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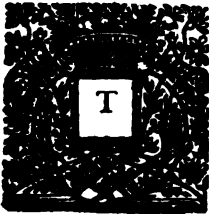


THE  
SLAUGHTER  
OF THE  
CHILDREN in *Bethlehem*,  
As an HISTORICAL FACT of  
*St. Matthew's* GOSPEL,  
VINDICATED, &c.

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S E C T. I.

*The silence of Josephus proved to be of no force against St. Matthew.*



THE Objection of the *Schematist*, I am now to examine, is the last against *St. Matthew*, and relates to the Fact of *Herod's ordering the children* in *Bethlehem from two years old and younger to be slain.*

Sect. I.  
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A 3

That

Sect. I. That *fact*, he pretends (a), is also sub-  
 ject to great difficulty. For how could so  
 extraordinary a thing be done, and NO  
 HISTORIAN, but the author of the  
 (supposed) second chapter of Matthew men-  
 tion it? And PARTICULARLY, how could Josephus be supposed to omit it,  
 if true?

(a) Sch. p. 36.

1. Thus the Schematist, to make his pretended difficulty appear the greater, gives his unwary Reader more than a broad intimation, that there are several old *Historians* still extant, who having writ at large of the Facts belonging to *Herod's* life; yet say nothing of the Children slain in *Bethlehem*. I blush for the *Objector*, to be obliged to make here such an observation. Sure he is not so ignorant, as not to know, that in truth there is not one such *writer* remaining, but *Josephus*, and even that before this *Jewish* Historian, there was none, as far as we can tell, but one *Nicolas*, a *Pagan*, and intimate friend of *Herod*; of whom we shall say more by and by.

2. Therefore the pretended *great difficulty* lies only in the silence of one single Author; as if we should reject all the Facts of those times, which are not supported by the express testimony of *Josephus*. But if such a method of arguing be admitted, we must also discard the most part of the *facts*.

*facts* related by the best *Historians* Antiquity ever had, and of which yet no man in his wits can form the least doubt. In a case of this nature an *Author* is generally believed, when he tells, though alone, a thing which he was able to know, either by himself, or by good witnesses; which was transacted in his own time, or not long before, and carries along no absurdity, no impossibility, no inconsistency with other facts well supported; and when the Writer himself is known besides, to be a man of probity, and to have had no apparent reason, interest, or view, whereby he could be prompted to invent a particular *fact*. Now that all these qualifications are to be eminently met with in the Writers of the *New Testament*, has been already a thousand times proved beyond all contradiction.

3. And why could not *Josephus* be supposed to omit that *Fact*, though true? Has he undertaken to write the *Life*, or a general History of *Herod*? If he had, could he not have omitted some *fact*, or other? He was not an eye-witness of the transactions of that time. When he wrote his Books of the *Jewish wars*, *Herod* had been dead fourscore years, and very near one hundred when the *Antiquities* of the *Jews* were published. The Chief, and likely the only Author whom *Josephus*



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could follow, and whom he quotes sometimes, was one *Nicolas of Damascus*, a particular friend of *Herod* (a), and consequently a man byas'd in his favour. And indeed his *partiality* has been noted by *Josephus* himself, particularly in his sixteenth Book of *Antiq.* There he says expressly, that *Nicolas living in Herod's kingdom, and together with him, he wrote his history, (of Herod) with a view to please that king, and advance his interest, mentioning those things only, which were honourable to him.*

So partial an Historian had then no doubt omitted the Fact of the *children* slain by *Herod*: And why could it not also be left out by *Josephus*, when he did not find it in *Nicolas's* chief Guide, though it had been a true event of *Herod's* reign?

4. Nor can we judge otherwise for what the *Schematist* adds to strengthen his difficulty; viz. *That Josephus SEEMS a great enemy to Herod, and to tell EVERY thing he knew to his disadvantage, and especially ALL his various acts of cruelty.* For the objector himself seems to confess what is certainly true, that all this is more than he can know and prove. His consciousness of that, is, I suppose, the


(a) See *Josephus's* *Antiq.* Book xvii. c. 5. and Book xiv. c. 1. where, besides that *great intimacy*, *Nicolas* is taxed of being a great flatterer of *Herod*.

the reason of his pointing in that place (a) Sect. I  
 at *Scaliger*: See, says he in the margin, *Scaligeri Animadversiones in Chronicon Eusebei*, p. 176. But there that great man proves nothing neither of what is affirmed above, nor does he say, that *Josephus* was a great enemy to Herod.

Besides, as *Scaliger* makes otherwise no manner of application of his *wondering*, why did not the candid *Schematist* rather interpret that *wondering*, as being an intimation, that *Scaliger* suspected in *Josephus* some want either of *knowledge* or *sincerity*?

The first may certainly be supposed, without any absurdity or unlikelihood. Nor is it possible to the *Schematist* to prove on the contrary, that *Josephus* must necessarily have *known* the Fact now in question. And we have already shewn, that it could not be in *Nicolas's* history, who was the chief, if not the only contemporary Writer, whom *Josephus* could take for his voucher. It might be also *unknown* to, or *concealed* by, the persons he consulted; the principal of whom were those of *Herod's* posterity.

As for *Josephus's* *sincerity* on the other hand, we may have in this case very good reason to suspect it. He knew without doubt, that the *Christians* had already mentioned this *fact*, and applied it to their

Sect. I.  their own Affairs, which *Josephus* seems not to have approved of, as our *Objector* will easily grant; and consequently that this was a sufficient motive for tempting *Josephus* to omit the *fact*. I do not doubt but the *Schematist* looks upon what is now in *Josephus* concerning *Jesus Christ*, as being intirely spurious and mere addition to his Text. If so, we may indeed wonder at his omitting such a transaction, and admire his affected silence. But then it would be unjust and unreasonable to conclude from thence, that all the *facts* concerning the rise of the Christian Religion, are false or dubious, notwithstanding they are attested by the sacred and pagan Historians.

But let us moreover suppose, that *Josephus* was very well apprized of the murder of the Babes in *Bethlehem*, and even that he was *a great enemy of Herod*, as the *Schematist* adds of his own; though *Josephus* tells equally the good and bad of that King's actions: Yet for all that, and all his supposed sincerity, he might easily have passed over this particular instance of *Herod's* cruelty, having given so many others, which were more, or at least as eminent. Add, that *Josephus* was not engaged to tell every individual action of *Herod*.



rod. And he declares himself, (a), That *though he looked upon truth, to be peculiarly the duty of an historian; there may be yet some bitter truths, which a grave and a modest author will make some difficulty to mention, even in the case of the worst of men, &c.* Which is the very case of Herod.

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To inforce those just observations, there is no need to repeat here at large all the objections already made, by several learned men, against *Josephus*, to shew his unfaithfulness, partiality, &c. in many passages of his books. Nor shall I insist upon what he owns himself (b), that some *writers* had related many things otherwise than himself; and especially one *Justus* of *Tiberius*, a cotemporary *Jew* with him, and who had lived with King *Agrippa* the younger, as his *Secretary*, though he published his History after the death of that Prince.

For all that, I easily grant *Josephus* to be true and sincere enough in the most part of his narrations, particularly in the *facts* of his own times, and of the latter age before him.

5. But

(a) *Joseph.* in his *Life*, p. 1013. in Sir *Rog. Lestranger's* Version.

(a) See *Josephus* in his preface to the history of the *Jewish* wars, and in his *life*, p. 1013, 1015.

Sect. I. 5. But then it is also certain, (and this is a new observation to be added) that for the greatest part of his *facts* there is *no historian* to confirm them. Consequently the same pretended *difficulty*, brought against *Matthew* from *Josephus's* silence, may be with greater strength retorted against *Josephus* himself. And even when some facts of his history are also found in *Tacitus*, for instance; yet 'tis agreed among men of learning, that *Tacitus* had borrowed them from *Josephus*; and so there is for the same, but the single authority of this writer: Which if it be admitted, sure there is no reason why we should not receive St. *Matthew's* authority, notwithstanding all the silence of *Josephus*.

