

NOTES ON ROMAN ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENTS FOUND  
IN LEICESTER, AND NOW IN THE TOWN MUSEUM.<sup>1</sup>

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The Town Museum of Leicester possesses one of the largest collections of architectural fragments of the Romano-British period<sup>2</sup> that can be found in this country, mostly derived from excavations made for various purposes and at various times, within the lines of the walls of that ancient city.

Before proceeding to describe in detail these relics of the Roman time, it will be necessary to give a slight sketch of the site on which they have been found.

The present town of Leicester, has within the last fifty years far outgrown the narrow limits of the older city. But in so doing, it has left very distinct traces of the ancient boundaries. On examining the map, it will be seen that the streets called Soar Lane and Sanvy Gate on the North, Church Gate and Gallowtree Gate on the East, and Millstone Lane and Horsefair Street on the South, form three sides of a parallelogram, on all which sides the walls of the mediæval town are known to have existed, which walls there is very little room to doubt, were built on the foundations of the walls of the Roman city of Rataë. There is no trace of the fourth wall, on the West side, but it is scarcely to be supposed that the Roman town was not completely surrounded by a mural defence. It is conjectured that the western wall ran from a point where the northern one touches the river Soar, to some point west of Southgate street, where it joined the southern wall. The huge mass of masonry

<sup>1</sup> Read at the Monthly Meeting of the Institute, November 1st, 1888. The following paper does not pretend to deal with all the Roman Architectural Antiquities found in Leicester, but only with those preserved in the Museum.

<sup>2</sup> The Museum Committee having lately decided on a re-arrangement of this collection, in order to its better display, the re-arrangement has been carried out with great judgment by the present Curator, Mr. Montagu Browne, F.Z.S.

called the Jewry Wall, occurs in the centre of this supposed line, and has been considered with great probability, to be the western gateway of the Roman city. Westward again of this supposed wall, and at no great distance from it, the river Soar flows in an irregular line, from south to north. As Roman remains have been found quite down to the brink of the river, and between it and the supposed line of the Roman western wall, there must have been a suburb here, if the western wall lay on the conjectured limit. The discussion of this question does not, however, come within the scope of this paper; it is enough to state that all the relics preserved in the museum, with a few exceptions, were unearthed within the boundaries just mentioned, viz., the lines of streets whose names have been given, on the north, east and south sides, and the banks of the river Soar on the west. Within the area just described, two lines of main streets will be seen to cross each other, the one running east and west, consisting of High street and St. Nicholas street, (in which latter street most of the Roman remains have been found), and one from north to south, High Cross street and Southgate street. As is so usually the case where a town sprang up again on a deserted Roman site, and even within existing Roman circumvallations, the mediæval lines of communication do not represent the Roman ones. Thus in Leicester the streets named are of mediæval origin, though perhaps in High Cross street, there are faint indications that it, in part, followed one of the Roman ways. The greater number of architectural objects preserved in the museum, came from the four streets mentioned above. The exceptions are fragments of a mosaic floor, and a short column, both of which came from the ruins of a villa in a field, called the Cherry orchard, near Danett's hall. This is a site, west of the old town about three quarters of a mile from the present West Bridge. It will be described further on.

Returning now to the consideration of the fragments in the museum, the most prominent of these form the group numbered from 4 to 7B.<sup>1</sup> in which all the parts are

<sup>1</sup> The reference numbers given in this paper are those borne by the objects themselves in the museum, and are repeated in the plan and plate accompanying this paper.

placed as they appeared *in situ*. The following sentences, recording their discovery, (in St. Nicholas Street, November 1867), are quoted from a Report for the year 1867, in the transactions of the Leicester Architectural and Archæological Society.<sup>1</sup>

“During excavations at the north-east corner of that street” (St. Nicholas Street) “abutting upon High Cross, the workmen came upon portions of two Roman columns standing upon a plinth, at a depth of between fourteen and fifteen feet from the present surface. The plinth of wrought stone, one foot thick, rested upon a rubble wall or foundation. The two columns with their bases complete, stood (measuring from the centre of each), 10 feet  $10\frac{3}{4}$  inches apart. They were each 1 foot 11 inches in diameter. The height of the portion of one was, including the base 4 feet 4 inches, the height of the other also including the base and a portion of the column found at its side and replaced, 6 feet  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches.”——“It should be mentioned that in the year 1861 remains of other columns were found in the same locality, one column being discovered in a direct line with those now under notice.” This is No. 8 in the museum and on the map. There are some slight differences of dimension and proportions in these three bases found on the same spot, but they are practically the same, and all belonged to the same building.

The large drum of a column marked No. 4 has a dowel hole in the top and a lewis hole cut through it, and near this, what looks very like a mason’s mark in the shape of an incised letter T. The hollowed stone which lies on the plinth, in this group, between the columns appears to be part of the guttering which ran in a line with the plinth, to receive the rain dropping from the eaves of the portico or colonnade. The drum of a column lying next it is interesting for the following reason. In every Roman site in Britain where columns, or capitals, or bases are found, there is evidence of the lathe being used in forming them, and in this Leicester collection that evidence is not wanting. Even such heavy masses of stone as the drums of shafts seen here, have been turned into shape in the lathe. If this

<sup>1</sup> Vol. III. Part 4. 1874. p. 334.

drum (No. 6) be examined, it will show a dowel hole in each end meant to contain a plug of wood, in which the rods of iron forming an axis are fixed, and at one end a second hole near the circumference to receive the elbow from this axis, without which the movement of rotation could not be imparted to the stone to be worked upon.

