

A
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
First DISCOVERIES
OF THE
Antient City of HERACLEA,
FOUND
Near PORTICI, a Country Palace belonging
to the KING of the TWO SICILIES.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I. Containing an Account of the Foundation of HERACLEA, together with a Description of that fatal Eruption of Mount VESUVIUS, by which it was destroyed.

PART II. Containing a curious Account of the Discoveries which were made in the Years 1689 and 1711, and those of a later Date, giving a full Description of the Grand Theatre, Temples, Inscriptions, Statues, Columns, Lamps, Urns, Vessels of Glass, and other Metals, Paintings, Medals, and sundry other Curiosities found therein.

Done into *English* from the Original *Italian* of the
Marquis Don MARCELLO di VENUTI.

By WICKES SKURRAY.

To which are added,
Some LETTERS that passed between the learned *Jo. Matthia Gesner*, Professor at *Gottenburgh*, Cardinal *Quirini*, and *Hermannus Samuel Reimarus*, Professor at *Hamburgh*, concerning these Discoveries.

L O N D O N :
Printed for R. BALDWIN, jun. at the *Rose*, in
Pater-Noster-Row. M.DCC.L.



T H E

Translator's Preface.



THE following small Treatise is an authentick and concise Account of the Antiquities and Curiosities, which have been discovered from Time to Time, in the City of *Heraclea*; Part of which was overwhelmed and covered with Ashes by an Eruption of Mount *Vesuvius*, and Part was swallowed up by an Earthquake, and remained in that Situation, as it were in a State of absolute Oblivion, during the Space of one Thousand six Hundred and ten Years, when some few Discoveries were made, though very trifling to what has been within these ten Years: Wherefore I (out of a Curiosity, which is natural to any one) no sooner saw the Original hereof advertised, but I bought it, at first barely with a Design of perusing and translating it, for my own Amusement in my leisure Hours: But on shewing my Translation to some Gentlemen of my Acquaintance, who had actually been on the very Spot, and even in the subterraneous City herein treated of; They, after a proper Revival and Correction, gave me Encouragement to offer it to the Publick; and though some few (and I hope) trivial Faults may have been inadvertently passed over; yet, as it is the first Attempt I ever made of the Kind, their known Indulgence leaves me no Room to doubt of their giving it a favourable Reception.

^a The Publick's.

T H E



T H E

Author's Preface.

I F the Finding of any curious Monuments of Antiquity has always been reckoned one of the noblest Pleasures of the Learned, and all those who would be accounted the Patrons and Friends of the Arts and Sciences: How much greater will be the Glory of the King of the Two Sicilies, who has had the good Fortune, not barely of finding small Fragments, &c. but (if one may use the Term) he has, as it were, unburied an entire City, be-decked with magnificent and precious Ornaments, viz. Theatres, Temples, Paintings, Buildings, Colossal and Equestrian Statues, both of Marble and Brass, &c.

The Fame of this lucky Incident, worthy of only such a King, who takes a Pleasure in encouraging Arts and Sciences, has excited throughout the World such Amazement, as raises both a Kind of Envy, and laudable Curiosity, in those who delight in Antiquity, and have any tolerable Share of good Sense.

And as it happened to be my Lot to be the first that had the Honour to participate and explain to his Majesty the first Discoveries of these Curiosities, and also seeing so many Accounts daily published, and several illustrious Members of the learned Republick striving, with a Kind of Emulation, which shall be the first to discourse thereon; I resolved (with the sole View of satisfying the many Requests which I have had from several Parts of Europe) to publish a short and minute
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Description of the first Discoveries, which were made under my Direction; together with some short Dissertations, which I read on that Subject, in our Tuscan Academy at Cortona; and in order that those who have taken upon them to publish the Designs, may be able securely to pursue the Description. And Signor Muratori speaks thus^a: Inter tot pretiosa antiquitatis Romanæ monumenta, statuas, columnas, aliaque elaborata marmora, quæ in Villa Resinæ extra Neapolim, anno 1739, effossa sunt, & adhuc effodiuntur, & quorum descriptionem sperare nos facit doctissimus Eques Venuti, primum hoc marmor effodientibus sese obtulit, ex quo innotuit ibidem extitisse Theatrum cum orchestra, &c. This and other Accounts were transmitted him from Time to Time by me, and the Abbot Ridolfino Venuti my Brother. Signor Gori is publishing a Book, entitled, Collectanea Antiquitatum Herculaneusium: This Work consists of a Collection of all the Accounts, which have been published to this very Day, by him carefully revised and put together; where, among the many other Things, he produces several Letters, which he received from my Brother and me, concerning these Discoveries.