In short, 'tis a sophistical method, as unjust as unreasonable, to endeavour to discredit the express testimony of an Historian, by objecting only the *silence* of a later Writer; which might proceed from many causes; though it be impossible at such a distance, as in our case, of above seventeen hundred years, to guess at the true cause and reason, with any certainty. Therefore 'tis equally unjust and absurd to pretend, that no other cause of such a silence, or omission, can be assigned, but the *falsehood* of the fact omitted.

S E C T.



## SECT. II.

*The testimony of Macrobius justified.*

**B**UT is there indeed no *Author*, besides St. *Matthew*, who took notice of the *murdering the children in Bethlehem*? Why, truly 'tis plain the *Schematist* would fain make his Readers believe it is so. For though he knew there is such an *Author*, yet he throws his testimony into a marginal note, whereon he may suppose few of his Readers, if any at all, will cast their eyes, after he had assured them in the text, that *no historian* mentions it. Besides in that note he is positive, that passage alledged, *is of no authority*, and then makes a shew of proving it, though his objections are as ill grounded, as the former against St. *Matthew*. I shall demonstrate this after I have represented the passage of *Macrobius*, as our adversary brings it.

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“ It is pretended, he says, that this  
 “ slaughter of the Infants is confirmed by  
 “ *Macrobius*; who in a Chapter of the  
 “ *ingenious sayings of Augustus against*  
 “ *others, and of others against him*, (Sa-  
 “ turn. l. 2. c. 4.) tells us, that *when*  
 “ *Augustus heard that Herod's son was*  
 “ *killed*

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 “ years old, whom Herod had ordered to  
 “ be slain, he said, It is better to be He  
 “ rod’s hog than his son.*

Herein an impartial Reader will at first sight perceive it is plain, that *Macrobius*, as to the *fact* in hand, says the very same thing we have in *Matthew’s History*; *viz.* that *Herod had ordered some infants, under two years old, to be slain.* What then can all the difficulties and objections imaginable avail against so clear an evidence? Can they make *Macrobius* unsay what he declares so clearly, so positively? Consequently it cannot be true, that *when this passage is considered, it will be found to be of no authority*, as the *Schematist* affirms. The contrary of his assertion will clearly appear, if we fairly examine his critical *considerations* upon that passage.

The first is thus expressed :

1. *“ Joseph Scaliger tells (a) us, that  
 “ though Antipater, Herod’s son (who was  
 “ killed about the time when the infants  
 “ are said to be slain) was convicted of  
 “ treachery to his father Herod, yet He-  
 “ rod submitted the matter to Augustus,  
 “ who himself gave orders for his death.  
 “ Wherefore Scaliger justly wonders, how  
 “ a*

(a) Animadv. in *Eusebii Chron.* p. 177. See also *Pri-  
 deaux’s Connect.* Vol. II. p. 654.



“ a saying could fall from Augustus, which  
 “ implies his ignorance of his own sen- Sect. II.  
 “ tence.” ~

*Answ.* I will not be so severe upon our Objector, as to make a long expostulation with him, for his representing here the expressions of *Scaliger* differently from what they were delivered by that great man. I own, that for the main point, *Scaliger* insinuates that *Augustus* had approved of the judgement given by *Varus* governour of *Syria*, against *Antipater*. But I maintain that *Scaliger* is therein strangely mistaken, that his *wondering*, instead of being *just*, as our adversary affirms, is built upon nothing; and 2dly, That consequently there is no room in this for the least difficulty, by which *Macrobius's* authority can be invalidated.

1. *Scaliger's* blunder has been already exploded many years ago (a); and 'tis indeed

(a) Besides *Christ. Noldius*, (*Hist. Idum.* n. 26. p. 151. Ed. 1. An. 1660. Franq;) a very learned man of this nation, *J. Gregory*, has this remarkable passage, which I remembered after I had writ my following observation.

“ It is enough to draw some doubt upon the tradition  
 “ of *Macrobius*. *Joseph Scaliger* believeth it all; but yet  
 “ his wonder is, that *Augustus* should make such a return  
 “ upon *Herod*, seeing that he himself did the murder, not  
 “ only upon this, but upon all the three sons. I do not  
 “ perceive that the learned man hath cause enough. *He-*  
 “ *rod* did but cast the envious part upon the Emperor,  
 “ (and officiously too) but left the main and principal  
 “ guilt upon his own head, and therefore nevertheless, to  
 “ all

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indeed so gross, that it may be easily discovered by any one, who has read in *Josephus* the account of *Antipater's* condemnation and death: If our difficulty-maker did not remember it better, than *Scaliger*, when he was reading this learned man's *Animadversions*; should he not afterwards have consulted again *Josephus* himself, when he was arguing in so grave a matter against the authority of *St. Matthew*? I think really that a lover and searcher of Truth, a free thinker, and a man careful of his own reputation, should have done it.

*Josephus* then, far from telling, that *Augustus* had given an absolute decisive sentence of death against *Antipater*, and had himself given orders for his death; quite contrary he assures us, that *Augustus* left that business so far to *Herod's* discretion, as to let him chuse either death or exile, for his son: Here are the words of *Josephus* in his *Antiquities*, B. XVII. c. ix. *When Herod was thus giving his last orders to his kindred, he received letters from his Embassadors at Rome, whom he had sent to Cæsar, [Augustus]. The substance thereof was; that Acme had been*  
put

“ all this the Emperor might very fitly retort as he did,  
“ That it were better to be *Herod's* hog than his son.

*Episcop. Pueror*, p 101. of *J. Gregory's Tracts*, printed after his death, which happened *March 13. 1646.*

put to death by Cæsar's order, for her plotting with Antipater; and that Antipater himself was left to his judgement, as his Father and his King, either to send him into Exile, or put him to Death, as he would (a).

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2. The Case being thus stated, how could Scaliger wonder, that Augustus was surprized, when he heard, that Herod, instead of choosing to banish his Son, and acting like a Father, who ought to feel still some pity for one so near him; had rather chosen to slay him, and had thus acted more like a Butcher than a Father? Might not Augustus justly reflect upon the barbarity of such a Father, when he heard the issue of his Permission given to Herod in respect to Antipater? Might he not justly say, *it was better to be Herod's Hog than his Son*, without having forgot his own Judgement and Sentence? How then could our Objector approve so much of Scaliger's Blunder, and say that his *wondering was just* upon this matter?

B

3. There-

(a) Ταῦτα δὲ ἐπιτέλλων αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς Συγγενεῖς, γραμματα παρῶν ὑπὸ τῶν εἰς Ρώμην Πρόσβου ἀποσταλθέντων εἰς Καίσαρα καὶ ἀναγιωσθήντων, τὸ κεφάλαιον ἦν, ὡς τῆς τοῦ Λαμῆος ἑγγυῆς τῷ Καίσαρι ἀνηρηθῆκε, ἰδοὺς Ἀντιπάτρον συγκατασχεθέντα: εἰσπὴν τοῦ τοῦ Ἀντιπάτρου, ὡς ἐπὶ γνώμῃ τῇ αὐτοῦ ποιεῖται, ὡς Πάτερ καὶ Βασιλεῖς, εἴτε Φυλάδα ἢ λαίονα ἢ δολιχίον, αὐτὸ κτείνω.



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3. Therefore the *Schematist* could not neither justly pretend that *Macrobius's* Authority suffers in the least from such a mistaken Difficulty. Does it not rather appear, that his account of *Augustus's* sharp and severe Reflection upon *Herod's* cruelty towards his Son, is very agreeable to *Josephus's* History in this Point, and is thereby strongly confirmed?

4. Besides, *Scaliger* never intended to carry his *wondering* fit any further, than what relates to *Augustus's* Joke; and for all that he makes use of *Macrobius's* Testimony for the slaughter of the *Infants* (a).

