

**CATALOGUE OF THE
ENGRAVED GEMS AND
RINGS IN THE COLLECTION
OF JOSEPH MAYER, F.S.A.**

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CHARLES TINDAL GATTY

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ENGRAVED GEMS AND RINGS.



LIVIA,

WIFE OF THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS,
IN THE CHARACTER OF JUNO.
NO. 184 IN THE COLLECTION OF
JOSEPH MAYER, F.S.A.

CATALOGUE
OF THE
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PREFACE.

MOST of the gems here catalogued, were obtained by Mr. Mayer from the Hertz collection ; a few came from the collection of Mr. Philip Henry Hope, and the remaining specimens have been brought together from a variety of sources during the last fifty years. These gems and rings do not comprise all those that originally formed Mr. Mayer's collection, as a considerable number were presented by Mr. Mayer to the town of Liverpool, with his gift in the year 1867.

The collection contains examples of most of the styles of gem engraving from the earliest times, and forms a useful series for a student ; but it does not pretend to rank in quality with such cabinets as the Marlborough Collection and others, in which some of the most perfect examples of gem engraving are to be found.

For the purpose of preparing this Catalogue, the collection has been divided into groups, and it is hoped that this classification will assist towards an intelligent appreciation of its contents. In the arrangement of any collection of works of art, where the material, country, date, and nature of the objects are all of importance, compromises have to be made, and

something must be sacrificed. In this collection, for example, the pastes have been kept apart from the precious stones, by which arrangement a completely satisfactory classification of *subject* is sacrificed to that of *material*.

The determination of the style and date of these gems has occupied considerable time, and been attended with difficulties. The writer entered upon an unexplored land of knowledge when he received the collection, but through Mr. Mayer's kindness he has been enabled to consult some of the best authorities, and obtain from them the elucidation of many doubtful and difficult points. There is, perhaps, no branch of art which contains so many successful ancient and modern imitations as that of gem engraving. Directly the student passes from the undoubted characteristic pieces of any style, which carry with them the conviction that they are what they pretend to be, he passes into a region of uncertainty where it is difficult to determine whether any violation of the general characteristics of a style, is to be attributed to the ignorance of an ancient or modern imitator. Apart from this question of imitation, it is also found that any work of art so delicate, and often so subtly executed as an engraved gem, does not at once make a due impression on the mind. The first glance often produces only a hesitation, and it takes considerable time for those not long familiar with the subject to gain conviction, and give an opinion founded upon good reasons.

These difficulties, and others, have retarded the publication of this Catalogue, and the writer offers his apologies to Mr. Mayer for the delay; he is conscious that the work is still

but imperfectly done; he hopes, however, that in due time many fresh points of interest will occur to others, and be discovered by himself, in order to make these pages more worthy of Mr. Mayer's acceptance. The descriptions are unequally distributed, some departments having had more attention or suggested more enquiry than others, and it is only at the last moment when the work has to be definitely finished, that discoveries are made of so many points that have been overlooked and undervalued.

The writer begs in conclusion to thank Mr. Mayer for entrusting to him a valuable collection, and giving him the opportunity of a study full of interest and instruction. He begs also to thank Mr. C. W. King and Professor Wright of Cambridge, Mr. Neville Storey-Maskelyne and Dr. Rieu of the British Museum, Mr. Edward Thomas of London, and Mr. F. P. Marrat of Liverpool, for deciphering inscriptions and giving translations, and suggesting many interesting matters which have been incorporated into these pages.

CHARLES TINDAL GATTY.

FREE PUBLIC MUSEUM, LIVERPOOL,
9th September, 1879.