But I being called away by my domestick Affairs, tho' very much against my Will, obtained the King's Permission to return Home, wherefore I could not be present at the Prosecution of this grand Enterprize: And as the King was pleased to order me to write a Dissertation of the Antiquities of that Place, which he transmitted to the Court of Spain; and being wrote within the Space of a few Hours, I find myself necessitated to publish it in a more distinct and better Manner, to satisfy (as I said before) the impatient Curiosity of some Persons; in order, that if this my succinct Detail should fall into other Hands, they may be better informed of the Discoveries and the History thereof: Which (Discoveries) have daily increased, and have,

^a Tesoro delle Iscrizioni, p. 2021. 1.

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to my great Satisfaction, confirmed all that I from the Beginning (as it were by a Kind of Foreknowledge) surmised, i. e. that under the Spot where they first begun to dig, was buried, not only a grand, noble, and sumptuous antique Theatre, but also an antient City, which by the Grecians, and in particular by Strabo, was called 'ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙΟΝ, and by the Latins, as Pliny, and many others, Herculanium and Herculaneum, situated in Campania Fœlix; the Situation of which, I cannot better describe, than by giving you the very Words of ^a Florus, who says, Omnium non modo Italia, sed toto orbe terrarum pulcherrima Campaniæ plaga est; . . . Hic illi nobiles portus . . . Hic amicti vitibus montes Gaurus, Falernus, Massicus, & purcherrimus omnium Vesuvius Ætnæi ignis imitator. Urbes ad mare Formiæ, Cumæ, Puteoli, Neapolis, HERCULANEUM, Pompei, &c. Permit me here to add, that this Discovery clears our learned Archbishop Nicolas Perotto, from an unjust Censure cast upon him by Elias Vineto, in his Notes on the above Passage of Florus, by finding Fault with his placing Heraclea in Campania Fœlix, thus: Fuerunt autem hæ (urbes) multæ, quarum una Campaniæ hic celebratæ: quæ urbs eadem fuit cum Herculaneo, si quid Perotto, ^b homini multa sine ratione, auctoreque tradenti, credimus.

Having divided the Work into two Parts, I shall in the first give an Account of the Foundation of the City Heraclea, beginning first with searching out who that Hero (Hercules) was, and what the Mythologists say concerning his Travels from Spain into Italy: In the next Place, I shall give you the History of the City Heraclea, and its first Inhabitants, beginning from the Oscians and the Tuscans, and continuing it down to the Romans, without mentioning the Wars which were

^a Lib. 1. de Bell. Samnit. edit. Venet. anni 149.

^b In Cornucop. pag. 207.

carried

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carried on in Campania Fœlix, and particularly near Heraclea. But as some Persons would blame me (and not without Reason) for not saying any Thing of the famous Battle that happened there between the Romans, and King Pyrrhus, I will not omit giving you in this Place the very Words of Florus ^a: Apud Heracleam, & Campaniæ fluvium Lirim, Lævino Consule, prima pugna: quæ tam atrox fuit, ut Ferentanæ turmæ præfectus Obsidius investus in Regem turbaverit, coegeritque projectis insignibus prælio exciderè; but on bringing Elephants into the Army, the King gained a compleat Victory; by which, as Florus says, totam trementem Campaniam, Lirim, Fregellasque populatus, prope captam Urbem a Prænestina arce prospexit. Elias Vineto confounds himself in this Passage, not knowing how to find out what Heraclea that is, in Campania Fœlix, which is mentioned by Florus, and Paul Orosius ^b; seeing there is only one named by Strabo, and Pliny, in the Confines of Italy, between the Rivers Siris and Aciris, but a great Way from Campania, and the River Liris, where Plutarch (in his Life of King Pyrrhus) says the Battle was fought; which, if he had more nicely observed Florus, he would have found; and these new Discoveries more and more confirm it.