Not only was this method employed in Britain, but it appears to have been in use in Gaul also, for M. de Caumont, in his work on Gallo-Roman antiquities, says that the form of capital the most frequently found in France must have been turned. Some of the bases in the Leicester collection have been thus worked; certainly the portion of small shaft with its base (No. 15) has been formed in this manner. The little column, found on the site of Wyggeston's Hospital, High Cross St., July the 27th, 1875, looks very like the column of a colonnade of the upper story of some building, which had a hand-rail from shaft to shaft. The hole for the tenon of the rail, cut as small as possible so as not to weaken the shaft, with the little bracket worked on the shaft under it, to carry the greater width of the rail, are noteworthy.

St. Nicholas Street yielded further specimens of the Roman builders' work. No. 2A and No. 10 bases, and No. 3, a capital, (see plate), were found in this street between the Methodist Chapel and the corner of the line of houses known as the Holy Bones, facing St. Nicholas churchyard.

Here, fortunately, we have a capital of one of the columns, of somewhat remarkable form, a peculiar variety of the Doric. There is another in the Museum, No. 19, resembling it, but more elaborate and of smaller dimensions. It is a singular fact that this capital (No. 3) is not unlike in section the fragment of a capital of one of the columns of the portico of the building supposed to be the Basilica of Lincoln, lending probability to the idea that it exhibits a local variety of the Doric order employed in the Midlands. In the necking of the large capital (No. 3) and in the mouldings of the base No. 9, may be observed deep holes and grooves. Such grooves occur opposite each other in the upper mouldings of the bases of the columns, *in situ*, of the portico at

Lincoln, just named, and they may be seen cut into the sides of capitals and bases on most Roman sites. They indicate, with little doubt, in many instances, the existence of screens of open work of simple geometrical pattern fixed between column and column, or used to fill either square or arched openings affording light and air to the interior of buildings. In Rome itself, and in the principal edifices of important continental cities, these screens were either of marble or bronze. In this distant province they were, more probably, of the humble material, wood, bronze being too costly to be much in use. To a certain extent barriers of latticed work of this character may be considered the prototypes of the traceries which filled the windows of churches, and the arcades of cloisters, in the middle ages.

The two bases Nos. 13-14, were found, *in situ*, in July, 1861, close to St. Martin's church. The following extract from the report for that year in the Transactions of the Leicester Architectural and Archæological Society, gives the details relating to their discovery. "The excavations at St. Martin's, Leicester, have brought to light many antiquities of great interest. Several considerable portions of the foundations of ancient walls have been discovered, and upon removing the earth—in July last—on the north side of the church close to the palisading dividing the church ground from the Town Hall lane, the workmen came to a rubble wall of considerable thickness, surmounted by a wrought stone platform, upon which stood the bases of two massive Doric columns, each about two feet in diameter. These columns in all probability formed a portion of a colonnade, which, judging from their size and the space intervening between them—about ten feet—would be of considerable length." I will here only remark that the section of these bases shows a comparatively late date, being much ruder than the profile of those found at the corner of St. Nicholas street.

A few other fragments will attract attention, Nos. 21 to 26, part of well carved impost moulding, and what may possibly be the stones of an arch all found in High Cross street at its junction with Blue Boar lane. Also, may be noted the Corinthian capital, the only one of that

order in the collection (No. 17), found in a garden in Talbot lane. It is very rude in execution and doubtless very late in date, and its effect much injured by the loss of the volutes.

Last but not least in interest, the fountain tank No. 12 must be noticed (for section see plate). This was discovered September 5th, 1862, at No. 52 High Cross street, near its junction with St. Nicholas street, at a depth of about 10 feet in excavating for a cellar. It may have been a street fountain, but if objection be made that it is too small for that purpose, then it must have stood in the peristyle of some important house. Its finely moulded outline, unfortunately not perfect in any one part, may, with some attention still be made out and is worthy of study. There are traces of a lining of the usual pink cement on the inner surface of the basin.

Before passing on to describe the Mosaics which the museum contains, mention must be made of a few minor objects.

The collection shows various forms of tiles, roof tiles, with fragments of their cover joint tiles (imbrices) (Nos. 49, 50, 49A), found in Jewry Wall Street (at M. on plan); the usual building tiles marked by the feet of the animals which have strayed across them in the brick-field, where they lay drying before being baked, amongst them being one with the impression of the nailed sandals of the brickmaker himself. There are also flue tiles of the usual form and character. One of these, however (found on the site of Wygggeston's Hospital), has an exceptional interest, for it is signed. It is preserved in case No. 4 of the archæological room, and is inscribed "Primus fecit." The letters are scratched out with the tools used in scoring the surfaces of flue tiles to give a firmer hold to the plastering with which they were covered.

As to the patterns on flue tiles scored in this manner, they are far too rude to have been made with any intention of being used for decorative purposes. But there is a class represented in this collection, specimens of which are placed in the case containing the inscribed tile mentioned above, which were undoubtedly employed for decoration. These are the tiles stamped with reed-like lines, forming patterns of diamond and other shaped



diapers (see Nos. 3,010, Case 4, archæological room, and 3,495 same Case, the latter found near Talbot Lane. They may have been employed for the wall linings of bath rooms (for sudatoria or calidaria), for all the tiles thus stamped have traces of flanges, indicating their use for flues. Occasionally they are found with mortar adhering to their faces, but this only proves that such fragments have been worked up as old material.

A second variety, much more rare than the above, of which the museum possesses only a tiny fragment (No. 3,498, Case 4, archæological room), shows the imprint of patterns in very low relief. Pieces of such tiles, with an ornamentation of peculiar character, were picked up in the excavations of a Roman house at Alresford, near Colchester, and a portion of one of an identical pattern with these on the site of a villa at Chelmsford, both in Essex. Similar specimens are preserved in the British Museum, which were found in London. Others again are in the Guildhall Museum in the City of London.