The same Observation is to be applied to Dr. *Prideaux*, though the *Schematist* is pleased to join him here with *Scaliger*, as if both united in rejecting *Macrobius's* Evidence, or in the same Objection against it. On the contrary, that learned *Dean* brings in the Testimony of *Macrobius*, for the *slaughter of the Infants*, and the *Sarcasm* of *Augustus* upon *Herod*. He finds only some Difficulty therein concerning the *Age* of *Herod's* Son, said to be slain with those *Infants*. His Words are these

(a) Quod puerorum cædes non multò præcesserit Antipatri casum, tum ex Evangelio constat, tum etiam ex *Macrobio*, qui infantes ab Heroæ cædi iussos, & interillos filium quoque ipsius Herodis pœnas dedisse, refert. *Scalig.* Ibid.

these following: “ *Macrobius*, a Writer  
 “ of the fifth Century (a) tells us, that a-  
 “ mong those Innocents *Herod* slew a  
 “ young Son of his own, and thereon  
 “ *Augustus* made this Reflection, that it  
 “ was better to be *Herod's* Hog than his  
 “ Son. But it is not likely, that *Herod*  
 “ should have a Child so young, as those  
 “ Innocents, at the Age he was then of.  
 “ The Death of *Antipater*, which hap-  
 “ pened about that time, considered with  
 “ that of *Alexander* and *Aristobulus*, for-  
 “ merly put to Death by him, may rather  
 “ be thought to have given the occasion  
 “ for that *Sarcasm*. (b) ” Thus the pious  
 Doctor in raising the Difficulty, offers at  
 the same time his Thoughts for its Soluti-  
 on; so far is he from making use of it  
 against *Macrobius's* Evidence and Autho-  
 rity, as the *Schematist* does in his next  
 consideration, whereof that Difficulty is  
 the Foundation.

II. *Secondly*, says he, *Augustus* by being  
 acquainted with the Treachery of *Antipa-*  
 ter, and himself condemning him to Death,  
 (c), knew him to be a Man grown; and  
 therefore could not make a Reflection,  
 which if pertinently understood, implies  
 B 2 him

(a) Saturn. Lib. II. Chap. 4.

(b) *Prid. Connoff.* Part II. Book IX. p. 654.

(c) How false this Assertion is in particular, I have just  
 now shewed.

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 two years old.

In my Answer to this *Consideration* I shall avoid, as much as possible, a tedious Dispute, being willing to make more Concessions than even our *Considerer* can reasonably desire.

1. I grant then, that *Augustus* knew certainly *Antipater* to be at his Death (*a*) past *Childhood*; and yet we cannot affirm upon any other historical Ground, that *Herod* had at that time any Child about *two years old* (*b*), or that he was slain among and with the *Innocents*; as some *Po-pish* modern Writers have asserted (*c*), from *Macrobius*.

2. The Question and Difficulty only lies about the true meaning of *Macrobius's* Expressions (*d*), which indeed seem to signify,

(*a*) Which happened *five Days* before his Father's; *Joseph*. Book I. c. 21. *Antiq.* xvii. c. 10.

(*b*) I would not say the thing is *impossible*, or *unlikely*, as it has been supposed by Dr. *Prideaux*, and before him by the famous *Casaubon*, Exercit. cont. Baron. §. xvi. p. 173. *An autem putandus est Herodes, qui septuagenarius, aut non multis mensibus minor obiit, ante biennium genuisse filium, qui bimulus cum caeteris sit occisus?* We see every Day Men older than *Herod* was, at that time, have Children.

(*c*) *Baronius* Annal. ad An. Ch. I. n. 30. *Dechorius* Annot. 10. in 1. p. Thes. Disput. de Ortu. Salvat. *Serarius* Opusc. T. I. de Herod. c. 21.

(*d*) In the Original *Macrobius* has it thus: *Cum audisset [Augustus] inter pueros, quos in Syria Herodes Rex Judaeorum intra bimatum iussit interfici, filium quoque ejus occisum ait; Melius est Herodis porcum esse, quam filium.*

nify, that a *Son of Herod* was also slain *among the Children two years old.* Sect. II.

It is stated and answered by the learned *J. Gregory*, above quoted, in the following manner; “ But what *Son of Herod's* could this be? It must be *Antipater*, or it must be none at all. But *Antipater* was more a Man than to be reckoned among the Children of two years old and under. And moreover then that, *Antipater* was not at *Bethlehem*, nor thereabouts at that time.

“ I know not upon what terms to make this hold, unless it be thus. *Herod* had obtained of *Augustus* the killing of two Sons already, and now solicited for the third. It was presently upon the killing of the Infants that *Herod's* Messenger came to *Rome* with the Accusations of his Son *Antipater*, and so both the passages came to the Emperor's ear at the same time, and this later, for the nearness, was misreckoned into the bargain.”

Which is as much as to say, that there is a *mistake* in *Macrobius's* insinuating, that a *Child of Herod* had been slain *among, or with* the other Children. To the same confession must amount what *Dr. Prideaux* advances in his *Solution* above recited.

B 3



3. Ano-

Sect. II. 3. Another way has been offer'd by the learned *Noldius* (a). According to him, *Macrobius* means only, that the murder of the *Innocents*, and that of *Antipater*, having been committed at some few days distance, both were told together at *Rome* to *Augustus*; and not that *Antipater* was kill'd together, and at the same time with the *Innocents*. As if *Macrobius* had said, *Augustus* heard at once, that *Herod* had, besides those *Children*, slain also his own *Son*. And it is not a good consequence, to conclude, that a person is but two years old, because he is reported to have been kill'd, *with* some others of that age (b).

At least, I am sure, we may affirm, that *Macrobius's* expression [*Inter, &c.*] is frequently used by Latin Writers, to signify that *when*, or *while* some things had been a doing, others happen'd, or were transacted, tho' of a different nature, and even at some distance, both of time and place. For to prove this,

(a) Si *Macrobius* statuit *Bimulos* simul interfectos cum *Antipatro*, utique hallucinatur. Sed nihil opus hoc de ipso Suspiciari: Cum dicere possit, *Bimulorum & Antipatri* cædes, quod paucis tantum diebus differrent, uno tempore *Romæ* auditas, sed non uno factas. Ut illud *Macrobii*: *Inter pueros, &c.* possit exponi, *præter pueros, &c.* *Christi Noldi*. *Hist. Idum.* p. 68. Ed. An. 1660.

(b) *Noldius* L. C. p. 148. Ex hoc Loco *Macrobii* *Decherius* malè elicit hunc parologismum: *Herodes cum Infantibus bimulis suum quoque filium interfecit; ergo cum bimulum interfecit.* Nam præcisè ex verbis *Macrobii* illud non potest confici. Qui *inter Bimulos* occiditur, non statim *Bimulus, &c.*



this, many instances (a), could be brought, if it were necessary. Therefore I hope, that Interpretation will not appear to the *Schematist* to be forc'd and out of the way. Otherwise he may remember here, what he says afterwards, That *Macrobius liv'd in the end of the 4th Century*, that is to say, when the purity of the *Latin Tongue* was almost lost; and also that *Macrobius* himself expressly declares, he was not a *Latin* born, and begs his Reader's pardon, if in his *Discourses* be not found the *original Roman Elegancy* (b).

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4. Nevertheless I am willing to suppose, that *Macrobius* implies that he, at least, conceiv'd *Herod's Son* had been kill'd among the *Infants, under two years old*.

But then I maintain, that nothing is more unreasonable than the consequence our Ob-

B 4

jector

(a) Among which may be reckoned these two Passages of *Macrobius* himself: Lib. I. C. VI. INTER HÆC Avieni dicta Flavianus & Eustathus ——— ingressi alacriorem fecere Cætum, &c. Cap. VII. INTER HÆC Evangelus, petitu omnium temperatus, M. Varronis, inquit, Librum vobis arbitrator non ignotum, &c. To which I shall add only two more of a much antienter Writer: *Vel. Patercul.* Lib. II. C. 83. INTER hunc apparatus belli, Plan- cus non judicio recta legendi, ——— transfugit ad Cæsarem. Et C. 45. Peridem tempus P. Clodius, homo nobilis, — Et actus incesti reus, ob pinitum INTER religiosissima P. R. sacra adulterium, &c.

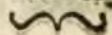
(b) *Macrobius Saturn.* L. I. *Pref.* Nisi sibi nos sub alio ortos Cælo Latinæ Linguae vena non adjuvet. Quod ab his, ——— petitu impetratumque volumus, ut æqui bonique consulant, si in nostro sermone nativa Romani Oris elegantia desideretur, &c.

