

Meric Casaubon
Marcus Aurelius Antoninus . . . his meditations
London
1634

MARCVS AVRELIVS
ANTONINUS
THE ROMAN EMPEROR,
HIS MEDITATIONS
Concerning HIMSELFE:
TREATING OF A NATVRALL
Mans happinesse; Wherein it consisteth, and of the
meanes to attaine unto it.

TRANSLATED OVT OF THE
Originall Greeke; with Notes:
BY
MERIC CASAVBON, B. of D. and Prebendarie
of CHRIST Church, Canterbury.

<mottos>

LONDON,
Printed by M. FLESHER, for RICHARD MYNNE, in
Little Britaine at the Signe of S. Paul.
M DC XXXIV.

<part 3 – Notes>

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. Now they that 'burned', used to gather the
reliques of the dead corps, consisting of bones and ashes,
and to lay them up in 'urnis, ollis, ossuariis': 'in potts, urnes,
crookes', and the like earthen vessels made of purpose; and
so to bury them. I would not Note it, (I must confesse,) as a
thing that I thought worth *nothing (for I thinke there can
bee nothing more common:) but that I am glad to take
this occasion to impart unto the Reader a memorable cu=
riosity in matter of antiquity, which by the learned Anti=
quaries beyond the Seas, I am sure, would bee much
esteemed. Some 2. or 3. miles beyond Sittingborne in Kent,
West, as you go to London, there is a little village in the
way called Newington. It hath not beene my luck hitherto
in any either later Book or ancient record, to find any thing
concerning this village worth the noting. All that I can say
of it is, that the inhabitants shoue a place, to which they
say that in former times the water came, as indeed by
many circumstances it is very probable: and that Milton
(A towne before the Conquest of great fame, and of
very great antiquitie) is not above two miles from it.

*'noting' 1635

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About a quarter of a mile before you come to Newing=
ton, not much above a stones cast from the high way on
the right hand as you come from Sittingborne, there is a
field, out of which, in a very little compasse of ground,
have bene taken out by digging within these few yeares
Roman potts and 'Vrnes', almost of all *seyzes and fashions,
and in number very many: some thousands, I have beene
told upon the place; but many hundreds, I am sure I may
say, and speake within compasse. And though so many
have already beene found, and carried *way, yet doth the

*'sizes' 1663

*'away' 1663

field afford them still (as I am told) plentifully enough now and then, according as you prove either skilfull or lucky in the digging. The figures of some of them I have here caused to be represented to the Reader.

The first and greatest, with an Inscription graven and cut in about the neck of it SEVERIANVS, &c. was above a yeare ago by the pious and ingenuous Vicar of that Parish, M. Henry Dearing, bestowed upon me, which I keepe as a great Treasure: as also was the last not long after, with the cover of it ouer it, so severally represented of purpose, that the forme of either might the better appear. The words of the Inscription of that first (as neere as they could bee imitated) are these:

SEVERA NVS • PATER • D.
OLA • IOW • V • FELLIX



Ant. p. 32, 33.

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In the writing of which words although something may be observed not ordinarie, as 'Ola', for 'Olla'; and those kind of A. and L. &c. yet is there nothing so singular, but a learned antiquarie well versed in Gruter's 'Thesaurus' of Inscriptions, will soone find examples of it. As for the sense and meaning of the words, though not so obvious perchance as might bee wished, yet must I (because few words will not serve) suspend my opinion till some fitter opportunitie. That in the middle, with the Inscription C O C C I L L I M, was by the meanes of a worthy friend, M. Dr. Winston, (that great ornament of his profession) procured unto me from the Right Honourable (for his worth, and love to learning as well as by his place) Richard, Earle of Portland, Lord High Treasurer of England, &c. whome, with some other rare antiquities it was sent unto, some yeares ago. I was desirous to compare these that I had (for the Inscriptions sake especially) with some others of the same kind. But I find this difference, that whereas mine were much perished and worne by age, such was the brightnesse and smoothnesse of this middle, (of the cover of it I meane, which is of a redd

*coloureth earth) as that it rather resembled pure Corral, then ordinarie red earth: and as for the letters of the In= scription, that they were not as mine rudely graven in with the hand, but in the same mould, and at the same time when the cover it selfe was formed, very artificially printed, or imbossed rather: as by these figures, that are represented, you may in part perceive. Since that, when I passed last by Newington coming from London, among many other fragments of antiquitie in M. Dearings garden I found the *peecs of just such an other Cover (but that the colour of it is nothing so fresh) with this Inscription in the middle likewise, P R I S C I A N. Now as the multitude of these Newington 'urnes' (for I doe not remember that ever so many in so narrow a compasse of ground were found:* is observable; so is the manner of their laying in the