The Mosaic pavements which the museum contains are perhaps more interesting as affording opportunities for studying and ascertaining the nature of the materials of which they are composed, than for any singularity of design or excellence of workmanship.

On this site, there seems less certainty than on others of naming the districts from which these materials were drawn; and perhaps the considerable use of tile tesserae in the pavements of the villa, in the cherry orchard, Danett's Hall (to be hereafter described) may be an indication that the mosaic workers could rely less than usual, for the construction of their pavements on the natural products of the surrounding country than was the case elsewhere.

The mosaics preserved in the museum come from three different floors, two found in the town, one from the cherry orchard, at Danett's Hall, outside it.

No. 1 has some interest as showing the only figure subject yet found in Leicester.

It was discovered according to Nichols, the historian of Leicester,<sup>1</sup> about 1675, in making the cellar of a house

<sup>1</sup> See History and Antiquities of the Town of Leicester, by John Nichols, F.S.A., p. 9.

opposite the Elm trees, near all Saints' church, (for the site, see No. I on plan). It is an octagonal panel, one no doubt of others now lost, surrounded by the usual braided border, and containing a youthful male figure, nude, with flying drapery behind him, leaning against a stag. In front of this group is a Cupid, with bow bent, and arrow raised towards the other figures. The subject may possibly refer to the myth of Cyparissus and the stag. It has been absurdly misnamed Diana and Actæon! No adequate representations of this panel exist. Those which have been made are little better than caricatures, both as to colour and form. Though the figures are ill drawn in the original, the copies made of them are still worse. There is a great delicacy in the colouring, unusually so for Romano-British mosaic. In these days when so many processes are available for re-producing form and colour, it might be worth while to attempt a faithful copy of this curious fragment of antiquity.

Mr. John Paul, F.G.S., of Leicester, to whom I am indebted for the careful identification of the materials of this and of the other Roman pavements in the museum, sends me the following note on the tesserae of this panel. He says, "The white, grey, creamy white, the black and a few pieces of liver colour in the horns of the stag, are all fragments of marble. The bluish grey, is a limestone probably from the coal measures, the tesserae of reddish brown, and others of a yellowish brown are both limestones, whilst a brown and a dull citron are both fine grained sandstones. I am unable to determine from what locality these materials have been procured, but I think the probability is in favour of Derbyshire for the marbles and limestones; and the sandstones must I think have been brought from a distance. In both pavements" (this and the Cherry Orchard one) "the red tesserae are pottery and as you suggested this is the only artificial material used."

Nos. II., III. and IV. are portions of a pavement from Vine street. They exhibit a somewhat coarse piece of work though showy and effective.

No. V. This is part of the pavement of the largest room of the villa discovered in the Cherry Orchard, Danett's Hall.



This villa lay to the westward of the Roman city on the opposite side of the river Soar, at a distance of about three-quarters of a mile from the old town. It must have had some road connecting it with the town; possibly a lane called Watt's Causeway, enlarged and since named King Richard's Road served for purposes of communication with Rataë.

According to an account in Nichols, the cherry trees which gave the site its name were planted sometime early in the last century. In this orchard, about 1782, in grubbing up the roots of one of the trees, a portion of the floor of a corridor was discovered, and though a continuation of it in a northern direction was traced by the owner of the ground, no further endeavour seems to have been made to uncover it. The portion of floor found at this period was figured in Nichols' *Hist. and Antiquities of the Town of Leicester*, (pl. ix., fig. 2.) and also in a communication from that writer to the *Gentleman's Magazine* (Oct. 1786).

In the year 1851, the Literary and Philosophical Society of Leicester, through its Archæological Section, undertook the exploration of the site, and an account of the proceedings drawn up by the late Mr. Walker (the architect who superintended the excavations) was transmitted by the Secretary of the Society to the British Archæological Association, by whom it was published in the seventh volume of their *Journal*. Operations were commenced with the object of finding the fragment made known by Nichols. On the first day a pavement was uncovered but not the one illustrated by that gentleman. It was the floor of a room about 15 feet square, the tesserae of which were about 1 inch square and composed of red brick and a greyish drab stone. The pattern consisted of interlaced squares of red on the grey ground. Continuing the excavations onward in the same line in a northerly direction, the explorers came to the largest room discovered, which measured about 28 feet by 18 feet. Here, at the western end of this chamber Mr. Walker says, "A very beautiful semi-circular pattern was disclosed, executed in very small tessellæ of four colours, viz., blue, red, brown-pink, and white,<sup>1</sup> repre-

<sup>1</sup> This is the fragment No. V in the Museum. As to the materials of the tesserae of this pavement, Mr. Paul considers that the white resembles a hard

senting in the centre a shell pattern, in the two divisions of which, next the line of the diameter of the semi-circle, are dolphins swimming towards the centre. This shell pattern is bounded all round by the guilloche ornament, outside of which is a vandyke of black and white, bounded by strips of grey and red tessellæ about one inch square. On the south-western side of this pavement, a stone pedestal" (No. 27 in the collection) "was found laid carefully down on the tessellæ, which were uninjured beneath it; this pedestal seems to be executed in Ketton stone." A fragment of a guilloche border at the eastern end of the room marked the extent of this chamber.

Pushing the trenches still further north in the same line, the explorers came upon another floor of a chess-board pattern in red and grey tesserae, the whole showing a room 14 feet square.

