XXXIV. *A Description of four Bronzes found at Colchester: from the Collection of HENRY VINT, ESQ. In a letter from CHARLES NEWTON, ESQ. to SIR HENRY ELLIS, K.H. Secretary.*

MY DEAR SIR,

THE three bronzes engraved, Plates XIII.—XVI. and exhibited by Mr. Vint to the Society of Antiquaries, Nov. 27, 1845, were discovered in the month of October last, on the line of railway now forming between Colchester and Ipswich, about a mile to the east of the Colchester terminus, and half a mile north of the town. They were dug up at the depth of about five feet from the surface; portions of red pottery, bronze, and lead, were found near them, and, at the distance of about six feet, a human skull and some horses' teeth. The spot presented no indications of having been a place of dwelling or of sepulture, but two or three hundred yards nearer the terminus is a small rising ground, in cutting through which the railway labourers are said to have found urns containing bones.

The larger of the two heads, Plates XIII. XIV., has evidently ornamented a vase, the loop with which it is surmounted having formed the place of insertion of a handle attached like that of a bucket. The type which this bronze presents is a peculiar one. The beard falls in parallel spirals, the ears are pointed, the under lip is full and sensual; the hair is bound with an ivy-wreath, from which, behind each ear, hangs a bunch of grapes; the hair is parted over the forehead. In the countenance there is something of majestic gravity, but the surface of the features has suffered so much injury that it is not certain whether the expression they now convey is that intended in the original design. The general cast of the features, the sensual overhanging under lip, the furrowed beard, the pointed ears, are characteristic of Silenus;^a but the low forehead, and the hair parted

^a Compare particularly the head of Silenus—Panofka, *Terracotten zu Berlin*, Pl. xlv. which much resembles this bronze in the expression of the features.

in front of the wreath, seem hardly reconcileable with any known type of this deity.^b It is possible that the bronze before us represents Priapus, whose statue in the Museo Pio-Clementino^c has the hair similarly arranged, and of whom both the ivy and vine-wreath were attributes;^d or again, we may have here one of those combinations of the Bacchic and Satyric types which were not unfrequent in ancient Mythology, particularly in the latter days of paganism.^e

In this fragment we still discern the excellence of the art, notwithstanding the great decay of the original surface. In the design, the characteristic and the beautiful are singularly and happily contrasted; the grotesque expression of the features does not disturb the general harmony of the composition; the flowing lines of the hair are skilfully contrasted with the sharp, well-defined forms of the leaves, and the different surfaces are wrought with great knowledge, and judiciously relieved by undercutting. On one side of the beard, the edge of the metal has the shape of a vine-leaf; but this I believe to be nothing but the accident of fracture. In the collection of antiquities at Corsham House, Wilts, is a bronze head of Bacchus, very similar in the general character of the composition, and apparently of the same period of art, and which probably has also formed the ornament of a vase. It was formerly in the collection of Dr. Mead,^f and is now the property

^b Silenus is not always bald: see Pistolesi, *Il Vaticano illustrato*, iv. tav. 7, for the celebrated statue of Silenus with the infant Bacchus in his arms. Cf. *ibid.* tav. 47. Labus, *Mus. di Mant.* ii. tav. 2; *Mus. Chiaramont.*, tav. xl. xli. In these instances the hair of Silenus is represented hanging down in front of the wreath, but it is not parted, and the insertion of the roots is much higher on the forehead.

^c I. tav. 51.

^d

Τὸν κροκόεντα Πρίηπος

Κισσὸν ἐφ' ἡμέρῳ κρατὶ καταπρόμενος.—THEOCR. *Epigr.* iii. 3.

His statue, in the Mus. Pio-Clem. cited above, has the vine-wreath.

^e As an instance of such combination, may be quoted the statue in the Sculpture Gallery of the British Museum, *Synopsis*, 1846, p. 105, the type of which resembles generally that of a youthful Bacchus, but with the unusual peculiarity of ears elongated, and in form very like those of Satyrs. See the remarks on this type, Becker, *Augusteum*, i. p. 128, Pl. 25-6, where another statue, identical with this in every respect, is published, from the Sculpture Gallery at Dresden.

