

XXXIII. *Extract of a Letter from the Reverend Dr. Tovey, Principal of New-Inn-Hall, Oxford, to R. Rawlinson, LL. D. relating to a Roman Brick found in London.*

Read July 12, 1744.

———And now, Sir, let me thank you for putting me upon looking into my history, “*Anglia Judaica*,” as I am so vain to call it. It gave me an opportunity of making, what I think a curious discovery, relating to a piece of Roman antiquity found in London. I happened to cast my eye on page the 4th, where mention is made of the Roman brick that was found about seventy years since in Mark Lane. You know very well that the Basso Relievo that is upon it has been thought, by all Antiquaries, to represent the story of “*Sampson, and the foxes with firebrands*.” Mr. Waller and others are of that opinion; and, to salve the matter, suppose the Jews were in Britain in the time of the Romans, and that they brought them acquainted with the story. As Mr. Waller was a man of note, I was obliged to take notice of his fancy, to prove the antiquity of the Jews in England; but declared I could not build much upon it at the time of my composing that page, but that the Basso Relievo related to Sampson. But, on farther consideration, a thought came into my head, that, when I was at school, I had read much the same story about a fox and firebrand burning corn in “*Ovid’s Fasti*.” Upon search I found it in the 4th book, from verse 681 to 712; and it is, without question, the very thing designed on the brick, the maker of which, I believe, knew no more of Sampson than of Deborah. You may see an account of this brick also in the preface to Leland’s Collect. vol. I. page 71.