The pattern figured by Nichols was not yet found, so the excavations were continued in another direction, with the result of laying bare the pavement of a corridor at right angles to the range of rooms already discovered. This was 56 feet in length and 7 feet 8½ inches in width, and consisted of alternate squares of grey and red tesserae, brick and grey stone, each tessera being an inch square. At the upper end of this, the corridor floor illustrated by Nichols, was at last found. It ran beside the range of rooms just described and at right angles to the corridor mentioned above, with which it probably communicated. This large gallery was upwards of 120 feet long by over 11 feet wide, and showed in its flooring the same red and grey tesserae as in the other rooms, arranged in three distinct patterns.

The walls of the villa had been eradicated to their very foundations. No hypocausts appear to have been found though flue tiles were turned up, and one filled with concrete to serve apparently as a support to a floor was discovered *in situ*. Fragments of wall plaster were of course numerous, but some must be specially noted as

kind of chalk such as that used as building material in the interior of Ely Cathedral, and that the blue or rather blue grey and the yellow (called above brown-pink) may have been obtained in Leicestershire.

The stone for the common greyish drab inch square tesserae used in great quanti-

ties in the other and coarser floors, he says, "would easily be got from the coal measures of Leicestershire or Derbyshire."

I think it very possible that the bluish grey and black tesserae of the Leicester pavements may, on further examination, prove to be of Barrow limestone,

they bore the impress of reeds. Common pottery was plentiful, but no Samian ware was discovered, and only four coins,—all of the lower empire.

The simple style of all these floors, with one exception, and the poverty of the material possibly indicate that the owner of the villa, though well to do, and having doubtless “everything handsome about him,” was hardly in as affluent circumstances as that wealthy citizen of Rataë the floor of whose dining room (?) may still be seen in the town in Jewry Wall street.

Be that as it may, before the site was built over in 1868 further explorations were made by the Literary and Philosophical Society conjointly with the Architectural and Archæological Society of Leicester, but with little result. Another pavement however rewarded their researches. This was 15 feet by 9 feet 6 inches and showed a pattern of intersecting circles in coarse black and white tesserae. It was situated opposite the Newfound Pool Inn and 25 feet from King Richard’s Road, formerly known as Watt’s Causeway.

All vestiges of the villa were then obliterated by the increase of the town in that direction and the only relics of it now to be found are in the museum.

It is to be regretted that some fragments of each pattern of the corridor floors uncovered in these excavations could not have been preserved. The plan however, prepared by Mr. Walker and exhibited in the museum, affords valuable information. From it we learn not only the disposition and colouring of the floors, but it preserves for us the lines of the walls of the building.

The villa seems to have been erected on the plan, usual in the larger class of Romano-British houses in the country, viz., of a series of rooms of various sizes and destinations, placed round an open court, or round two courts if the establishment was a large one, all connected by corridors looking into the open space, not infrequently laid out as a garden. Even in the smaller houses, not built in this fashion, a corridor running along the front of the house is a common feature. These corridors surrounding a central court or garden, play an important part in the economy of Roman houses in Britain and elsewhere, for many of the ordinary employments of the

household were undoubtedly carried on in them where they were sufficiently ample. Such is certainly the case in the smaller class of houses in Pompeii, as the excavations constantly reveal. In one house there, Fiorelli believed he found indications of the presence of looms, with the name of each slave who worked in them scratched on the wall in the place assigned to him.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps it may not be too great a stretch of imagination to fancy that the voices of women occupied with their spinning and other household cares, and the click of the busy loom echoed through the corridors of this little country villa within sight of the western gate of Rataë.

I have now described in some detail, the architectural fragments preserved in the Leicester Museum. It remains to be seen what deductions may be drawn from them as to their probable date in the long period of the Roman occupation of Britain.

Unfortunately, speaking generally, our materials for forming a judgment on this subject are but scanty. Until a very recent period and even at the present day sometimes, but little care has been taken to preserve the few architectural relics of the Roman period which have escaped destruction. While minor antiquities, often of little value, have been carefully treasured up from the earliest times of investigation, the fragment of frieze, or shaft, or base which might have afforded an invaluable key to the age and proportions of the building, amongst the ruins of which it had been buried for centuries, was left abandoned on the spot where it was unearthed, for rain and frost to destroy, little or no record being made of its existence.

The evidence afforded by these sculptured stones of the degree of civilization in Roman Britain has scarcely yet been appreciated at its full value.

Of these stones those most frequently found, are the bases and capitals of columns.

The capitals are for the most part of the Doric order, differing widely from the usual form. The type most commonly seen is represented in the Leicester collection by the capital of the short column from the cherry orchard

<sup>1</sup> See "Descrizione di Pompei per Giuseppe Fiorelli," 1875, p. 226.

at Danett's Hall (No. 27)<sup>1</sup> and one other (No. 18) (see plate for both). Not only is this a common form in Britain, but in France also. It may perhaps be taken as the type of Doric capital throughout Britain and certainly in Northern Gaul. The base used was the attic one, as was shown by a discovery of columns with their shafts and capitals intact at Saincaize, near Nevers, in France, in the year 1861.<sup>2</sup> It is impossible at present to say at what period this peculiar form of capital was adopted in Romano-British buildings and in those of Gaul. M. de Caumont believes that it is as old as the age of the Antonines, from the fact that the columns mentioned above were found in the ruins of a building which contained busts of the emperors Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius. The profiles of Romano-British capitals of this order (the Doric) vary continually—in this collection alone four or five different profiles may be observed.