But to return to the Distribution of this Work, I shall next treat of the first Eruption of Vesuvius, as I happened to read publickly in our Tuscan Academy. Finally, in the Second Part, I shall describe the Antiquities found, together with the Account of the first Discoveries of the Theatre, Temples, and Paintings, which happened in my Time; for there have since been found several other Paintings, &c. A naked Hercules as large as Life; a Satire holding a Nymph in his Arms; Virginia accompanied by her Father, and Icilius her Spouse, whilst M. Claudius is demanding hers before the Decemvir Appius: And the Education of

^a Lib. i. cap. 14.

^b Lib. 4. cap. 1.

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Achilles

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Achilles under the Centaur Chiron ; but that of Virginia is universally admired above all the rest, being one of the best preserved. Also two Bassi Rilievi ; the one representing some Persons playing at Dice : Under each Person is his Name wrote in Greek. The other represents a Chariot, drawn by a Parrot, and guided by a Cricket.

I congratulate our Age, that it has been able, as it were, to look back, and actually to see the Customs and Manner of the Ancients. If any wish for the Perpetuity of any Thing, that has ever had its desired Effect, I should imagine it to be that Motto, which is to be seen on a Medal of Titus, having on the Reverse a handsome Temple adorned with Horses, six Columns, and three Statues. The Motto is this ; ÆTERNITATI. FLAVIORUM. This is not a Place to examine the Legitimacy of that Medal, nor to what Fabrick it pertains ; but it is easy to imagine, that as these Monuments of Antiquity (which, doubtless, were put up in Heraclea to the Honour of that Family) that have lately been discovered, have eternalized the Name of that Imperial Family hitherto ; they will eternalize for the future, the glorious Name of CHARLES BOURBON, the fortunate King of the Two Sicilies.

The last Thing I have to say is, that whatever I write, I shall only bear Witness of what I have seen with my own Eyes ; and I solemnly protest, that I have no Intention to publish or describe the other Curiosities, which have been since dug up ; nor to prejudice any one that proposes to treat thereon : But only that this my short Treatise (in which there may be some Things mentioned, which others know nothing of,) may serve as a Forerunner and Conductor of the curious Work, which, by Order of his Majesty, is preparing. And for Example, I saw in a French Account (which is now printed) the Inscription on Mammianus Rufus (possibly a Descendant of that L. Mammius, called

by

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by Dionysius * vir non obscurus, who saw the Oracle engraved in the Temple of Jupiter Dodoneus) found in the Theatre towards the Sea, as is the Manner of other Theatres, and particularly according to Florus, and Orofio del Tarentino, who says thus :

L. ANNIVS. L. F. MAMMIANVS. RVFVS. IIVIR
 QVINQ. EATRO NUMISIVS. P. F.
 ARO HERCVLANEN

There were two Inscriptions (as I shall treat about in my Description) pretty much alike ; the first, in several Pieces of a grand Architrave, which I put together thus.

A . . . MAMMI RVFVS. IIVIR. QVIN. THEAT.
 ORC. . . . DE. SVO

On the second Cornish, or Architrave, Fellow to the first, was another Inscription in these Words :

L. ANNIVS. L. F. MAMMIANVS. RVFVS. IIVIR,
 QVINQ. THEATR. O . . . P. NVMISIVS.
 P. F. AR . . . TEC

And as the Workmen broke and spoiled every Thing, and pulled the Architraves in Pieces, (tho' they were entire when under the Ground) it might happen, that they put two different Things together, and so confused every Thing. It was, indeed, proposed, that every Thing should be preserved, but it could not be obtained ; only the most precious Things were placed as Ornaments in the Royal Killa of Portici, where the following Inscription is put up, which I proposed ; in which is a Plainness, which I take great Pleasure in.