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jector would draw from thence ; as if therefore it follow'd, that *Augustus* never utter'd such a *Fest*, and that there never was such a slaughter of the *Infants*. Why do not he rather conclude, that *Herod* never had a Son, whom he put to death ? Sure this consequence would be much more *Logical*, since that Son of *Herod* is the principal matter *Macrobius* has here in view. But then this consequence must affect the authority of *Josephus*, upon whom the *Schematist* builds here his chief Objections against *Matthew*. However, as notwithstanding *Macrobius's* suppos'd Blunder, in putting two things together, which should be distinguish'd, *viz.* The slaughter of the *Infants*, and the death of *Herod's* Son, who was a *man grown* ; yet it is most certain, he had good authority for the truth of the *fact*, concerning the killing of *Herod's* son : So we may very justly believe, that he had also his authority, both for the *Fest* of *Augustus* on that occasion, and for the *Fact* of the *Infants* slaughter. And these two *Facts* cannot be rejected, no more than the murder of *Herod's* son, tho' the Blunder of *Macrobius* should be never so great. We have in the best *Historians* many instances of like Blunders, and want of attention ; and yet the *facts*, misplac'd by them, are not, singly taken, the less true for all that misplacing of them. If  
the

the want of memory, or due consideration, were a sufficient ground for casting the reproach of Falsehood upon a writer, What would become, for instance, of *Scaliger's* reputation, whose blunder and want of memory, (tho' he had so vast a one) we have seen in the passage, quoted above upon this very Subject ?

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III. The following *Consideration* will not detain us so long, because of its striking weakness, and because the ground of it may be reduced to the former.

*Thirdly*, says the *Schematist*, *The remarks of Augustus, as Grotius (a) observes, has no relation to the slaughter of the Infants, but only to that of Herod's Son. And I add, that, Augustus reflecting only on Herod's Cruelty to his Son, evinces, that he knew nothing of his Cruelty in destroying the Infants. And as Augustus could not have been ignorant of it, if it had been true, so he could not have omitted the mentioning of it, when he was satyrizing Herod's Cruelty.*

1. To shew, how little pertinent all this is to the purpose, we need but to join with it the consequence intended by the Objector, and which ought to contain the Position he has undertaken to prove, viz. *That the Fact of the Infants slain by Herod's order is not confirm'd by Macrobius ; and that*

(a) Ad. Matt. ii. 16.



Sect. II. *that his Passage, wherein however it is certainly found, is of no authority.* For how, pray, does this follow from what *Macrobius* says not, or from what he should have said more, according to the fancy of any one, who has a strong itch of contradicting? Why forsooth, because *Macrobius*, as his design, in the Chap. quoted, required it, relates only the *Sarcasm of Augustus* upon *Herod's* cruelty to his Son; does it therefore follow that *Augustus* knew nothing of the *Infants* slaughter, which yet *Macrobius* assures that Emperor heard at the same time; or that he said nothing at all of it then? Who in cold Blood can draw such Inferences from *Macrobius's* silence; when it does not appear, he was obliged, by the design of his Narration, to tell more Circumstances? Who can reasonably, from that *silence*, affirm what *Augustus* omitted, or omitted not, and what he should have added to the only reflection *Macrobius* thought fit to record? How then can the Objector be so positive, that *Augustus* reflected only on *Herod's* Cruelty to his Son, and that this reflection evinces, that *Augustus* knew nothing of *Herod's* cruelty in destroying the *Infants*? And why, pray again, could not *Augustus* have omitted reflecting upon this Fact, when he was satyrizing *Herod's* Cruelty,

*elty*, not in general, as the Objector so fairly insinuates, but in particular *to his Son*? Sect. II.

In short, *Macrobius* is at present the only Ancient Writer, who speaks of this satyrical Jest, and his Design, in relating it with some other witty Sayings, was not to give us all the Circumstances attending every one of those Jest. He does not neither tell us, whether *Augustus* uttering the same was standing, sitting, or lying down upon his Couch; and yet he must have been in one or the other Posture. Why then does not the *Considerer* conclude, that the omission of such a necessary Circumstance *evinces*, that *Macrobius* knew nothing of the matter, and that *Augustus* never made any of those *Jests*? This Consequence would certainly be as reasonable, as any of the *Schematist's* Inferences.

2. For what concerns *Grotius*, whose Authority is here brought in, he neither argues against the *Fact* it self, nor reasons against *Macrobius*, as the *Schematist* does. It seems, indeed to him, that *Macrobius*, by a mistake, has put together two different Stories of the same time. But to make that Conjecture of his likely, instead of affirming with our Objector, That *Augustus* could not have been ignorant of the *Infants slaughter, if true*; quite contrary he assures, That it was too inconsiderable, to have reach'd *Augustus's Ear*; " because it  
" was



**Seet. II.** *~* was done in a place of few Inhabitants ;  
 or it might be pretended to have hap-  
 pened in a Tumult and Sedition, with-  
 out the King's Command ; or lastly, be-  
 cause it was obscur'd by other much  
 greater Crimes of *Herod*. Then *Gro-*  
*tius* adds, that the killing of *Herod's Son*  
 was alone to the purpose, and not the  
 killing of the Infants, which could not  
 oblige *Augustus* to say, *That it was bet-*  
*ter to be Herod's Hog, than his Son.*

There is no need, I am sure, I should  
 enlarge here in shewing, what every in-  
 telligent Reader can at first sight perceive ;  
 that those suspicions and assertions of *Gro-*  
*tius* are groundless, and too weak for prov-  
 ing that suspected Mistake of *Macrobius*.  
 Which after all is only pretended to be in  
 his putting wrong together two Things,  
 whereof one was foreign to the other ; but  
 not in having invented both, or either of  
 them. Let any one judge of the goodness  
 and strength of *Grotius's* reasoning, when  
 he reads his Words, I have put in the Mar-  
 gin (*a*) ; remembering at the same time,  
 that

(*a*) *Grot.* in *Matt.* ii. 16. Latine admodum quisquis  
 ille est ex quo *Macrobius* *Augusti* dicta descripsit, *intra*  
*bimatum*: Nisi ab ipso *Macrobio*, qui *Theodosianis* tem-  
 poribus vixit honoresq; gessit, ac proinde aut *Christianus*  
 fuit, aut certe legit *Apostolor.* Libros, hoc additum ma-  
 luitus, quod est credibilis, quia non satis esse dici potest  
*Antipater* *Herodis* filius, jam provecæ ætatis, quique  
*Bethlehemi* non fuit, inter *infantes Bethlehemiticos* oc-  
 cisus,

that tho' he has been a very Learned Man, yet he was very far from being *infallible*, or without prejudice.

3. And even supposing, that *Macrobius* was really thus mistaken, yet the *Schematist* cannot reasonably make use of it against the Truth of the *Fact* now in hand; which is not doubted of by *Grotius*, and cannot be justly question'd by any Body else, notwithstanding all the suspected Mistakes in *Macrobius*, as I have demonstrated above in Confuting the second *Consideration*. So that I need not here say any thing more about it.

I will only give one Instance or two of such *Mistakes* in *Macrobius*, which yet cannot hurt the *Facts* he mentions. Thus *Lib. I. c. xxiii.* He cites a place from *Plato*, as being in his *Timæus*; and yet it is not to be found there, but in his *Phædrus*;

as

eifus. Adde quod Antipater occisus 5<sup>o</sup>. ante mortem Herodis die, hæc autem Janiena ante aliquanto contigit, ut docent, quæ sequuntur inf. Com. 19. Videtur ergo Macrobius errore quodam Historias duas ejusdem temporis miscuisse. Certe Janiena illa infantum, aut ob rariorem habitantium in eo tractu, aut quia tumultus Seditioisve ebtantu, dissimulato Regit imperio, fuit peracta, aut denique quod majoribus Herodis Scelerib. obscuraretur, minus nobilis fuit, quam ut ad Augusti aures perveniret; Quippe cum nec Josephus, scriptor tam diligens, ejus meminere, Deinde sola filii caedes ad rem pertinet; Socievitia autem οἱς τῶς δετῶς καὶ κῆρα, efficere non potuit, ut diceret Augustus malle se Herodis porcum esse quam filium.



Sect. II. as the most Learned *John Rainold* (a) observed 130 years ago. Again, *Macrobius Lib. II. c. xii.* quoting a Passage of *Pliny the Elder*, who wrote under *Vespasian*, he puts him under *Trajan*, and so confounds him with *Pliny the younger*, the former's Nephew and adopted Son; in which Mistake he follows a much older Writer of the Emperor *Severus* his Reign; one *Sammonicus Serenus* (b). But for all that, it is a matter of Fact most certain, that the very Things and Passages cited by *Macrobius* are in those Authors he names.