^f See the description of it in the Sale Catalogue of his antiquities, *Mus. Mead. Pars I.* p. 232.

Bronze Head, supposed of Silenus found at Colchester, 1845.

Bronze Head supposed of Silenus found at Colchester 1845.

Geo. Scharf jun. del.

Published by the Society of Antiquaries of London, 23^d April 1846.

of Lord Methuen, by whose kind favour I have been enabled to compare it with Mr. Vint's bronze.

The head engraved, Plate XV., is that of the Emperor Caligula. The portrait is a good example of the skill of the ancient artist in what may be called Ethography,^g or the delineation of character, and completely embodies the idea which we have formed from history of the disposition and habits of mind of this Emperor. The contracted brow and sinister gaze express his implacable cruelty; in the careworn hollowness of the cheeks and eyes we may trace the workings of those vague terrors with which the mind of this tyrant was ever haunted. The lips and corners of the mouth are pinched and drawn in, as if trained to conceal emotion; a sign of long and early habits of dissimulation, such as Caligula was compelled to practise in his youth, in order to elude the suspicions of Tiberius.^h

It is interesting to observe how nearly this portrait corresponds with the description of the personal appearance of this Emperor handed down to us by Roman writers of his period. They remark that his eyes were fixed and sunk in his head, his temples hollow, his brow stern and lowering; and Suetonius relates that he enhanced the natural hatefulness of his aspect by studying before a mirror how to give his features the most cruel and forbidding expression.^j This head is modelled with great care and knowledge, and from the rarity of statues and busts of Caligula, is very valuable as presenting so finished a portrait. It bears a most striking resemblance to a bronze head engraved in the *Recueil des Antiquités* of Caylus, and wrongly

^g The term Ἠθογραφία was applied by Aristotle to Polygnotus, *Poet.* c. vi.; cf. *Pol.* viii. 5; *Poet.* c. ii.

^h Suetonius, c. x. cf. *Tacit. Annal.* vi. 20, 45, where it is said of Caligula that, "etsi commotus ingenio, simulationum tamen falsa in sinu avi perdidicerat."

Oculi Caio principi rigentes. Pliny, xi. 37 s. 54.

^j *Statura fuit eminenti—oculis et temporibus concavis, fronte lata et torva, capillo raro ac circa verticem nullo, hirsutus cætera.—Vultum vero natura horridum ac tetrum etiam ex industria efferabat, componens ad speculum in omnem terrorem ac formidinem.—Suetonius, in vit. c. l. Tanta oculorum sub fronte anili latentium torvitas—tanta capitis destituti et emendicatis capillis aspersi deformitas.—Seneca de Constantia Sapient. c. xviii.* It is asserted in these passages that Caligula was bald, but he is not so represented on any of his coins or busts.

attributed to Claudius in that work.^k Under the bust is placed a globe, a well-known symbol of Roman sovereignty, variously combined and associated in their art. On a copper coin struck at Romula Bætica,^l in Spain, the bust of the Empress Livia occurs so placed; and analogously, on a silver coin struck at Antioch,^m the bust of Trajan rests on the imperial eagle; and other coins of early Emperors may be cited in illustration.

This bust was probably mounted on the small bronze stand engraved in the same Plate, found lying near it, the surface of which is inlaid with a floral ornament in silver. The celebrated bronze Mercuryⁿ from the collection of Mr. R. P. Knight, now in the British Museum, and many of the bronzes found at Pompeii, are placed on stands similarly ornamented; indeed this species of inlaying formed the usual decoration of the candelabra and other bronze ornaments of the Romans.^o

There seems every reason for supposing that Colchester occupies the site of the Roman colony founded at Camulodunum in the reign of Claudius,^p de-

^k I. pl. 65. Compare for heads of Caligula, Becker, *Augusteum*, iii. pl. 127; Mus. Capit. ii. pl. 11; Barré, *Bronzes d'Hercul. et Pompeii*, vii. 2me série, pl. 17; *Antichita d'Ercolan.* v. Bronze, i. tavv. 57-8; Bouillon, *Musée d'Antiques*, ii.; Laurent, *Musée Royale*, Paris, 1816, ii. 2me série, Pl. 3; Mus. Florent. i. tab. v. fig. 2; Labus, *Mus. di Mant.* 1830, i. Pl. 43. In the description of this last bust, *ibid.* p. 193, the characteristics in the countenance of Caligula which we have already pointed out are noticed.

