

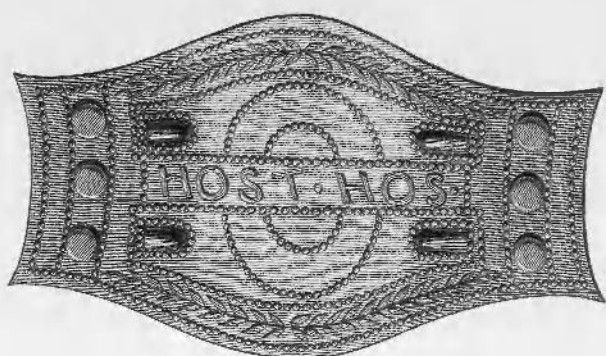
ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE BULLA WORN BY ROMAN
BOYS. BY JAMES YATES, M.A., F.R.S. &c.

I OFFER these remarks as a supplement to my "Account of a Roman sepulchre at Geldestone, Norfolk," published in the Fifth Volume of the Archaeological Journal. Having in illustration of my subject described the golden bulla, which was brought to England by Dr. Conyers Middleton, I concluded my notice of it in these words :—"Probably this fine relic is in England at the present time, but in whose possession I cannot tell." Not long afterwards Lady Fellows communicated to me the gratifying intelligence, that it was in her possession, and by her kind permission I am now enabled to exhibit it to the Archaeological Institute. At the sale of the effects of Dr. Middleton, it was purchased by Horace Walpole, Lord Orford, for his splendid collection at Strawberry Hill. There it remained until the sale in 1842, when it was purchased by William Knight, Esq., by whose decease it came into the possession of his widow, the present owner.

Probably no finer specimen of an ancient bulla has yet been discovered than that belonging to Samuel Rogers, Esq., by whose great kindness and liberality I am enabled to exhibit this precious relic.

It was discovered among ashes and burnt bones in an urn of red earth by some labourers in a vineyard about twelve miles from Rome, on the way to Albano. From its first discovery in the year 1794, it remained in the possession of Signor Antonio Bellotti till 1821, when it was bought by Mr. Rogers.

As the Cligi Bulla has upon it the name CATULUS, which, as I formerly observed, "is supposed to have been the name of the wearer," so Mr. Rogers's is marked with the letters HOST. HOS. These admit of being read in two ways, HOSTUS HOSTILIUS, or HOSTILIUS HOSTILIANUS. In either case we must suppose the boy, referred to in the inscription, to have belonged to the Hostilia Gens, Hostilius being his *nomen gentilitium*. We have then the alternative, either to take HOSTUS for the *prænomen*, or HOSTILIANUS for the *cognomen*. But we are informed, that the *prænomen* was



Golden Bulla, found in 1704, near Rome.
In the possession of Samuel Rogers, Esq.

far more commonly used than the cognomen; that the former was almost an indispensable prefix to the nomen, and was given to boys on the ninth day after their birth, whereas the addition of the cognomen was arbitrary and uncertain.¹ Hence it appears to me, that we may with confidence read the inscription HOSTUS HOSTILIUS, and it is remarkable, that this was the designation of the first man of the Hostilian name at Rome.² It was therefore likely to have been resumed by his descendants.

I now beg leave to enter into a somewhat more detailed comparison and description of the four largest known bullas, viz., the Chigi Bulla at Rome, and the three in London, and I shall subjoin a brief notice of two smaller ones found in Lancashire.

Each of the four large bullas consists of two circular plates of pure gold, devoid of ornament, but beaten into the form of a watch-glass or meniscus. The edges of these circular plates are in close apposition, but without any perceptible means of joining them together, so as to contain securely objects placed within them. By their apposition they assume the exact form of a lentil, so as to agree with the remark of Plutarch, who describes the bulla as lentil-shaped.³ The two plates are united on one side by a third plate of the same material, which is embossed, bent double, and rivetted in three points to the two circular plates. In the bulla now preserved in the British Museum (which belonged to Sir William Hamilton's collection), and in Lady Fellows's bulla, the gold wire remains for suspending the object from the boy's neck. In the British Museum specimen the embossed plate has a style of ornament peculiar to itself.⁴ But in the three others, viz., those belonging to Cardinal Chigi, Lady Fellows, and Mr. Rogers, the ornament is very similar, consisting of long sprigs of bay or myrtle with oval festoons; and in both of those, which are inscribed with the name of the boy, it is placed longitudinally in the middle of the embossed plate. These circumstances are shown in the annexed woodcuts, of which the one figure represents Mr. Rogers's bulla as seen in front, and the other shows the

¹ Smith's *Dict. of Greek and Roman Ant., Art. Nomen*, p. 640.