IV. The *Schematist's* last Consideration against *Macrobius*, runs thus:

1. "Fourthly, *Macrobius* liv'd in the end of the 4th Century, and is no Evidence for any Fact done in the beginning of the 1st Century, or any Sayings of *Augustus*. And it is an unanswerable Objection to the Authority of *Macrobius*, that what he says occurs in no other before him."

2. "Nor is the Authority of *Macrobius* the better for being a Christian, as some [ *Barthii Adversaria*, p. 2258. & *Grotius ad Matth.* ] suppose he might be."

Here

(a) *Lib. de Eccles. Rom. Idol*, Li I. C. 5. p. 198. Edit. Oxon. An. 1596.

(b) Sic *Jos. Scalig. Anim. in Euseb. Chr.* p. 207. & post eum *J. Fabric. Bibl. Lat. L. III. C. 5.* Vid. *Plin. Vit.* p. 26.

Here we have two different Objections heap'd together, which I have distinguish'd, and shall answer distinctly one after another.

Sect. II.

The first is properly built upon the want of an *older Author* to support the Testimony of *Macrobius*, who liv'd so long after the *Fact* in question. So this is the very same Objection made at the beginning against *Sr. Matthew*; and therefore our former answer thereupon may serve here, without any further trouble. Especially if we observe, that the *Schematist* uses here the same Art, supposing again, what he must know to be absolutely false, *viz.* That we have still all the Authors, who wrote before *Macrobius*, since the beginning of the first Century. The falsehood of which supposition being so generally known, if it be but remember'd here, it wou'd be sufficient for the discovery of the Fallacy lying in that first Objection.

However, I am willing to add some particular Observations in relation to *Macrobius*; that our Reader may the better know the Character of some Men, who now a days have such an unhappy fecundity of Imagination, in making groundless Objections.

1. It is certain that *Macrobius* cannot be brought in, as an Eye-witness of the *Facts done* some Centuries before him. Nor is  
he



Sect. II. he cited as such in the Controversy before us. But what then? Could he not have what he says upon it, from some of those many Authors extant in his time and lost since? Does he not expressly acquaint his Readers, that this Work of his is nothing but a Collection taken out of the Books he had read, either *Greek* or *Latin*, which he had made for the use of his Son *Eustathius* (a)? And even he assures his Son, that (b), often he produces his matters in the very Words of the Authors he had read, desiring that he would not blame him for it, when he shou'd find it out in his Studies, since it was done with a Design.

Hence it is, that not only he names at every Page the ancient *Authors*, whose Passages he alledges; but he often transcribes Word for Word some others, whose Names he does not mention. This is discover'd in several Instances, by the help of some of the few Books, which are now preserv'd (c); and had we more still, no doubt, but we shou'd

(a) Saturn. Lib. I. Præf. p. 154. Edit. Plaut. An. 1597. Quâ solâ utor. Quidquid mihi, vel te jam in Lucem edito, vel antequam nascereris, in diversis, seu Græcæ, seu Romanæ linguæ Voluminibus elaboratum est, id totum sit tibi scientiæ suppellex, &c.

(b) Nec mihi vitio vertas, si res, quas ex Lectione varia mutuabor, ipsis sæpe verbis, quibus ab ipsis Auctoribus exarratæ sunt. Præf.

(c) Thus *Macrobius* transcribes often Word for Word long Passages of *Aulus Gellius*, whom he does not name. The most part, for Instance, of *Macrobius's* third Chapter; Book



shou'd find out larger Proofs of the same kind; and of *Macrobius's* Carefulness to mention nothing of old times, but with the Authority of some or other good Writer.

Sect. II.

2. Therefore nothing is more unreasonable, than our Objector's Pretension, that *it is an unanswerable Objection to the Authority of Macrobius, That what he says occurs in no Other before him.* How could it be found now after the loss of so many Writers, whom *Macrobius* had in his time, whereof we have not at present the hundredth part?

And consequently the *Objection* is by that Observation answer'd, as easily, as reasonably. For, tho' we have lost so many ancient Authors quoted by *Macrobius*; yet besides his Affirmation, that he collected the various matters of his Work out of former *Authors*, and often in their very Words; we have moreover a demonstration of his veracity and faithfulness, by the concurrence of some Writers now preserv'd, in a great number of the Things he treats of.

3. It is then very reasonable to believe, that in other Places, and other *Facts*, where *Macrobius* omits the Name and Quotation of his *Authors*, yet he had certainly

Book I. is copied out of *Gellius*. Noct. Att. L. III. c. 2. &c. Lib. VI. c. 8. from *Gelli* Lib. V. c. 81. The 7th Book is taken from *Plutarch*; and in other Places he follows *Alexander Aphrodisi*, verbatim, &c.

C

some

Sect. II. some good ones, for what he says concerning the Times so long before his Age; tho' now we cannot discover and prove it, for want of those many Writers extant in his time, but entirely lost at present.

4. Otherwise the same Objection may destroy for ever the authority of all the best Historians Antiquity had, who have luckily escaped the fate, which abolished so many other Books. *Tacitus*, for instance, and *Suetonius*, must not be believ'd in any thing they write of *Augustus* above a hundred years after his death; and much less Credit must have *Dion Cassius*, a Man of so high a rank, and so justly esteem'd, who compos'd his History above two hundred years after that Emperor, and who has so many *Facts*, not to be found in any other Author.

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S E C T. III.

*The suspected Christianity of Macrobius groundless.*

AS for the other Objection, taken from the suspected *Christianity* of *Macrobius*, it is worded somewhat strangely and ambiguously, to say nothing worse. I would in Charity suppose, the *Schematist* means

means only, that if *Macrobius* had been a *Christian*, his Testimony is not the better for that; because in that case, what he says of the *Innocents*, might be taken from St. *Matthew*, and therefore cannot be a new Evidence, different from that of our *Evangelist*. Otherwise, if the *Schematist* knows any thing of the Christian Religion, he must know, that a true Christian is an enemy to Lies, Forgerys, Impostures, Occasional Conformity for a Place of Honour, or Profits, &c.

But let the *Schematist's* meaning be what it will, I may aver, that every impartial Reader thinks, it was the Duty of a candid Objector, before he vented such a Reflection upon *Macrobius*, as a Christian, to have offer'd some better Proof, than a single *might be*; which is all the *Schematist* brings in, and borrow'd too from a couple of modern Writers, who neither give any Reason for their *suspicion*. *Grotius*, at least, in the Passage above recited has none; and I may suppose the same of *Barthius*, without inquiring further about his Book, seeing the *Schematist* puts him with *Grotius*, as fancying only, that *Macrobius* *might be a Christian*.

Instead of that, I shall here clearly prove the reverse of that groundless *Suspicion*, by solid and strong Reasons, taken from *Macrobius* himself.

C 2

1. The




Se&t. III. 1. The *first* is from the Nature and Design of his Book, in which we find the *Fact* in question, without touching the other concerning *Scipion's Dream*, tho' it be written with the same *Heathenish* Notions, and in the same Stile.

Now then in that Work of the *Satur-nals*, *Macrobius* writes chiefly of Religious *Heathenish* Matters; and, like a thorough good *Pagan*, zealously vindicates *Heathenism*, as much as he can. In this view he endeavours, with all the artifice and learning possible, to make it appear more reasonable, than Christians represented it, when they traduc'd the gross *Idolatry of Pagans*. This (a), *Macrobius* would fain extenuate, by pretending to shew, that their thousand different *Gods* and *Goddeses* were nothing, but the *Sun*, the *Moon*, the *Earth*, &c.

Is all that stuff, and the like, a fit Work to prove, that the Writer of it was, or might be a *Christian*?

2. Does he speak like one breathing *Christianity* in the least, when he says, for instance: In our *sacred Ceremonies* WE WORSHIP *Janus* with a double Face, &c. In *sacris quoque INVOCAMUS Janum Geminum, Janum Patrem*, &c.