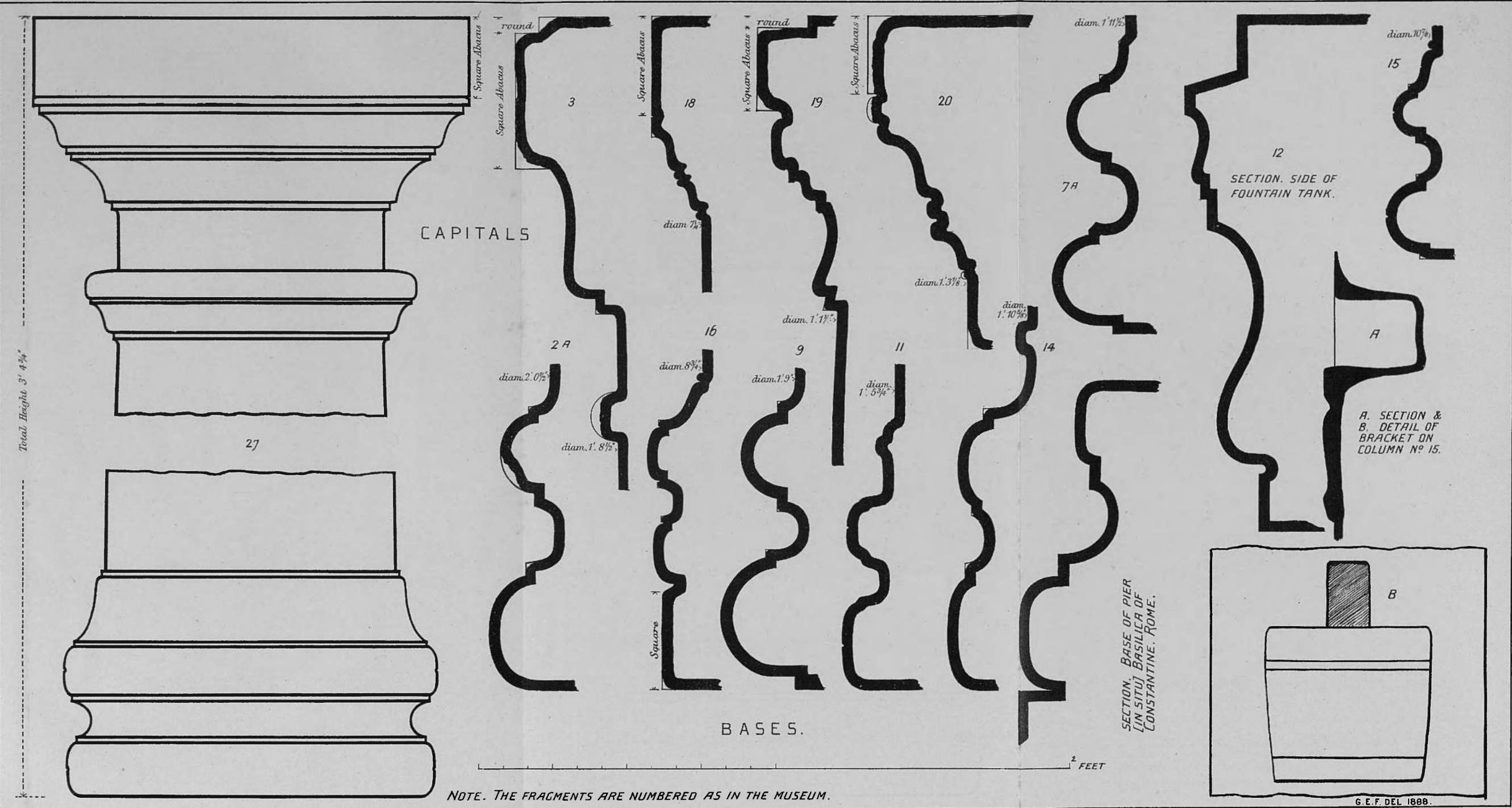
If, however, the sections of the capitals give little help in the determination of their age, we may conjecture with more certainty the comparative periods of the bases. These do not vary to the same extent, in the form and number of their several members, as the capitals do. They all, or mostly all, follow the form commonly known as the attic base, consisting of an upper and lower torus moulding divided by a scotia with a fillet above and below it. Frequently a large reversed cyma moulding, or a hollow (cavetto) occurs above the upper torus, joining it to the shaft, and the larger this member is the later in date will the base be to which it belongs. The two torus mouldings, with their dividing scotia, are, however, constant features in these bases, and the greater or less projection of the torus mouldings, and the depth or shallowness of the hollow between them, are, in all probability, indications of their earlier or later date.

If reference be made to the bases No. 4A and 7A (see plate), from the corner of St. Nicholas Street, it will be seen that they follow pretty closely the usual type of attic base, though they are somewhat clumsy. From this fact they may be taken to belong to one of

<sup>1</sup> In the Museum at Cirencester, and in the Roman baths at Bath, may be seen capitals of this type in its most perfected form.

<sup>2</sup> See *L'Abecedaire or Rudiment d'Archéologie, Ere Gallo-Romaine*, par M. A. de Caumont, p. 95.







the earliest buildings yet found in Leicester. Let these, however, be compared to those found, *in situ* also, near St. Martin's Church (Nos. 13 and 14). The section of these at once shows a difference of proportion. The torus mouldings are much heavier, they are nearly of equal size, and the lower scarcely has a greater projection than the upper one. The hollow, too, between them is much reduced in depth. That this is not a mere accident can be shown by the comparison of these bases with examples from other sites, and the museum exhibits other bases with even flatter torus mouldings and shallower hollows, (see especially the foot of the dwarf column from the Roman villa in the Cherry Orchard, No. 27 on plate). Approximately such a base as No. 14, from St. Martin's Church, may be conjectured to be of the time of Constantine. If we make allowance for the difference between the art of a distant province and that of the capital, it may be compared not unfavourably with such a base as that of the great pier, occurring at the angle of the apse of the Basilica of Constantine in Rome—(see plate of sections). Here, the flatness of the torus mouldings is a striking feature, and constitutes a strong point of resemblance with the Leicester base.

