

DIAGRAMMATIC SECTION OF THE NORTH WALL.

The original drawing, of which this is a black and white copy, was plotted from dimensions taken at various points when the wall was undergoing repair, and the exact positions of the sculptured monumental and architectural stones recovered are shown on the plate facing page 4.—  
I. MATTHEWS JONES, City Surveyor, Chester.

Scale: nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch to a foot.



OFFICIAL REPORT ON THE DIS-  
COVERIES OF ROMAN REMAINS AT  
CHESTER, DURING THE FIRST REPAIRS  
TO THE NORTH WALL, IN 1887.

BY THE CITY SURVEYOR (MR. I. MATTHEWS JONES).

*(Read 24th October, 1887.)*

MY lord, ladies, and gentlemen,—I have the honour to report that in my official capacity I was instructed by the Improvement Committee (Alderman Littler, chairman) to make safe that portion of the city wall on the north side, popularly known as one of the “breaches,” made during the siege of Chester, 1645-6.

This “breach,” situate fifty paces from the west angle of the Phoenix Tower, had been built in an inferior manner, *i.e.*, with small stones on the internal and external wall faces, with backing and filling in the body of small rubble in mortar; the outer face set twelve inches in from the older wall right and left of it, and having no tie or bond with the latter.

The stones were very much decayed, and as the face and

body of the wall were parting from each other, immediate action was necessary, more especially owing to its dangerous position on the scarped rock, overhanging the Shropshire Union Canal. This portion was at once taken down to the level of the massive stone wall underneath, which proved on examination to be the sub-structure.

It may be convenient here to state, to prevent any disputes and for future guidance and reference, that not a single stone, showing any characteristic workmanship, style, or period, was found in this stone-and-mortar work, from the level of the sub-structure upwards. Very small quantities of tile fragments were found, but coins, pottery, or other relics were remarkably distinguished by their absence during the whole course of the work.

In the No. 9 course of the underlying sub-structure massive wall, the fragment of monumental stone numbered No. 4 was the first inscribed stone met with; and, having personally discovered, in 1883, the interesting stones now in the Museum (and known as from Water Tower Street), in the underlying similar old wall, situated to the westwards of the Northgate, the men were cautioned to be not only observant but most particular as to the handling of any stone that might appear to be of value.

It was now deemed expedient, previous to rebuilding, to thoroughly examine the sub-structure, not only for that which it might contain, but also as regarded its strength and capability to bear the new work proposed to be built on it. Accordingly, with the kind permission of the Very Rev. the Dean, a shaft was sunk close to the wall in the Dean's Field to the solid rock, twenty-six feet in depth from the top of the parapet wall.

An opening was then made through the massive stone wall, in order to make a communication with the outer face, where a similar shaft had been sunk through the earth,

which had accumulated on the top of the scarped rock. At this point on the outer face, bedded on two footing-courses on the rock, was found a splayed plinth, running along the face of the wall, and of similar dimensions and workmanship to that described in the Society's *Journal*<sup>1</sup> as being found elsewhere under the massive stone wall below the soil level.

In the above-named opening the most important finds were made. The sculptured stone marked No. 1, and exhibited here this evening, was found on the fourth course above the rock, and formed one of the building stones of the wall. This stone is creating great interest, several gentlemen having contended that it is of mediæval origin. W. de Gray Birch, Esq., F.S.A., who maintains the opposite, purposes having it exhibited at an early meeting of the Society of Antiquaries, London, and promises to give a paper embodying the principal points of contention.<sup>2</sup>

Special attention may be called to the stone worked for the jamb of a doorway. The quality of this stone shows the carving as if it had left the hands of the sculptor only yesterday. Other squared stones here are found of equal quality, their size and shape betokening unusual labour in bringing them to the spot and bedding them.

Many of the squared stones left in the work have dowel or cramp holes. They vary as regards quality, and several quarries must have been sources of supply, as white and red sandstones are found laid side by side.

This find gave a stimulus to the work of recovery, and

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<sup>1</sup> See the Society's *Journal*, vol. i. (new series), p. 188, &c.

<sup>2</sup> This stone, now generally known as "the ecclesiastical stone," was exhibited before the Society of Antiquaries, London, on the 8th December, 1887, and the paper read on that occasion will be found on p. 25.

it being necessary to bond or tie the old and present new work together, certain stones had to be moved, and while jealously guarding the old face and keeping it intact, some fifty-eight worked stones in all were got out.

These are numbered on the drawing submitted herewith, which also shows every course and the position of every stone when *in situ*. The centre line being drawn on the plan to scale, measurements can be taken therefrom, and all the stones being numbered, it will be easy to ascertain their exact position in the wall.