(a) According to the Method of *Porphyry* before him, quoted Lib. I. c. 17. *Sicut & Porphyrius testatur Miner-vam esse virtutem solis, &c.*

&c. (b): WE ADORE Apollo; that is Sect. III.  
to say, the Sun;—*Apollinem, id est so-*  
*lem, modò sospitatem modò pestem signifi-*  
*cantibus cognominibus ADORAMUS* (c). 

I could produce a hundred such Expressions, if it were necessary. But I shall only add, that I am ready to submit, if, by some other clear Passages, the *Schematist* be ever able, with all his cunning, to prove *Macrobius* a Christian.

3. In the mean while I shall put in here another Consideration, to shew the contrary: Which is, that *Macrobius* in the *Conversations*, or *Dialogues*, whereof his seven Books are composed, has chosen, for his *Interlocutors* and Speech-makers, some Men, we certainly know to have been the most rank and obstinate *Heathens* of his time.

Let us begin with *VETTIUS AGORRIUS PRÆTEXTATUS*, in whose House the *Conversations* are suppos'd to have been held, during the *Saturnalia*, those fine *Heathenish* Holy-Days, dedicated to *Saturn* (d). His *Paganism* cannot be more open, than it is in *Macrobius*, who not only makes him set forth

C 3

that

(b) *Saturn.* Lib. I. C. 9. & C. 17.

(c) *Ibid.* Lib. I. C. 17.

(d) *Saturnalibus apud VETTIUM PRÆTEXTATUM Romanæ Nobilitatis Proceres doctique alii congregantur, &c.* *Macrobius* L. I. C. 1. in *Argum. Oper. Vid. et Cap. 2.*



Seâ. III. that long Discourse containing about XX Chapters, wherein he explains the nature of the *Heathenish* Gods and Religious Ceremonies; but besides, he has pointed out very plainly the *sacred Offices* and Dignities he was indow'd with (a). These are particularly recited in the Marble, which was, it seems, the *Base* of the Statue dedicated to him by publick Authority, according to the Prayer of the Senate made in their Name by *Symmachus* (b), to the Emperors *Theodosius* and *Valentinianus*. The Inscription still extant has among the rest the following remarkable Words: VETTIO AGORIO PRAETEXTATO V. C. PONTIFICI VESTAE PONTIFICI SOLI QVINDECIMVIRO AVGVRI TAVROBOLIATO CVRIALI NEOCORO HIEROPHANTAE PATRI SACRONVM, &c. (c). It was dedicated the first of *February* in the IIIrd Consulship of *Valentinianus* II. with *Eutropius*, i. e. *An. Dom.*

387.

(a) Saturn. Lib. I. C. 7. Hic *Avienus* in PRÆTEXTATUM expectationem consulentis remittens; Licet omnes, ait, qui assunt, pari doctrinâ polleant; sacrorum tamen VETTIVS unice conscius potest tibi & Originem Cultus, qui huic DEO [*Saturno*] impartitur, & Causam Festi solemnis aperire.

Cap. 17. Hic *Avienus* — Et quia sacrorum omnium PRÆSULEM esse, Te VETTI PRÆTEXTATE, divina [Scil. Imperatorum mandata] voluerunt, perge, quaeso.

(b) *Sym.* Ep. 32. Lib. X. Edit. Parci.

(c) *Gruter.* Inscr. p. MCII. n. 2.

§ 87. Another Statue had been intended by the *Vestals*, he having been a Priest of *Vesta*, as we read in *Symmachus* (b), who did not spare his Praises in his Letters to him alive, and after his death to the Emperors (c). Sect. III.

No wonder then if St. *Hierom* calls him a *sacrilegious Man*, and a *worshipper of Idols* (d), and acted so severely against the *Christians*, in that Dispute between *Damasus* and *Ursinus*, about the See of *Rome*, he being then Governour and *Præfectus* of the City (e).

*SYMMACHUS* himself, whom we have already often quoted, is another of the *Interlocutors* in *Macrobius*. His *Heathenism* would sufficiently appear by his intimacy with *Prætextatus*, had we no other Evidence. But it fully appears thro' all his *Epistles*, and especially by that famous *Petition* (f), which in the Name of the Senate he presented to the Emperors

C 4 in

(b) Epist. 36. Lib. 2.

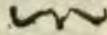
(c) See Lib. I. Ep. 44.—55. & Lib. X. Ep. 30—32.

(d) Miserabilis PRÆTEXTATUS, qui designatus Consul est mortuus, homo Sacrilegus, & Idolorum Cultor. Solebat Ludens beato Papæ Damaso dicere: Facite me Rom. Urbis Episcopum, & protinus ero Christianus. Hieronym. Epist. ad Pammachi. de errorib. Joan. Hieros. p. 264. T. II. Ed. Erasmi.

(e) In the Year 367 and 368. See *Socrat. Hist. Lib. IV. c. 24.* & *Ammi Marcellin. Lib. xxvii. p. 349.* Ed. Vales.

(f) Lib. X. Ep. 61. DDD. Valentiniano, Theodosio & Arcadio.



Sect. III.  in behalf of the *Vestals*, and for the restoring of *Pagan* Ceremonies, and which was so zealously oppos'd by St. *Ambrosius* and *Prudentius*, the Christian Poet of that Age. We have also a shorter Demonstration in a Marble preserved to this time at *Rome* in the *Villa Casali*. Having transcribed it my self better than it had been published before (a), the curious Reader will not be sorry to see it here.

Q. AVR. SYMMACHO  $\overline{V}C$   
 QVAEST. PRAET. PONTIFICI  
 MAIORI CORRECTORI  
 LUCANIAE ET BRITTIORVM  
 COMITI ORDINIS TERTII  
 PROCONS. AFRICAE PRAEF  
 VRB. COS. ORDINARIO  
 ORATORI DISSERTISSIMO  
 Q. FAB. MEMM. SYMMACHVS  
 $\overline{V}C$ . PATRI OPTIMO.

At the top in the *Cornish* this Word is read EVSEBII. Which I take to signify, that this Inscription, tho' erected at the expence of *Symmachus's* Son, had been composed by *Eusebius*. And this may be the same Man with that brought in by *Macrobius*

(a) *Raines's* Inscr. p. 399. *Spon.* Miscel. p. 123.

*Macrobius* among his *Interlocutors*, and praised as a famous Professor of *Rhetorick* of those times (a). Sect. III  
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I shall omit another Inscription (b) which I have copied in the same *Villa*, and was dedicated by the same *Symmachus* the Son, to the Grandfather of his Wife, *Virius Nichomachus Flavianus*, who had the same Religious Dignity of *Pontifex Major*, and who seems to have been the Father of *Flavianus*, another of *Macrobius's* Speakers, whom he makes *Symmachus* (c), to extol much above the Father (d), whereby alone

(a) Facundum & eruditum virum EUSEBIUM Rhetorem, inter *Græcos* præstantem omnibus idem nostrâ ætate professis, doctrinæ *Latinaris* haud inscium Prætextatus meum in Locum [*Postumiani*] invitari imperavit; *Saturn.* Lib. I. C. I. Vid. c. 6.

(b) It has been published several times, as by *J. Ger. Vossius*, de Hist. Lat. Lib. III. P. 4. C. 2. *Henr. Valetii*. Not. ad Am. Marc. L. 28. fin. and from thence by *Reinesii*. Synt. p. 441. *Spon.* Misc. p. 123.

(c) The Character of *Flavianus*, drawn by *Symmachus* himself, has been already observed by the learned *Reinesiius*, Epist. 69. p. 624. & Inscript. p. 78. *Flaviani* quem dixi, Pontificis erga Ceremonias Deorum & festa Divinitatis imperata solenniaq; Religio & Pietas, ex Epist. 34. & 53. Lib. 2. *Symmachi*, agnosci potest: Quâ munus suum, in sacris *Matris Magnæ Deum* celebrandis, imprimis castum seu jejunium *Symmacho*, ceu Collegæ (nam & hunc *Pontificem* fuisse adparet ex Ep. 41. L. I. 31. L. II. & 99. L. IX.) eum mandavisse, quòd absens istarum feriarum diebus esset, legimus.

