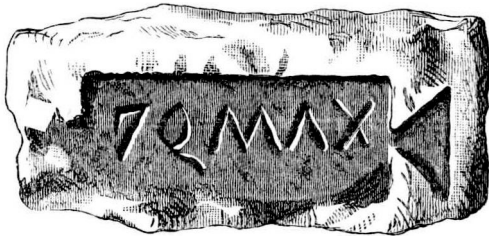






CENTURY OF OCRATIUS MAXIMUS.



CENTURY OF QUINTIUS MAXIMUS.



CENTURY OF QUINTUS TERENCEUS.



CENTURY OF TERENCEUS ROMANUS.

CENTURIAL STONES, FOUND IN CHESTER.



## ON THE RECENT FIND OF A CENTURIAL STONE IN CHESTER.

BY GEORGE W. SHRUBSOLE, F.G.S.

*(Read 19th November, 1888.)*

**D**URING the past summer, while excavations were going on in the rear of the premises of Messrs. Lamont and Son, in Eastgate Street, some massive foundations were met with, evidently much older than the structure above. Many of the stones had the appearance of having once belonged to some of the Roman buildings of Deva, like the courses of masonry discovered, in 1884, on the property of Mr. Bullin, in White Friars, which proved to be the foundations of the monastery of the White Friars, built almost exclusively of Roman material.<sup>1</sup>

Among the stones met with in Eastgate Street, on the occasion referred to above, there was found one with an inscription, which I now describe. It belongs to the class known as "Centurial stones," of which we have at present five in number found in Chester. These relate to,

1. The Century of ABVCINVS.
2. Do. QVINTIVS MAXIMVS.
3. Do. OCRATIVS MAXIMVS.
4. Do. QVINTVS TERENTIVS.
5. Do. TERENTIVS ROMANIS.

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<sup>1</sup> See the *Journal* of this Society, N.S., vol. i., p. 198.

The last mentioned is the stone found in Eastgate Street. When these stones were first discovered, there was some doubt as to the use for which they were designed. Antiquaries were divided in opinion. The discovery, however, of several of them *in situ*, along the great wall of Hadrian, and also at the larger Roman castra, as in the multangular tower in York, has brought out pretty clearly the purposes which they were intended to serve, which are as follows:—

1st. They indicate that a body of Roman soldiers, namely, a centuria, composed of one hundred men, under the command of a centurion, whose name occurs on the stone, were once located at, or near the place in question as long as the stone was *in situ*. Thus, in the tower referred to at York, ten of these inscriptions were to be seen, indicating that that number of centuriæ had at one time or another been stationed at that particular locality. To come to later times, I doubt not that the rocks along the valley of the Nile bear epigraphic evidence of the passage of the British forces on their way to the Soudan, but possibly of a less permanent character.

2nd. Another use for the stone would be to mark the particular location of the centuria in the castrum. A stone of this kind might have been erected at the beginning and end of their quarters in camp.

3rd. Again, these stones tell us of a certain amount of work done by the particular centuria, it may be the building of a wall or tower, by the addition of the word FECIT variously contracted. Or, as it has often happened, they record the fact that the centuria was engaged in building or repairing a certain amount of the wall in which the stone was found.

This use we may illustrate by a stone found in Manchester, which states that the century of Quintianus, of the

first cohort of the Frisians, built twenty-four feet, presumably, of the wall.

COHR . I .  
FRISIANO  
>QVINTIANI  
P . XXIII

Similarly, we have one of our own centurial stones, referring to the completion of one thousand feet of the wall by the century of Ocratius Maximus.

Coming now to the latest addition to our group of Chester centurial stones, we have the recent find in East-gate Street, in which in a sunk panel a two-line inscription may be read, but not without some difficulty. It reads, as determined by Professor Hübner, of Berlin:—

CHOR . III  
>TER . RO

Or expanded, Cohortis tertius Centuria Terentii Romani; that is, the century of Terentius Romanis, of the third cohort of the Twentieth Legion, the latter being understood.

I have only to add that the stone is thirteen inches long, by eight wide, and eight and a half deep, and that Messrs. Lamont and Son have very courteously presented it to the Society's Museum.

