

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 **ETRVSCAN** 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-Rennaissance 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



ETRVSCA Piranesi's Initials 72pt

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