Another likeness to the art of Constantine's time may be found in the flatness of the ornamentation of the Corinthian capital (No. 17) from Bath lane. This might be compared with a pilaster capital from the Basilica above named. Although of far inferior workmanship, and in a less precious substance (for one is of white marble while the other is of a coarse red sandstone), it shows that tendency to mere surface carving which is so apparent in what remains to us of the works of the Constantine period. The capital in question probably formed part of a building of very late date. It must not be supposed that this example is flat because it is of rude workmanship, for rude ornament has not, necessarily, this quality. Taking into consideration therefore, the characteristics mentioned above, it may be fairly conjectured that the building of which the fragments from the corner of St. Nicholas Street formed part, was one of the earliest edifices of Rataë, possibly of the period of Hadrian, while the bases

from St. Martin's Church upheld the columns of a far later structure, perhaps of the time of Constantine, and that some edifice with Corinthian columns of whose capitals No. 17 is an example, stood in Bath lane, and was an erection also of the age of Constantine.

It is greatly to be regretted that the evidence is not sufficient to shew the nature of the buildings of which these fragments formed part. It is not impossible that the broken columns from the corner of St. Nicholas Street sustained the portico of the Basilica of Rataë, and that those found *in situ*, by St. Martin's Church, adorned a temple, but such conjectures are mere guess-work, and their too ready acceptance only tends to restrict research. It is an interesting fact that the present St. Nicholas Street from its junction with High Cross Street, to the corner at Holy Bones, and onward along the line of houses so named, has produced more fragments, and those of more importance, than any other part of the city.

These discoveries all point to the fact that important buildings of the ancient town stood in this locality, and somewhat closely together.

How complete the destruction or abandonment of the Roman city must have been, seems to be shown by the absence of Roman stonework of any size in the fabric of the primitive church of St. Nicholas. Rubble from the walls, and a certain quantity, not large, of Roman tile are visible in the masonry of its rude nave, and appear to be all the materials the site afforded when the christianised Teutons raised the humble edifice of their new faith upon the ruins of the Roman city. No massive plinths and shafts from Basilica or temple were used again in its construction, as is seen so often in more southern lands, and the only conclusion that can be drawn is, that the fallen columns and huge entablatures, either overthrown by violent destruction, or levelled by gradual neglect and decay, had been so completely covered by the accumulation of the soil and the wreck of the buildings they supported, that only grass grown mounds met the view of the early builders seeking materials for their church, then rising upon the desolate site. One mighty fragment (now called the Jewry Wall), alone presented itself to their view, the most perfect part, it might well be, of the ruined

walls of the town, and that they possibly utilised in their new fabric, and so preserved it to be a puzzle to future generations and a subject for legendary story and mediæval romance.

The ruins of the Roman town of Rataë still exist deeply buried beneath the streets and lanes of the modern city of Leicester. Systematic research for their discovery is no longer possible, but some favouring chance, and the public spirit displayed by her citizens, who have already done so much, may yet bring to light relics of the long-forgotten Roman past, even more historically valuable than those preserved in the museum, which I have here endeavoured to classify and describe.

#### REFERENCES TO PLAN SHOWING ROMAN ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS IN LEICESTER.

The numerals in red on the Plan indicate remains either existing *in situ* or preserved in the Town Museum. In the latter case, only those are marked, the site of whose discovery has been ascertained. The lines in red show the limits of the Roman City.

#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

Carte in Nichols' Hist. Leicest.—"The History and Antiquities of the Town of Leicester, &c., 1795. By John Nichols, F.S.A.," in his Hist. of Leicestershire, Vol i.

Nichols' Hist. Leicest.—Idem. Idem.

Throsby, Hist. Leicest.—"The History and Antiquities of the ancient Town of Leicester, attempted by John Throsby," 1791.

Thompson Hist. Leicest.—"History of Leicester," 1849. By James Thompson.

Trans. L. A. and A. Soc.—"Transactions of the Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Society."

Ord. Surv. Ordnance Survey.

- A. Floor of mortar, walls and traces of a hypocaust (?), and large foundations of a wall of Forest stone, laid dry. Near Water House, High Cross Street, next west end of the Friars. (Site of Johnsons Buildings.) Found 1667-8. (Carte in Nichols' Hist. Leicest., p. 11).  
A tessellated floor, a hypocaust and painted walls, site of Johnsons Buildings. Found 1667. (Throsby, Hist. Leicest., p. 19.)
- B. Large Sewer from East Gate, found at end of seventeenth century. (Thompson, Hist. Leicest. Appendix A. p. 447.)
- C. Wall and pavement of stone like a street. Found 1716. (Carte in Nichols' Hist. of Leicest., p. 11.)