The appendix to this report is a general description only of the stones, as perhaps it would be considered perfunctory on my part to either further describe them, or give an opinion as to their bearing on recent discussions, seeing that papers are promised dealing with these subjects, and are included in the programme of this session. Special mention may, however, be made of the stone, marked No. 14, and known as the "Marcus Aurelius Alexander" stone. This was discovered on August 15th, at a distance of fifteen yards from the foregoing general work of repair, on the fifteenth course. It formed an outer face stone, with the inscription inwards, and was bedded amongst stones like itself, showing evidences of great decay. No further exploration has been made here, though a section showing the later and earlier walls is still left for the inspection of those who are interested in the subject.

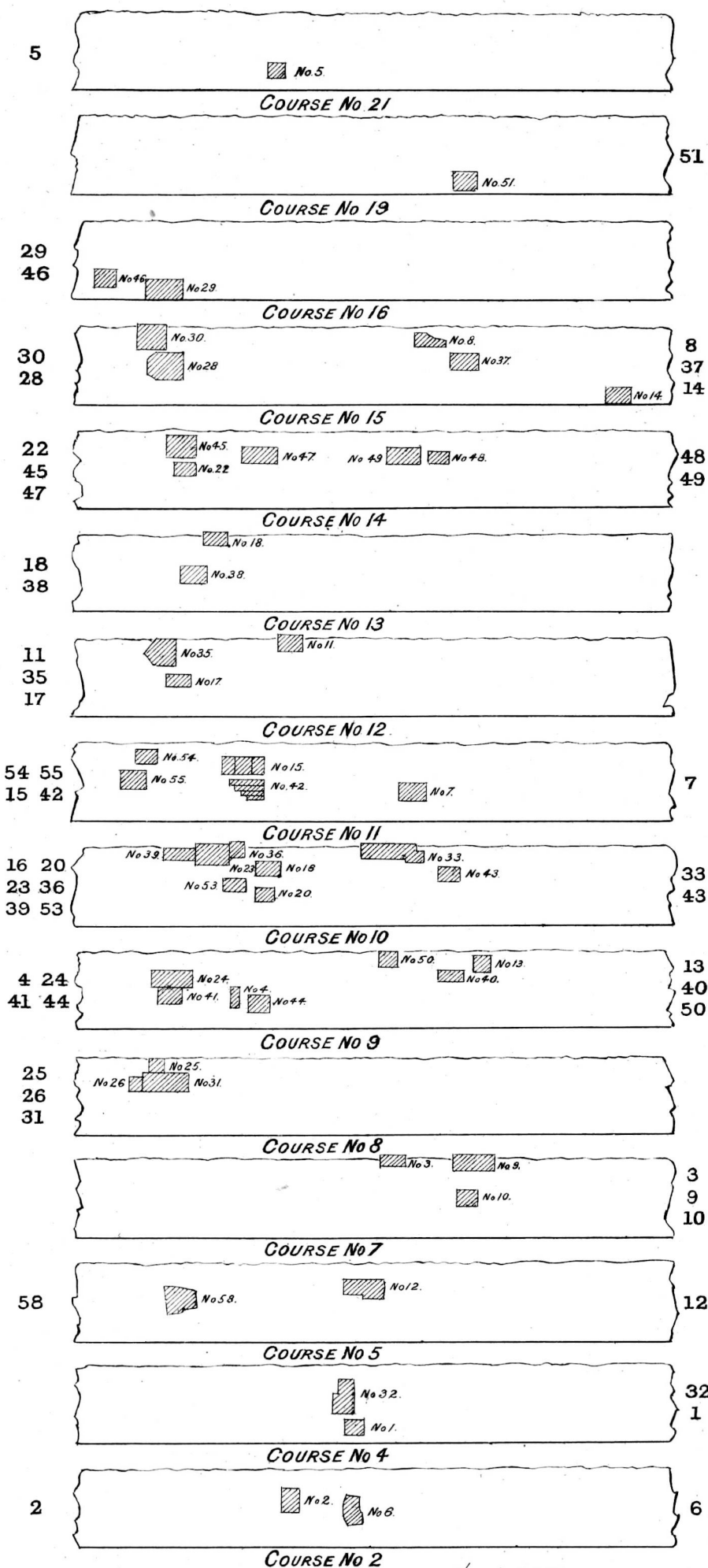
From the drawings of the cornices and the sculptured stones exhibited to-night, some idea may be gathered of the splendour and grandeur of the buildings from whence they came, previous to being built in this wall to tell the story of the past.

The other drawings submitted depict what is seen at the recent excavations, which I may also say agree with former ones, and I venture to think that by the cuttings

No. of  
Stone.

COURSES IN THE NORTH WALL.

No. of  
Stone.



Scale 22 Feet to One Inch.

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE RESPECTIVE COURSES OF STONE, WITH THE  
ROMAN REMAINS IN SITU.





being left open, great assistance will be given to archaeological searchers after truth.

