO. &c.

LVNA, the *Moon*. She is seated in her chariot, drawn by two females, holding a bow in her left-hand, and a dart in her right; upon the wheel of the chariot is the zodiacal sign of the Crab, with the Latin name CANCER, written underneath it. The distance represents a mountainous country, with a castle and a town, very rudely executed. Nearer to the eye is a fowler setting his nets, figures fishing in a boat, and a man shooting at a flock of birds with a bow and arrow; near him, some people are seated at a table playing at dice; in the fore-ground, towards the left, is a water-mill, part of the wheel of which appears, and a bridge over the river upon which we see a man on horse-
back

back, and an ass fallen down under his load; beneath the bridge are naked figures in the water fishing with a net. The inscription at the bottom of the plate begins as follows:

LA LVNA. E PIANETA. FEMININO. POSTO. NEL PRIMO. CIELO.
FREDA. E. VMIDA. FLEMATICHA. MEZANA TRA EL MONDO.
SVPERIORE ET LO. INFERIORE. AMA. LA GEOMETRIA, &c.

These curious and valuable specimens of ancient engravings are in the collection of Dr. Monro, with whose permission I copied the two above described.

P L A T E I V.

This singular curiosity is already spoken of in the fourth chapter of this Essay; there is the greatest reason to believe that it was engraved in England, and the plate itself bears every mark of great antiquity. It had a hole at the top quite through it, by which it appears to have been fastened with a nail to the wall, perhaps of some religious place, and to this circumstance, it is not improbable, we owe its preservation. The scratches and other defacements which it has sustained from the hand of time, could not be removed without danger of destroying the originality of the engraved work, and for that reason, it was conceived to be much better to let them remain as they are, than run any hazard that was not absolutely necessary. This plate is in my own possession.

The prayers contained upon the plate are, as my readers will readily see, in Latin; but as this work may fall into the hands of some persons unacquainted with the old manuscript form of letters, which are here closely imitated, I have transcribed them (some few words excepted, which are by no means intelligible to me.)

O R A T I O D E O M N I B U S S A N C T I S.

Gaude mater salvatoris
Felix fide flos decoris
Mundique solatium
Nunc letare celi choris
Ju hoc festo et langoris
Nostri sis remedium.

Gaude Michael in hac die
Gabriel Raphaelque Messie
Augelorum ordines
Nos precamur nobis pie
Sitis causa melodie
Supra celi cardines

Gaude ventre conservatus
O Baptista mire natus
Sacer degens seculo
Patriarchis sociatus
Et prophetis viae flatus
Fac finire jubilo

Gaude Petre cum sodali
Paulo Christo speciali
Luceus orbis climata
Et caterva generali
Vestri sita loco tali
Nos cum iis adjuva.

Gaude Thoma spes auglorum
Et Georgi tutor horum
Cum Edwardo nobili
Tu Laurenti rege lorum
Ut tuamur poli chorum
Cum favore Stephani.

Gaude presul O martine
Nicholae hugo lini
Posse nobis gratiam
Erkenwalde que Birine
Jam cum tuis augustine
Da supremo gloriam.

Gaude virgo Katerina
Margaretta Magdalena
Cum Brigida
Auna fides & Christina
Nos servando divina
Geus celorum jubila
Amen letamini in Domino &c.
Et Gloria omnes.

Concede

Concede quibus omnipotens Deus ut intercessio sanctæ Dei genetricis Mariæ sanctarum
que omnium celestium virtutum & beatorum patriarcharum prophetarum apostolorum
evangelistarum martyrorum confessorum atque virginum & omnium electorum tuorum
nos ubique letificet ut dum eorum merita recolemus præmia sentiamus
per eundem Christum dominum nostrum amen.

The words printed in Italics, are such as are very difficult to decypher; and I am by no means certain, that the true meaning is given to them. In the seventh prayer, there are two words which I cannot explain.

P L A T E V.

An emblematical subject in which an engraver is represented at work. This print is faithfully copied from a very ancient engraving of the same size, in the collection of Dr. Monro. The letter F. which appears upon the stone near the hand of the artist, gives some plausibility for supposing the plate to have been the work of Finiguerra. See a more particular account of it in the fourth chapter of this Essay.

P L A T E VI.

The Virgin and Child, from a print of the same size, engraved by Andrea Mantegna. The original is in my own possession.

P L A T E VII.

This curious Engraving is taken from the edition of Dante, printed at Florence, 1481, and served as a Frontispiece to the seventeenth Canto; the original was consequently engraved by Boticelli, or by Baldini, from the designs of Boticelli. A full account of this Book and of the Plates belonging to it, will be given in the Second Volume of this work; there are xix in the beautiful Specimen possessed by — Wilbraham, Esq; of Hill Street, Berkeley Square, from which, with his permission, the present plate is taken