- D. Tessellated floor, White Lion Inn. Found 1723. (Carte in Nichols' Hist. of Leicest., p. 11.)
- E. Tessellated pavements on site known as Vauxhall, close to the River Soar. Found in 1747. (Throsby, p. 19., Nichols' Hist. Leicest., p. 11.)
- F. Tessellated pavement found in S. Aisle of St. Martin's Church, 1773. (Nichols' Hist. Leicest., p. 12.)
- G. Tessellated pavement found on site of County Gaol. (Throsby Hist. Leicest., p. 383.)
- H. Tessellated pavement and hypocausts, under Mr. Stephen's House, now No. 18, High Cross Street. (Throsby, Hist. Leicest., p. 20.)
- I. Tessellated pavement under Mr. King's House, afterwards in possession of Mr. Collier. (Throsby. Hist. Leicest., p. 20.)
- K.K. Concrete floor, large foundations, columns, and large drain. Found 1793. (Throsby, Hist. Leicest., p. 388 *et seq.* with folding plate, p. 387.)—and foundations at the Talbot Inn. Found 1793. (Throsby, Hist. Leicest., p. 2.)
- L. Concrete floor, and massive wall in line with the Jewry Wall, at Recruiting Sergeant Inn. (Nichols' Hist. Leicest., p. 12.)
- M. Tessellated pavement, *in situ*. found 1830. (Thompson, Hist. Leicest. Appendix A. p. 445.)
- N. Pavement found in 1839. (Ord. Surv.)
- O. Wall and bases and shafts of columns. Found 1859. (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. ii, Pt. 1, 1866, p.p. 23, 24.)
- P. Painted walls of a room. Found 1866, in the street, Southgate Street, near Mr. Warren's premises. (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. ii, Pt. 1, 1866, p. 22.)
- Q. Coarse pavement and fragment of column. Found 1866, in Southgate Street, in street, between Mr. Johnson's Malt Offices, and Mr. Collier's house. (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. ii, Pt. 1, 1866, p. 22.)
- R. Rough tessellated pavement. Found 1876. Site of Opera House, Silver Street. (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. iv, Pt. 2, 1876, p. 106, and vol. v, Pt. 1, 1879, p. 55.)
- S. Concrete floor, foundations, and drain. Found 1859 and 1876, in Bath Lane. (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. ii, Pt. 1, 1866, p. 22, and vol. v, Pt. 1, 1879, p. 41.)
- T. Inscribed tile, "Primus fecit," Wvygoston's Hospital. (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. vi, Pt. 2, 1885, p. 96.)
- V.V. Columns found in 1885, now placed in St. Nicholas' Church-yard. (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. vi, Pt. 3, 1886, p. 161.)
- W. Tessellated pavement, Blackfriars St. Found 1885 (?) (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. vi, Pt. 4, 1887, p. 208.)
- X. Tessellated pavement, Sarah Street. Found 1885 (?) (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. vi, Pt. 4, 1887, p. 210.)
- Y. Foundation of wall, roof tile, and fragments of ornamented, stamped flue tiles. Found 1888, in St. Nicholas' Church-yard, in digging foundations for new N. transept to Church.
- Z. Large drain to W. of Jewry Wall, (mentioned by Throsby) re-discovered and its direction traced towards the Jewry Wall. (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. vi, Pt. 5, 1888, p. 312.)

## ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENTS IN TOWN MUSEUM.

(NOTE.—The fragments are numbered as in the Museum.)

## MOSAIC PAVEMENTS.

- No. I. Octagonal panel from a pavement. Subject, Cyparissus and the Stag (?) Found 1675. (Carte in Nichols' Hist. Leicest., p. 9.)
- Nos. II, III, IV, Portions of a pavement of geometrical design. Found in 1839 in Vine Street.
- Nos. 1 and 1 A. Parts of shaft of column found at S.W. corner of Methodist Chapel, St. Nicholas Street. (Ord. Surv.)
- Nos. 2 A. to 3, } Bases plinths and capital of column. All found in St.  
9 and 9 A. and } Nicholas Street, between Methodist Chapel and corner  
10 and 10 A. } of Holy Bones.
- Nos. 4 to 7 B. Two bases of columns, with shafts, and plinth, &c. Found *in situ* at N.E. corner of St. Nicholas Street in 1867. (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. iii, Pt. 4, 1874, p. 334.)
- Nos. 8 to 8 B. Base and plinth of column, found in St. Nicholas Street, matching the above and close to them, 1861 (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. iii, Pt. 4, 1874, p. 334.)
- No. 12. Fountain tank. Found at No. 52, High Cross Street, in 1862.
- Nos. 13, 14. Two bases of columns found *in situ* when excavations were made for new N. transept of St. Martin's Church, 1861. (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. ii, Pt. 1, 1866, p. 90, for plan of site see plate opposite p. 96.)
- No. 15. Small base and shaft, with bracket worked on the shaft. Found 1875, on site of Wyggeston's Hospital.
- No. 16. Small base and shaft. Found in 1850 (called in Ordnance Survey, "an altar stone.")
- No. 17. Corinthian capital, found in 1844. (L. A. and A. Soc., vol. ii, Pt. 1, 1866, p. 24.)
- No. 19. Portion of capital, found in Sarah Street, 1875.(?)
- Nos. 21 to 26. Carved impost mouldings and carved fragments, perhaps from an arch, found at junction of Blue Boar Lane and High Cross Street.
- Nos. 3495-8. Fragments of ornamental, stamped flue tiles in Case No. 4, archaeological room. Found in 1879. (Trans. L. A. and A. Soc., vol. v, Pt. 1, 1879, p. 41.)
- † Much worn base and fragment of a Capital. Found under house, W. side of Southgate Street, about 12 yards south of Bakehouse lane. Lying in grounds of Museum, outside conservatory.
- A. A. Fragment of stone carved with a niche, containing a portion of a rude figure in relief.

## DISCOVERIES RECORDED IN LEICESTER BUT NOT NOTED IN THE PLAN.

From about Red Cross Street down to the Elm Trees, (near All Saints Church,) 6 or 7 feet from the houses on W. side of street, an old stone wall, fallen down towards the houses. Found 1685, (Carte in Nichols'

Hist. Leicest.) Drain of hewn stone at entrance to lane leading to Castle, running from the Friars to the river. Found in 1685. (Carte &c., p. 11.)

Found next the King's Arms, (formerly in High Street), a stone wall running to the street, 1710. (Carte &c., p. 11.)