The pieces of Samian ware and concrete now exhibited were found at the Roodee excavation. The antefix was found during the intercepting sewer excavation in 1874.

The numerous fragments of Roman pottery, antefix, legionary tiles, marble, glass, Samian ware, &c., also on the table, were found on the property of His Grace the Duke of Westminster, near Vicar's Lane, and I have the permission of His Grace to ask the Museum Trustees to accept the same.

The Society is much indebted to the Right Worshipful the Mayor and the Town Council for their liberal instructions in regard to the work at the north wall. In concluding this report, I have personally to acknowledge the aid and assistance of many ladies and gentlemen; and in connection with the work, Mr. Wright, Messrs. Ledsham and Roberts, and the other corporation *employés* also deserve a meed of praise for their care and zeal in carrying out their instructions. It may also be mentioned that the necessary work of repair would not have been so costly, had not extra labour been entailed in order to recover these valuable memorials, and this has happily been effected, without any destruction of the face of the ancient wall, which we all so highly cherish and venerate.

#### APPENDIX.

Course	No. cut
No.	on stone.

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 2 ... | 2. Sculptured stone, with two standing headless figures, one with a bird in the right hand, the other with a sheaf (?) in the left hand. (See Plate II., opposite p. 6.) |
| 6.    | Rounded jamb of doorway, with part carved figure.  |

Course No.      No. cut  
                     on stone.

- 4 ... 1. Sculptured stone representing two figures, one, a male (?), with a gown and a stole (?), the other in a plain dress, each holding some object in the left hand.<sup>1</sup>
32. Stone base of pilaster.
- 5 ... 12. Angle pilaster caps.
- 5 ... 58. Monumental stone:—

PVB. > LEG V. MACED. ET.  
VIII. AVG ET II AVG ET XX VV  
VIXIT ANNIS LXI ARISTIO  
LIB H F C

- 7 ... 3. Left half of draped figure.
9. Half-round coping of gateway; the centre carved with the face of a god, probably Hercules.
10. Three-quarter length nude figure of athlete carved in high relief (white stone).
- 8 ... 25. Monumental stone panelled, with this inscription:—

D            M  
M. CLVVI. M  
ANI. VALENTIVS  
FOP O. IVLII

26. Part of the body of a large size carved male figure with toga.
31. Monumental stone, with the following inscription:—

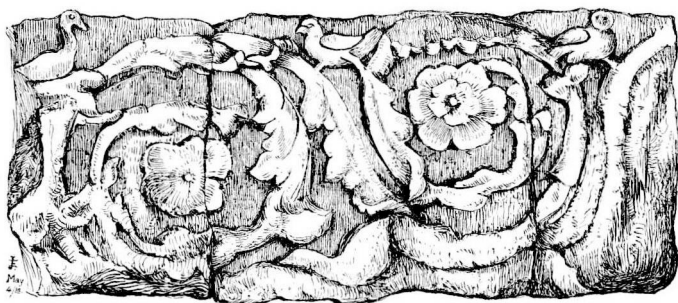
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<sup>1</sup> This is the so-called "ecclesiastical stone," which has caused so much controversy. It was suggested by several writers that it represented a man in ecclesiastical vestments, hence the name, and that it was not Roman but mediæval in character. A careful drawing of the stone will be found on Plate VI., and Mr. de Gray Birch's paper upon it begins on p. 25.

PLATE II.



FRAGMENT OF A ROMAN TOMBSTONE (?), FOUND IN THE NORTH WALL  
OF THE CITY OF CHESTER, IN 1887.



PORTION OF THE FRIEZE OF A ROMAN BUILDING, FOUND IN THE NORTH  
WALL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER, IN 1887.



Course No.      No. cut  
                    on stone.

DIS . MANIBVS  
ATTANVS N  
ATILIANVS AN X .  
PROTVS . AN XII  
POMPEIVS  
OPTATVS . D  
MINVS . F . C

- 9 ... 4. Fragment of monumental stone, with this inscription:—

(LE)G . XX . VV  
(VI)X . AN(N)  
... H . F . C

13. Square panel stone, with carved body of bird with a female face.  
24. Welsh white sandstone, bearing the figures of a centurion and lady within recesses. (See Plate I., frontispiece.) Inscription:—

D . M  
M/ . AVR . NEPOS . >LEG  
XX . VV . CONIVX .  
PIENTISSIMA . F . C .  
VIX . ANNIS . L .

On one side is this:—

(See p. 16.)

SVB ASCI AD
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40. Splayed angle stone.  
41. Moulded cornice.  
44. Coping or half column.  
50. Moulded cornice.  
10 ... 16. Panel part of frieze, white stone, with inscription:—

D (M)  
CINCINI(VS)  
VETERANV(S)  
VIX . AN . LXXX  
CVRA AEL(IO)  
CANDI(DO)

Course No.      No. cut  
on stone.