*'coloured' 1635

*'peeces' 1635

*')' 1635

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ground. They that have been present often at their digging up, have observed, that where one great 'Vrne' is found, di= vers lesse vessels are; some within the great, some about it: all *coverd either with a proper cover of the same earth and making as the pott it selfe is; or more coursey, but very closely stopped up with other earth. Of all those small vessels of what fashion soever that are found either in or about these 'urnes', I know no other use (to satisfie in some part their curiositie, that wonder at them when they see them) that was ordinarie among the Romans, but either to conteine some fragrant odoriferous liquor, and durable confection; or that 'libatio' of wine and milke that they used about their dead; or lastly (not to speake here of those burning lampes that have beene found in some ancient urnes and monuments, which so many have largely written and disputed of) to receive and preserve the teares that were shed by the friends of the deceased for greefe of their death. As for the difference of the greater & the lesser urnes, Fabricius in his 'Roma', and Marlianus in his topogra= phicall description of the same, are of opinion, that when urnes of different bignes are found in the same place, the greater were for the greater and richer, as the masters and 'Patroni'; and the lesser, for the poorer, and inferiour, as the servants and 'clientes'.

*'covered' 1663

In things of this nature, which were I meane, altoge= ther arbitrarie, there is no question but different fashions were used in different places; yea and likely in the same place, as every mans particular conceit, or humor served him. And therefore it were hard to determine any thing as certainly, and generally true. But as for these N. urnes, this seemes to have beene the custome there used. One great urne was appointed to containe the bones and ashes of all one, either houshold or kindred. As often therefore as any of them dyed, so *oftem had they recourse unto the common urne, which so often was uncovered. To *prevent

*'often' 1635

*sic

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this I find that the fashion hath beene in some places, to lett in the ashes through some holes made and fitted for that purpose. See Gruter fol. 814. Now besides the great and common urne, it is likely that every particular person that dyed, had some lesse urne or vessell, particularly dedi= cated to his owne memorie; whereby both the number of the deceased, and the parties themselves might the bet= ter bee remembred. There might bee also another use of

these lesser pots, in my judgement very necessary, and that is, that by them the common great Urnes, might the better bee knowne and discerned one from another; which being so neare, in so small a compasse of ground, and not much unlike one another, might otherwise easily be mistaken. And this is the more likely, because of those many hundreds that have beene taken up of the lesser sort, scarce have there beene found any, of one and the same making*, I heare not of any thing that hath hitherto beene found, in these Newington urnes besides bones, and ashes; and sometimes cleere water. And so doe I reade of 'urnes' or Earthen vessels 'plenis limpidissima aqua', that have bene found elsewhere, as that which is mentioned in Gruterus fol. 927. I doubt not but many would be glad (as well as I) to know certainly what this place hath formerly beene. But alas! how should wee ('who are of yesterday, & know nothing') without the helpe of ancient records, recall the memorie of things forgotten so many hundred of yeares agoe? Thus much wee may certainly enough conclude: First, from the multitude of these 'urnes', that it was once a common burying place for the Romans. Secondly, from the Historie of the Romans in this land, that no 'urne' is there found, but is 1200. or 1300 Yeares old, at the least: so many ages of men have these poore earthen vessels (of so much better clay for durance then human bodies are,) outlasted both the makers of them, and the persons to whose memory they were consecrated. Lastly, from the place, which is upon an ascent (and for a good way beyond, hilly;) not

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farre from the Sea, and neere the high way; we may affirme in all probabilitie, that it was once the seate of a Roman station. If any man can teach me more of it, I shall heartily thanck him. Since this was written, I made another journey to the place, and spent some time there in digging, but with no successe. However, that I might not returne home emptie, the same M. Dearing gave me a peice of urne, which hath this inscription, F V L . L I N V S.

<Transcribed from the first edition (STC 962). There are no significant variants in subsequent editions, only small adjustments to the spelling and punctuation such as might have been made by the printers. A few of these corrections are noted in the margin above. '1635' refers to the second edition (STC 963), '1663' to the third edition (Wing A4228). – C.F. Apr. 2010.>