Found, a wall in the cellars of Mr. Carter's house, and, in next house, a drain of stone, 1717. (Carte &c., p. 11.)

Two Mosaic pavements, found in 1754, in Blackfriars, on property belonging to Rogers Ruding, Esq., figured in plates vii and viii. A third, adjoining, in plates ix, fig. 1, found at same date. (Nichols' Hist. Leicest., p.p. 11, 12.)

Fragment of tessellated pavement, found on site of Grey Friars. (Throsby, Hist. Leicest., p. 396.)

Foundations and remains of floors, near the Peacock Inn, High Cross Street, 1858 (?) (L. A. and Soc., vol. i, Pt. 3, 1864, p. 215.)

Foundations, S. and W. of Jewry Wall. (L. A. and A. Soc., vol. i, Pt. 3, 1864, p. 305.)

Granite and Sandstone Walk, from near All Saints Church, to near Goal, running in middle of High Cross Street. (L. A. and A. Soc., vol. ii, Pt. 1, 1866, p. 23.)

Foundations on Mr. Sarson's premises, near St. Nicholas Street. (L. A. and A. Soc., vol. ii, Pt. 3, 1869, p. 207.)

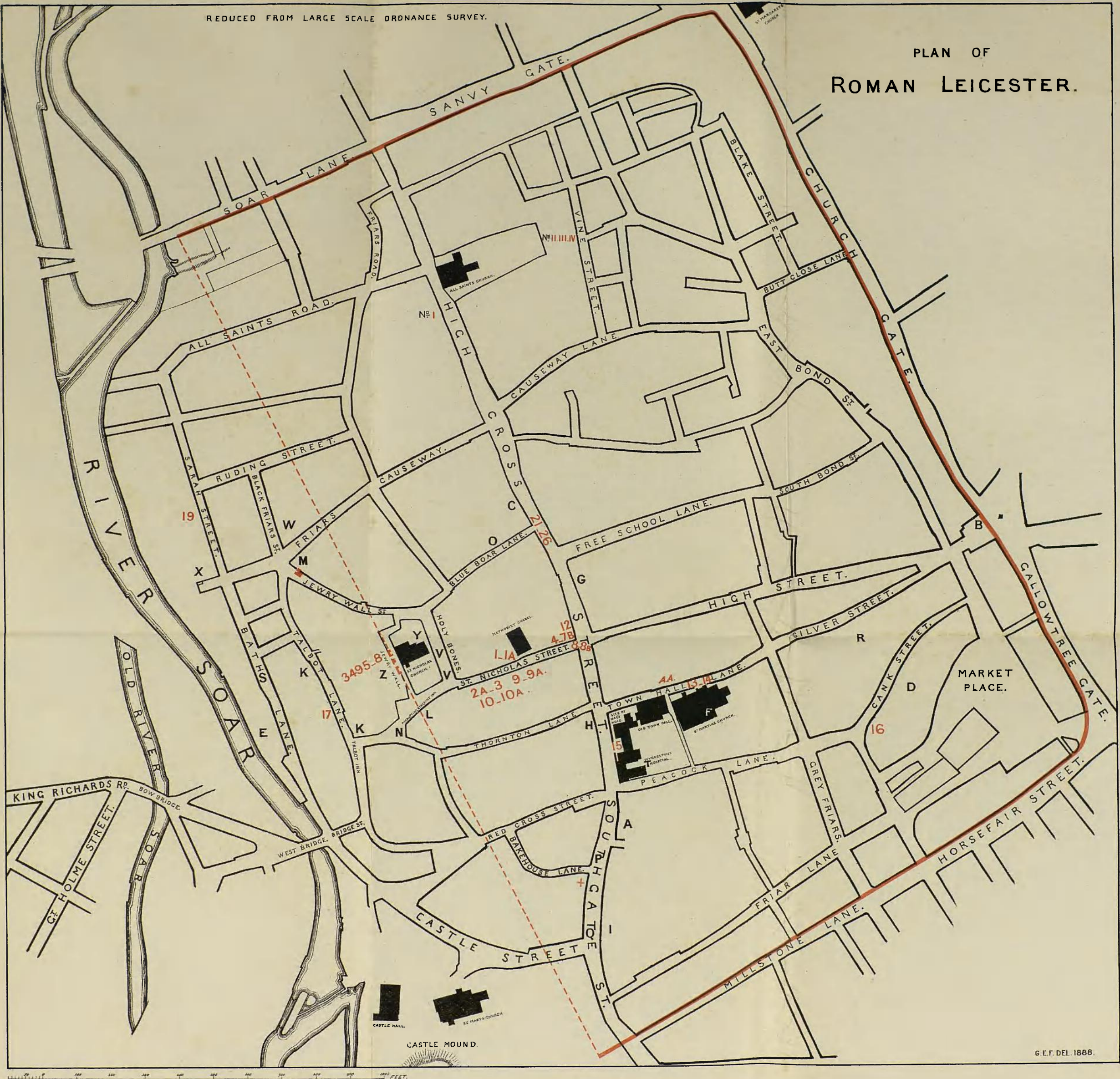
Results of excavations along the east front of the Jewry Wall. (L. A. and A. Soc., vol. ii, Pt. 2, 1867, p. 202 *et seq.*, and vol. iv, Pt. 1, 1875, p.p. 54, 79.)

Foundations and town ditch (?) Messrs. Rust's yard, near Jewry Wall (L. A. and A. Soc., vol. v, Pt. 1, 1879, p. 41.)



REDUCED FROM LARGE SCALE ORDNANCE SURVEY.

PLAN OF  
ROMAN LEICESTER.



G.E.F. DEL. 1888.