² Smith's *Dict. of Greek and Roman Biography. Art. Hostilius*.

³ φακοειδής. Plutarch. *Quest. Rom.* 514., ed. H. Steph. Par. 1572.

⁴ See woodcut in *Arch. Journal*, Vol. VI. p. 113.

embossed plate as it would appear, if it were detached, and unbent.

In all these specimens the gold plates are very thin. Mr. Rogers's is formed of much thicker plates than the other two, but is nevertheless extremely delicate. Their comparative strength will appear from their weights, which are as follows :—

British Museum, including the wire,	271 grains.
Lady Fellows's, including the wire,	271 grains.
Mr. Rogers's	363 grains.

From their tenderness and fragility, as well as from the absence of any method of fastening the edges of the circular plates together, it appears evident that these four bullas were never intended to be worn, but were probably made as sepulchral ornaments, to be buried with the burnt bones of the deceased children, and indicative of their high birth. Those, which were worn by them, must have been much stronger, and were in many cases of a less precious material.

The two Lancashire bullas were probably intended to be worn. They are of gold. One of them was found by a lady



Bulla, found at Overborough.
Orig. size.



Golden bulla, found at Manchester.
Orig. size.

(Miss Fenwick) near the Prætorium at Overborough,⁵ and shows the bulla in its simplest form, small and without the bent plate. (See the annexed woodcut.) The other was found A.D. 1772, in gravel on the banks of the river Irwell at Manchester. It has the form of a crescent (see woodcuts), and, instead of the bent plate, a pipe, which corresponds to the concave of the crescent, and through which the suspend-

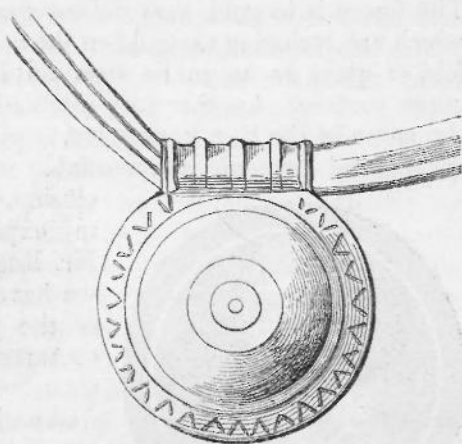
⁵ See Rauthmell's *Antiquitates Bremetonacenses*, London, 1746., p. 99. Plate V. Fig. 6.

ing cord passes. The front, instead of being plain as in all the five bullas already mentioned, is tastefully engraved with curved and zig-zag ornaments. In this specimen the two plates of gold were joined without an opening between them.⁶

Taking it for granted that the Lancashire bullas are still in England, I venture to ask where they are now deposited, hoping that my inquiry may lead to the same gratifying result as in the case of Lady Fellows's bulla.⁷

In my description of the Geldestone sepulchre I have mentioned the modes of representing the bulla in ancient monuments. These were monuments of boys, and either sculptures, pictures, or terra cottas.

Of the sculptures none probably is more perfect and beautiful than the bronze statue of a boy, which may now be seen in the Louvre at Paris. The boy wears a tunic and pallium. He holds a spherical object, perhaps a fruit, in his right hand, and a dove in his left. The statue belonged to the late M. E. Durand, whose collection was sold in 1836. Through the kindness of M. De Longperier, the Conservator of the Museum, I am enabled to lay before the Institute a drawing of the bulla, which is represented upon the breast of the boy. This bulla bears some resemblance in its form and ornament to that found at Manchester.⁸



There are at Rome three marble statues, which exhibit the bulla on the breast of the wearer, viz.—two in the Villa Borghese,⁹ and one in the Vatican.¹ The

⁶ *Hist. of Manchester*, by the Rev. John Whitaker, *Second Edition*, London, 1773. Vol. I., p. 81. Baines's *Hist. of Lancashire*, Vol. II. p. 155.

⁷ Whitaker says, that the Manchester bulla was deposited in Sir Ashton Lever's Museum; but I have searched the catalogue of the Leverian Museum for it in vain.