(d) Tùm *Symmachus*, — ne quid ad perfectionem Coëtus desideretur, invitandos ad eundem congressum conviciumque censeo FLAVIANUM, qui quantum sit, mirandum! Viro venusto PATRE præstantior, non minus ornato morum, gravitateque vitæ, quàm copiâ profundæ eruditionis, asseruit, &c. *Saturn.* L. I. C. 8. Vid. *Symmachi* Epist. L. II. integ. *Flaviano* script.



Señ. III. lone we can easily conclude, that he was of the same stamp, without enlarging upon what *Symmachus* himself says of him in his *Epistles*.

The like conclusion must be drawn concerning another of the Interlocutors, *COECINA ALBINUS*, whom *Macrobius* represents, as most united with *Symmachus*; having both the same Age, Manners, and Studies: *Et venerunt Aurelius Symmachus, et Coecina Albinus, cum etate, tum etiam moribus, ac studiis inter se conjunctissimi*; Satur. L. I. c. ii.

But to shorten this tedious examination, if those Instances seem not yet sufficient to the *Schematist*, there is a general Character of all the Interlocutors, given by *Macrobius*, Lib. I. c. xxiv. where he makes them ALL admire and applaud *Prætextatus*, after his long Discourse of the *Heathenish* Gods, and praise his Religion, Piety, profound Learning in their *Theology*, and great Eloquence, &c. *Hic cum Prætextatus fecisset finem loquendi, OMNES in eam affixis vultibus admirationem stupore prodebant: dein Laudare, hic memoriam, ille doctrinam, CUNCTI RELIGIONEM, affirmantes hunc esse unum arcane DEORUM naturæ conscium, qui solus Divina et assequi animo et eloqui posset ingenio.*

Having

Having thus defeated the pretended *Christianity* of *Macrobius*, and, I hope, to the Satisfaction of the Readers, who are sincere lovers of Truth; I shall conclude with another Remark, to shew that *Macrobius* did not take from *St. Matthew* what he says upon the slaughter of the *Immocents*. This appears from the difference, which is in their accounts. For *St. Matthew* tells us, it was done in a particular Town of *Judea* call'd *Bethlehem*; and *Macrobius* speaks of the whole Province of *Syria* in general, as if it had been all affected thereby, and *Herod* could have extended his Kingly Power over all that Province, where yet he had none. Had *Macrobius* been a *Christian*, he would certainly have been better instructed, by his frequenting the Christian Churches, wherein the *Gospels* were continually read. Nevertheless this inaccuracy of *Macrobius*, or of the *Pagan* Author, he follows, does not in the least hurt the chief Matter, we are concern'd for, the truth of the *Fact*, which for all that is so clearly deliver'd in *Macrobius*, as well as in *St. Matthew*, and some of the first Christian Writers, *Justin Martyr*, *Eusebius*, &c.

Sect. III.



POSTSCRIPT



# POSTSCRIPT

CONCERNING

## *Virgil's* IV<sup>th</sup> ECLOGUE.

THE Author of the *Scheme*, arguing (a) against my Lord Bishop of *Conventry's Conjecture*, (for he gives it for no more) concerning the grounds of *Virgil's* IVth Eclogue, has done me the Honour of putting my Name in a Marginal Note, as if I were one of those, who had beforehand confuted the *Bishop's* Notions.

There reciting in *part* the Title of a Manuscript Dissertation, I had mention'd in the Preface of my Book about the pretended *Universal Peace*, at the Birth of our Saviour (b), the *Schematist* adds, that my Dissertation *being yet unpublished*, the Bishop *has the peculiar advantage of consulting it, for his own Conviction*.

This, and the whole Note, I ought, without doubt, to take, as one of those extremely

(a) Pag. 50. 51.

(b) Jani Templum Christo nascente Reserat, &c. Roter, An. 1700.



extremely witty *Sneers*, so common in the  
 Stile of the *Schematist*. For I suppose, he  
 does not really believe, that so learned a  
 Person as my Lord Bishop, wants my poor  
 help for *his own Conviction* upon any  
 Subject ; or that I am so foolishly conceit-  
 ed, as to think his Lordship does want it.

1. To give him a serious Answer, I shall  
*first* observe, that this *very Learned*, Sa-  
 gacious, and Polite *Schematist* must know,  
 that the Bishop could find nothing in my  
 Manuscript Dissertation for *his Conviction*,  
 against his own *Conjecture*. For since the  
*Schematist* says expressly, that, *if he mis-*  
*take not*, the Bishop (p. 14.) *highly Com-*  
*mends that Manuscript Tract on another*  
*account* ; he must therefore be conscious,  
 that the Bishop having read my Dissertation,  
 he had also seen what the *Schematist* thinks  
 to be therein against the Bishop's *Notions*  
 on this matter, if in reality my Dissertati-  
 on contain'd any such Confutation. Or  
 at least in this supposition, the *Schematist*  
 might naturally imagine, that the Bishop  
 had not found therein any thing strong e-  
 nough for a contrary *Opinion* ; and conse-  
 quently, that no better *Conviction* could  
 be got by reading again my Dissertation  
 either in Manuscript or in Print. To what  
 purpose then does that Author bring me,  
 and my Writings into this Dispute ?

2. Besides,

2. Besides, the truth is, that my Dissertation confutes nothing like my Lord Bishop's *Conjecture*. For in a sort of Preamble I mention only the Interpretation of some Ancient Writers, who look'd upon this Piece of *Virgil*, as a true Divine Prediction; such especially is the Explication given by *Eusebius*, under the Name of *Constantinus* the Great: Of which a Learned Jesuit (a) speaks thus: *Constantinum certè tantum Imperatorem non pudit Bucolicum istud, non pro vulgari profanove, sed pro sacro Cælestive, sanctis Nicenæ Synodi Patribus, ceu Prognosticum, prælegere & explicare, &c.*

I mention at the same time another Interpretation borrow'd of *Servius*, that old Commentator of *Virgil*, and improv'd by most part of the Modern Grammarians and Criticks, particularly by *David Blondell*, tho' he confuted the former. They pretend that *Virgil* wrote that *Eclogue* after the Birth of a Son of *Pollio*, taking this opportunity for praising both *Augustus* and *Pollio*.

Having refer'd my Reader to *Blondell's* Book (b) for a further Confutation of the first Opinion, I propose another Method for entirely demolishing all, and especially the

(a) *Ægid. Bucherius*, in *Belgio Romano*, Lib. 2. C. 6. *Judicium Is. Casauboni* vid. in *Exercit. Cont. Baron. I.* p. 68. & *Tan. Fabri*, *Epist. P. I. Ep. 44.*

(b) *Des Sibyl. L. 1. C. 13, 14, 15.*

the last Interpretation ; *viz.* in giving what I thought to be a true *Historical* Explication of *Virgil's* Poëm.

In this View there was no need for me to determine, what might be the Poët's true Mind and Notion, when he brought in the pretended *Cumean* Predictions, on which he builds the Application he makes to the Subject, or Person, he had in his Eye.

Let it be a real *Oracle* of the *Sibyls* then extant and preserv'd among those, which had been gather'd in Foreign Countries, after the last burning of the *Capitol*, wherein the *Sibylline* Books were kept. Or let it be only a *Traditional* Notion, handed about from old times, and grounded upon, I do not know what. I may for all that search out what is the true Object, to which *Virgil* applies all the great and happy Things suppos'd to be hoped for, and expected by the *Roman* People, on either of those two grounds.

Nevertheless, in a short account of the fatal Accidents suffer'd by the *Sibylline* Books, I venture to observe, that *Virgil* by his *Cumean Verses*, *Cumæum Carmen*, seems rather to mean the predictions of the *Sibyl* in general, or of that in particular, who had her Seat and *Oracle* at *Cumæa*, near *Naples*.

And



And indeed, to say here something more of that, it is certain that in antient Writers that *Epithet* is constantly used for what belong'd to the *Sibyl*, and not to describe *Hesiod*. This Father of the most antient Greek Mythology is commonly pointed at by the Sir-name of *Ascræus*, a Town in *Beotia*, wherein he was suppos'd to be born or educated. It is used in particular by *Virgil* himself, signifying, that in his *Georgicks* he had imitated *Hesiod's* Poëm of Rural Affairs (a):

*Ascræumque cano Romano per oppida  
Carmen.*

On the other hand *Propertius*, a Cotemporary Poët, gives the *Sibyl* the Name of *Cumean Prophetess*, Lib. ii. Eleg. ii. fin.