* Dionys. Halicarn. Antiq. Rom. lib. 1. pag. 15.

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KAROLVS. REX
 PHILIPPI. V. HISPANIAR. REGIS. F.
 LVDOVICI. GALLORVM. DELPHINI. N.
 LVDOVICI. MAGNI. PRONEPOS
 THEATRVM. SPLENDIDISSIMVM
 OLIM. TITO. IMPERANTE. A. VESEVO
 OBRVTVM. ET. TEMPORVM. INIQVITATE
 DIRVTVM
 IN. APRICVM. RESTITVIT
 SIGNA. ET. STATVAS. AD. VILLAE
 ELEGANTIAM. ACCEDERE
 IVSSIT
 ANNO. MDCCXXXIX.

Every one is sensible, that from the fortunate Success of these surprising Discoveries, is derived a great Part of the immortal Renown due to the Name of his Majesty CHARLES VIII. King of Naples, who has made his Country happy, by patronizing honest Men, Arts, and Sciences, increasing their Commerce, and sundry other publick Services and Beneficences; among which let us mention the enlarging and securing the Wharf, (which is embellished with new Fountains) and in particular bringing thither, the fine Fountain, enriched with curious Bassi Rilievi, wrought by Benedetto da Majano; which lay abandoned and neglected, among the Ruins of the famous Villa of Poggio Reale, at present the pleasant Retirement of King Alfonso. In which Place, I proposed (permit me to mention it) should be set up, a large Statue of Bronze, (which was in the Arsenal of the Castle of Naples) made by the famous Donatello, which I imagine to be the Effigy of Francesco Sforza, crushing a Serpent, and I think, bears an Allusion to the just Temper of our King, who is a great Enemy, and Oppressor of Vice. All which was performed, under the Direction of Don Michael Reggio, Captain General of the Marines, and now Lieutenant, and Captain General of Naples,

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and Counsellor of the State; who ordered the following Inscriptions to be put on the four Fronts of the said Fountain; which, being all different, I hope the courteous Reader will permit me to copy here, viz.

(1.)

GENIO
CAROLI. REGIS
PHIL. V. HISP. REGIS. F.
QVOD
NEAPOL. REGNO. RESTITVTO
VIRTVTEM. ALVERIT
VITIA. DEPRESSERIT

(2.)

QVOD
LACVM. EREXERIT
ORAM. MARITIMAM. MOLES
PORTVMQ. VI. MARIS
DIRVTVM
RESTITVERIT

(3.)

QVOD
TRIREMES. NAVESQ.
AVXERIT
ET. NOBILIB. EPHEBIS
CLASSICAM
ACADEMIAM
FVNDAVERIT

(4.)

QVOD
CVRIAM. COMMERCII
INSTITVERIT
VOTA. PVBLICA
D. D.
M.D.C.C.XXXIX.

The

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*The learned World render their gratefullest Acknowledgements of the Magnificences of the unparalleled CHARLES King of the Two Sicilies, who, not regarding any Expence, has not only caused these precious Monuments of Antiquity to be dug out of the Bowels of the Earth; but also preserves them with the greatest Care and Diligence; having restored to the World, a City which was buried; and had been, as it were, entirely forgot, and of which one may say, as Seneca did * of the Villa of C. Cesar in the same Heraclea: C. Cæsar Villam in Herculanenſi pulcherrimam, qua mater ſua aliquando in illa cuſtodita erat, diruit, fecitque ejus per hoc notabilem fortunam; ſtāntem enim prænavigabamus: nunc cauſa dirutæ quæritur; there remaining ſtill a grander Idea of the Roman Magnificence, and a more glorious Remembrance of our invincible King.*

* De Ira lib. 3. cap. 23.



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