⁸ The small bronze figures of Horus or Harpocrates, sometimes represent him

wearing the bulla. See Spon, *Misc. Erud. Ant.* p. 18. Cupei Harpocrates, in *Poleni Supplem. T. II.* p. 425, 428. It may be presumed, that this addition to his attributes or emblems was made after the establishment of the Roman dominion in Egypt.

⁹ *Sculture del Palazzo della villa Borghese*, Roma, 1796. Vol. II., p. 24.

¹ *Mus. Pio Clementino*, Tom. III. tav. 21. Roma, 1790, folio.

more remarkable of those in the Villa Borghese has been called Britannicus. The statue in the Vatican Museum was found at Otricoli; the annexed woodcut shows its bulla.



The pictures, which exhibit the bulla, are etchings executed in a peculiar style, and with exquisite delicacy, upon circular plates of glass, which are partially coated with gold.

One of these is now in the British Museum. The glass has the usual appearance of decay and opalescence.

It is double, the under fold being merely a protection to the upper. The figure is that of a boy dressed in the tunic and pallium, with the bulla suspended from his neck. Mr. Birch thinks that the attire indicates the period of the Gordians. The figure is in gold, very delicately shaded with black lines, which are etched in the gold on the under surface of the upper fold of glass, so as to be seen on looking down upon the upper surface. Another very interesting circumstance is, that the name of the boy, M. CECILIVS, is placed by his side in gold letters, and presents a remarkable confirmation of the con-

clusion, at which I before arrived in explaining the name on Mr. Rogers's bulla. For here we have M. for MARCUS, which is the *prænomen*, prefixed to CECILIVS, the *nomen gentilitium*.



Antique Glass, British Museum. Orig. size.

represents it in the same engraving with the bulla, its companion. This portrait was likewise purchased by Horace Walpole for his collection at Strawberry Hill. In 1842 it was bought by C. Wentworth Dilke, Esq., and, by the kindness of that gentleman, I have

² See Ficoroni, *ut supra*, p. 12.

now the singular felicity of producing it for inspection. It represents a lady with the boy, who wears the bulla, in her arms. Ficoroni thought that it belonged to the age of Alexander Severus; Middleton (p. 36,) contends for a yet higher antiquity. The boy's dress is exactly the same as in the etching already mentioned, which is in the British Museum. We observe also the two layers of glass cemented together; and the circular border of the glass is entire, so that it does not appear to have been the bottom of a patera, as has been supposed, but to be complete in itself.³ The lower piece of glass is throughout of a deep blue colour. The upper layer is of the same deep blue, except where we observe a circle of gold near the border and the figures of the mother and child. These portions appear to consist of colourless glass. Thus the figures painted on the under surface of this upper layer are seen as we look down upon it, and the under layer of glass has preserved the painting from injury, so that it is probably as fresh now as when it came more than 1600 years ago from the hands of the artist. The method of fixing the gold to the glass, and of joining the blue glass, called "sapphire," to the white colourless glass, was by placing the composition in a furnace, by the heat of which the glass was partially melted.⁴

To these examples of pictures on glass may apparently be added one of much larger size, which is engraved by Leichius,⁵ and which, as he states, was preserved in the Library at Leipzig. It represents a Roman family, consisting of a boy, who wears the bulla, with his father and mother. Another, formerly at Strawberry Hill, is in the possession of the Rev. Dr. Bliss, of Oxford.⁶

It remains to mention the representations of boys with the bulla in terra cottas. M. Seroux d'Agincourt has engraved three of these.⁷ One represents a naked boy standing with the bulla suspended from his neck. Another exhibits a boy with the bulla in like manner hanging from his neck, but clothed and seated on a chair with a tablet on his knees. The third is still more remarkable, the bulla representing three figures, one of which is Mercury.

³ Middleton, *ut supra*, p. 45.

⁴ See Theophilus Presbyter, *Div. Art. Schedula*, II. 28; and *Inquiry into the style of ancient glass paintings*, by C.W. Oxford, 1847, pp. 19, 28, 337.

⁵ *De Diptychis Veterum*. Lips. 1743, p. 15.

⁶ *Proceedings of Arch. Institute at Winchester*, p. xxxix., Museum Catal.

⁷ *Recueil de Fragmens de Sculpture en terre cuite*, Pl. XIV. Figs. 1, 3, 5.