*Hanc utinam faciem nolit mutare se-  
nectus,*

*Etsi Cumææ secula Vatis aget.*

The same Phrase was not long after borrow'd by *Valer. Flaccus* (a):

*Phœbe, mone, si Cymææ mihi Consciâ  
Vatis stat castâ Cortina domo.*

From

(a) *Georgic*. Lib. II. v. 176. Et *Eclog*. VI. v. 69.  
—Hos tibi dans calamos, en accipe, Musæ,  
*Ascræo* quos antè *seni*, &c.

(a) *Argonaut*. Lib. I. ver. 5, 6. Cum quibus confer  
*Claudian* in Imp. Honorii Consul. IV. ver. 147.  
*Chaldai stupuere senes*, *Cumanaq; rursus*,  
*Intonnis Rupes*, *rabida delubra Sibyllæ*.

From whence some learned Men (*a*) have justly concluded, that this Poët was one of the *Quindecimviri*, under whose peculiar Care and Inspection were the *Sibylline Books*.

My next step is to fix the time of *Virgil's* Writing his IVth *Eclogue*, which I shew to be after *Pollio* had enter'd into the exercise of his *Consulship*, that is to say in *Autumn*, the Year 714. of *Rome*, (the 40th before our *Vulg. Aera*) immediately after the reconciliation between *M. Antony* and the young *Cæsar Octavianus*, call'd afterwards *Augustus*. This remarkable Circumstance fill'd *Rome* and all *Italy* with the joyful hopes of a lasting Peace, Plenty, and Happiness, after several years of Civil Wars ; tho' it happen'd that the next following years did not very exactly answer their expectation.

These Chronological Observations, concerning *Pollio's* Consulship, I have since inserted in the Life of *Horace* (*b*).

Having thus settled the true *Epoch* of *Virgil's* IVth *Eclogue*, and paved my way, I proceed to propose my two *Historical* Explications.

D

I. In

(*a*) *J. Fred. Gronovius de Pecun. veter. Lib. IV. C. XI. p. m. 333. seq; & post Nic. Heinsius ad L. C.*

(*b*) *Horat. Vita, ad An. V. C. 714. p. 77-81.*



1. In the first I endeavour to shew, that the Poët's Application and Encomiums can exactly sute the young *Cæsar* [*Augustus*.] Among the rest, comparing what is said there of the happy Golden Age beginning again, with what *Virgil* elsewhere [*Eclog. ix. & An. L. VI.*] says in express Terms of *Augustus*; I apply, to the Subject, the Testimony of many ancient Authors concerning the new *Star*, or *Comet*, which appear'd soon after *Julius Cæsar's* death, when this young Heir and Successor of his was giving to the *Roman* People some fine Shews and Games in honour of the deceas'd *Julius Cæsar*. Above all the rest the Passage of *Pliny* (a) is to be remark'd, being express mostly in *Augustus* his own Words. I shall repeat here only the latter part: *Sed Augustus interiore gaudio SIBI illum [Cometem] NATUM, SEQUE in eo NASCI, interpretatus est. Et sanè, si spectetur Octaviani seculi felicitas, salutaris Cometes ille fuit.*

Hence easily appears, why *Virgil* might fitly represent the young *Cæsar*, as in a manner a new born *Child*, besides the Reason taken from his being a meer Youth, which made them both, his Friends and Enemies call him so commonly a *Child*.

II. Not;

(a) *Hist. Natur. Lib. II. Ch. 25.*



II. Notwithstanding the great probability and fitness of that first Historical Explication, I propose yet another, by which I suppose, that *Virgil*, besides the Praises of *Augustus*, had also in his view to flatter him with foretelling the speedy Birth of a Son, by his Wife *Scribonia*, who was then with Child.

This I easily prove by good Authority, and that instead of a Son, there came the next year into the World the Daughter of his call'd *Julia*, who afterwards by her infamous Life, caus'd so much Grief and Shame to her Father *Augustus*.

III. What follows in my Dissertation is by much the longest part. Therein I fully overturn the other current Opinion concerning *Pollio's* Son, suppos'd to be born a little before, and nam'd *Saloninus* from *Pollio's* having taken *Salona* in *Dalmatia*, when he was commanding the Troops in that Province.

To demonstrate how groundless that is, I give an exact Chronological account of *Pollio's* Life, for many years before; which I have collected from his own *Epistles* and those of *Cicero*, as well as from other Historical Monuments. I make it thereby most evident, that *Pollio* never had any Command, nor made any War in *Dalmatia*, but after his *Consulship*.

I had by that an opportunity of speaking of *Horace's Ode to Pollio*, [Lib. ii. Od. i.] and so of confuting what *Dacier* had said upon the matter in his *Notes*. And this also I have inserted in my *Life of Horace* (a), referring at the same time (b) my Reader to the *Life of Pollio*, for a further Confutation of what concerns *Pollio's* pretended Son *Saloninus*, and *Virgil's* IVth *Eclogue*. For then I had resolv'd to change the Plan of my Dissertation, because this last and longest part of it seem'd much fitter for *Pollio's Life*. Into such a Work I had a mind to turn the whole Dispute about that *Eclogue*, as well, as all the rest found in Ancient Authors, relating to this Illustrious Man, so considerable by his Noble Birth, High Dignities, Great Attainments, and Extraordinary Parts, as an Historian, and a Poët.

Till this be publish'd in a Chronological Order, as I have done in the Lives of *Horace*, *Ovid* and *Pliny*, or the Dissertation it self be printed; I hope the short account, I have here offer'd, will be thought sufficient, to answer that sort of Call in the *Scheme*, without which I had never given

(a) Horat. Vita p. 91.—105.

(b) Ibid. p. 99. in the Margin *Vide Nostr. Pollionis vitam, ad An. V. C. 714*

given this trouble, neither to the Reader,  
nor to my self.

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### Addition for Page 35.

Having at last, got a sight of *Barthius's* Book, I am bound to tell the Reader, that I am convinc'd, the *Schematist* never read the Passage concerning *Macrobius*. For *Barthius* roundly affirms, he was a *Christian*, as a thing known to every Body. And yet he confesses, That *there is scarce in his Writings the least footstep of his Christianity*; so great is the Judgement of *Barthius*. No doubt, but the *Schematist* borrow'd this Authority of *Fabricius*, tho' a little too hastily, according to his wonted Method. For this Learned Man speaks thus, *Bibl. Lat. Lib. III. c. 12. (N.) Non minus incerta res de Religione Macrobiani Christianis eum annumerat Barthius, p. 2258. Adversar. Contra homo Ethnicus dicitur Spanhemio Dub. Evangel. T. I. p. 533. Cui assentiri malim. Ambigui hærent Grotius ad Matth. ii. 16. & Huetius, p. 789. Demonstr.*

However, here are the Words of *Barthius*, *Advers. Lib. 48. C. 8. Col. 2258. in fol. Ubi agens de Chalcidio, cui censet in rebus*



rebus Philosophicis, etiamſi Christiano, fi-  
dendum; addit: *Quod ſi facere nolueri-  
mus, ſanè cum eo Macrobius etiam, et  
Boethium, et alios nonnullos tales abjici-  
amus, qui cum Christiani fuiſſe omnibus  
noti ſint, tali tamen temperatione Philo-  
ſophica Scripta promulgarunt, ut Ægrè in  
illis vel aliquot Veſtigium Chriſtianismi  
appareat.*

I leave to the Reader to determine who  
is the moſt Judicious of theſe two Writers,  
either *Barthius*, who can reaſon ſo, or  
the *Schematiſt*, who dares produce ſuch  
an Evidence for proving that *Macrobius*  
*might be a Chriſtian*; even ſuppoſing that  
the *Schematiſt* had read *Barthius*.

## F I N I S.

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### ERRATA.

IN the Title Page, of the *Slaughter*, &c. read *Dubiis*.  
Page 4. line 10. read *Eclogue*. p 8. l. 18. r. *Nicolas*, his  
chief Guide. p. 20. l. 10. r. and that we. p. 38. l. 19. r. SA-  
CRORVM. p. 39. l. 9. and if he acted. p. 48. l. 7. r. *Af-  
creus*, from a Town. l. 13. r. *Romana*.



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