20. Upper portion of monumental stone; nude figure reclining.

23. Monumental stone:—

D      M  
M . SEXTIVS . . .  
CLAV . BELLIC  
CLA . CELEIA . A  
(NN)O R V M . X . . .  
(STI)P E N D . . .

33. Plaster angle caps.

36. Moulded cornice, with dentils.

39. Half-round coping, with return angle.

43. Architrave or frieze.

53. Dentil cornice.

II ... 7. Large white stone, with low relief carving of the hind quarters of some animal.

15. Splendid example of scroll frieze, with birds, introduced. (See Plate II., opposite p. 6.)

42. Return architrave or frieze.

54. Splayed stone.

55. Return dentil cornice.

12 ... 11. Low relief carving, white stone, nude warrior or athlete, with weapon.

17. Red stone, looped festoon carving.

35. Monumental stone:—

L . ANNIVS . L . F  
TRO . MARCEL

13 ... 18. Richly carved stone cap or pedestal.

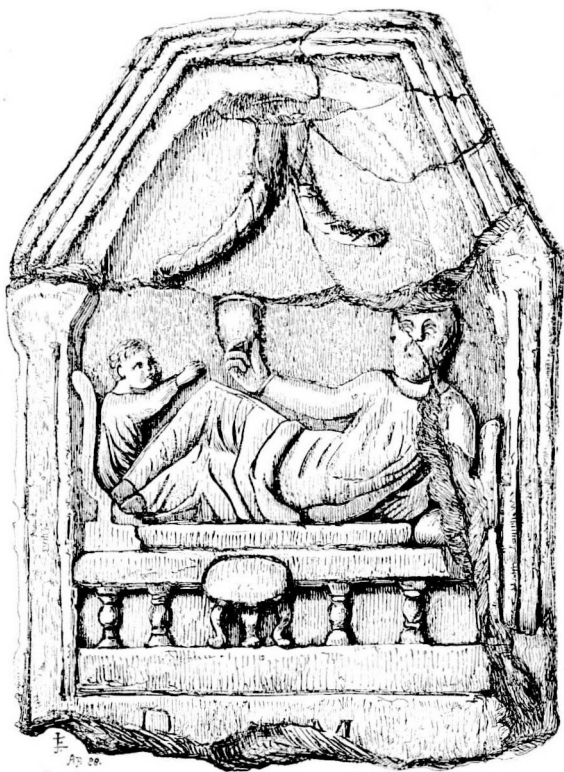
38. Return angle moulded cornice.

14 ... 22. Small splendid example, carved female head in niche or canopy.

45. Return angle moulded cornice.

47. Straight moulded cornice.

PLATE III.



PORTION OF A ROMAN TOMBSTONE, FOUND IN THE NORTH WALL  
OF THE CITY OF CHESTER, IN 1887.





Course No.      No. cut  
on stone.

48. Return angle moulded cornice.  
49. Return angle moulded cornice.  
15 ... 8. Carving showing "Genius," with trumpet (?) and cornucopia.  
14. Monumental white stone, with this inscription:—

D                  M  
M . AVRELIVS . ALEXAND  
PRAE(F) . CAST . LEG . XX  
... NAT . (SY)RVSC(O) ...  
... (VI)X . AN . LXXII ...  
... ICES . ET . S ...

T

- 15 ... 28. Upper part of monumental stone; recumbent figure, with a cup in the right hand, a child is seated at the foot of the couch. (See Plate III., opposite p. 8.)  
30. Upper part of monumental stone; recumbent female figure, having fishes (?) in spandril, and a scallop shell at the back of the head, with this inscription underneath (see Plate IV., opposite p. 18):—

D   M  
... INA

37. Moulded cornice.  
16 ... 29. Large stone, with two draped standing figures in recesses; very much weathered. This inscription is underneath one of them (see Plate V., opposite p. 20):—

(D)OMIT (SAT)VRN(I) A . VIX (A)N . XII	
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Course No.      No. cut  
                         on stone.

46. Dentil cornice.

19 ... 51. Straight moulded cornice.

21 ... 5. A fragment of the upper part of a Roman altar.

In no regular course the following have been discovered:

19. Inscription:—

D . M  
FLAVI  
A . SATV  
RNINA

21. Monumental stone with this inscription (see  
Plate IV., opposite p. 18):—

D      M  
FVRI   . MAXI  
MI  
MIL . LEG . XX . VV  
ST(IP . AN) XXII  
H . F . C

27. Head of figure.

34. Fragmentary draped figure.

56. } Cornices.  
57. }

59. Several small fragments of monumental stones,  
with traces of lettering.

