

PIRANESI'S INITIALS (Fig.II and Fig.III) were engraved in 1756 for *Le Antichità Romane* Tom.I (Plate) XLI when his Roman architectural authority was under threat within the *Græco-Roman* debate of the mid eighteenth-century. By adding serifs to the 'E' (1) he argued that the ancient italians added serifs to the primitive Archaic Latin alphabet (2) which took 21 letters used in the ETRUSCAN alphabet. The unneeded Zeta (3) was moved to the end of the alphabet, and was replaced with Gamma (4) created from an Etruscan 'C'. Following Rome's conquest of Greece the *Græca* 'Y' (5) was added to Classical Latin. 'V' was used for 'U' and the medieval ligatured double 'V' became double-u (6). Eventually a curled minuscule 'j' became 'J' and 'V' became 'U' following the post-Renaissance convention where 'I' and 'U' were used as vowels, and 'J' and 'V' as consonants.



"Archi dell'aquedotto [di Nerone], ove si legge l'avanzo della iscrizione rapportata ..."

Fig.II



"... e supplita nella figura III colle lettere NERO secondo l'interpretazione la più probabile ..."

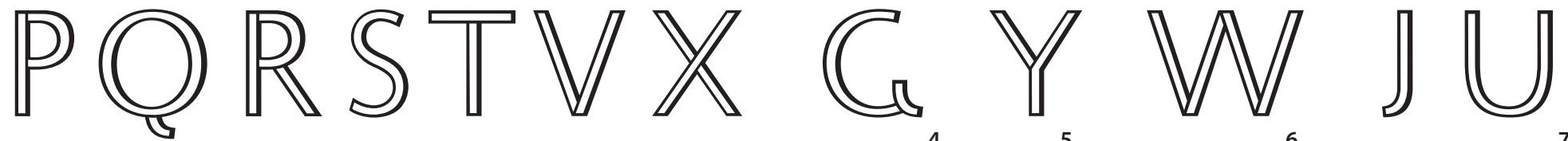
Fig.III

ETRUSCA Piranesi's Initials 72pt

2



3



4

5

6

7