^l Mionnet, i. p. 24, No. 183; Eckhel, *Doctr. Num. Vet.* i. p. 28.

^m Mionnet, v. p. 174, No. 220.

ⁿ Found in France; see Caylus, *Recueil des Antiquités*, vii. pl. 76.

^o The practice of inlaying metals is mentioned by several ancient authors; see Pausan. v. 11, in the description of the sceptre of the Olympian Zeus, *Athen.* xi. 76; p. 488; and one variety of this kind of art appears to be alluded to in the following passage of Pliny, xxxiv. 17, s. 48. "Album incognitur æreis operibus Galliarum invento, ita ut vix discerni possit ab argento, eaque incoctilia vocant. Deinde et argentum incoquere simili modo cœpere equorum maxime ornamentis, jumentorum jugis, in Alesia oppido; reliqua gloria Biturigum fuit. Cœpere deinde et esseda et vehicula et petorrita exornare; similique modo ad aurea quoque, non modo argentea, staticula inanis luxuria pervenit; quæque in scyphis cerni prodigium erat, hæc in vehiculis atteri cultus vocabatur." See Lebeau, *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscript.* xxxix. p. 444; Beckmann, *Beyträge zur Geschichte der Erfindungen*, iv. p. 363. Several examples of silver inlaid in bronze have been found with late Roman remains in this country. The attribution of the invention of inlaying metals to the Gauls in this passage illustrates the statement of Philostratus, that the barbarians of the ocean were skilled in the art of enamel, *Imagin.* i. c. 28, quoted by Mr. Way, *Archæological Journal*, ii. p. 156.

^p Tacit. *Annal.* xii. 32. Jenkins on the site of Camulodunum, *Archæolog.* xxix. p. 253.

stroyed by the Britons in their insurrection in the time of Nero,^a but probably soon recovered and permanently occupied by the conquerors. We may presume that the bronzes described in this paper were brought from Italy by the Romans shortly after their first settlement in this station. Very extensive Roman remains have, as is well known, been found at Colchester;^r and here, as elsewhere, we are enabled to estimate the permanence of the settlement, and the wealth and luxury of the inhabitants, by the abundance of their coins, tessellated pavements, and architectural materials. The bronzes here described furnish new and important evidence of this nature, and, distinguished by the beauty of the art from almost all the works of Roman times hitherto discovered in this country, are tokens of a degree of social refinement beyond the general standard of civilisation in the remote and half-reclaimed province of Roman Britain.

In Plate XVI. is engraved a small bronze figure of Jupiter Conservator, discovered in 1844 near the residence of Mr. Vint, at Colchester; now in the possession of that gentleman, and exhibited by him to the Society of Antiquaries, April 17, 1845. I am indebted to Sir Richard Westmacott for the following remarks on this figure.

The attitude of this bronze is simple and dignified; the pallium, thrown gracefully over the shoulders, hangs over the left arm, the hand of which doubtless held a sceptre; in the right hand is the thunderbolt.

The head is designed and treated with the grandeur of manner which the type requires, but the lower limbs are coarse, and the modelling exhibits none of the refinement observable in the treatment of the two bronzes we have described. The cavities which represent the circles of the eyes were, we must suppose, originally filled with silver. This statue was probably executed during the best period of Roman art, some time between the reigns of Augustus and Marcus Aurelius. The type of this deity, inscribed, Jovi Conservatori, is a very frequent one on Roman imperial coins.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours, very faithfully,

CHARLES NEWTON.

British Museum,
March 5, 1846.

^a Tacit. Annal. xiv. 32.

^r Morant, History of Colchester, iii. c. 4.

Bronze of Jupiter Conservator found at Colchester, 1844.