

LI. *An attempt to explain an antient Roman inscription, cut upon a stone lately found at Bath.* By John Ward, LL.D. *Rbet. Prof. Gresh. and V. P. R. S.*

Read Nov. 22, 1753. **A** COPY of this inscription was first communicated to this Society by Mr. *Henry Baker*, who received it in a letter from *John Browning Esq;* dated the fourth of July last. And the Society being then pleased to refer it to my further consideration, several other copies of it were in a few days sent me by my freinds from *Bath*, and other places. But upon comparing them one with another, I found they all differed in some respects; excepting two only, one of which had been copied from the other. And therefore, as I could not by this means settle the reading to my satisfaction, Dr. *Richard Davies* the physician being then in *London*, I acquainted him with the affair; who was so obliging, as to promise me, that upon his return to *Bath* he would procure for me an exact copy from his own inspection. And accordingly he applied himself for that purpose to the ingenious statuary at *Bath*, Mr. *Prince Hoare*; who apprehending that a cast of it in plaister of *Paris* might express both the form of the letters, and the defects of them, in their present state, with greater exactness than a written copy, was so kind as to take one off from the stone; which I received afterwards from Dr. *Davies*.

The stone was discovered upon the twenty-second of June last, about five feet under ground, in digging the cellar of a house, which was rebuilding at the lower

lower end of *Stall Street*. Among the rubbish of the old house, when it was pulled down, was a large quantity of walling stone, which had on it the marks of fire; so that probably some building had formerly stood there, which was burnt. And in sinking the ground about four or five feet lower than the stone, they found, as I am informed, two coins of the emperor *Carausius*, in base metal, and very much defaced; tho upon one of them the following inscription was legible: IMP CARAVSIVS PF. In July 1727 the beautiful gilt head, which is now preserved in the town house, was dug up at the other end of this street, not far from the *King's bath*, about sixteen feet below the surface of the earth, as they were making a common shore through the town (1).

The stone, upon which this inscription is cut, has been generally taken for a pedestal, either of a statue, or some other solid body, which it once supported. Tho from the appearance of the horizontal plane at the top Mr. *Hoare* is of the opinion, that nothing was formerly placed upon it; and supposes, that the sinking in the middle, with the two lines erased, one on each side, might be made merely for ornament. Besides, the face and two sides only are finished; the back being flat, as if it was designed to stand against a wall. The height of it, which is very near three feet; as likewise the form both of the stone itself, and the plane above mentioned; will appear by the draughts of them taken by Mr. *Hoare*, which are annexed to this discourse (2). From

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(1) A fine print of this head has been published by the A. S. L. in their *Vetust. Monum. Vol. I. Num. 34.*

(2) See TAB. III. *Fig. 3.*

a careful examination of the whole inscription, as it appeared to me in the cast, I have copied it in the draught of the stone; and indeavoured to express the several letters in their proper form and proportional size, together with the ligatures, divisions of the words, and their situation in each line, in the most exact manner I was capable of doing it. And upon considering the whole in this view, I take leave to offer the following reading in words at length, as what appears to me the most probable.

*Locum religiosum, per insolentiam erutum,  
virtuti et numini Augusti repurgatum  
reddidit Caius Severius Emeritus, centurio,  
sua pecunia.*

I. That the words *LOCVM RELIGIOSVM* must here signify a *burying place*, cannot, I think, be well doubted of; since that is the usual acceptation of them in the Roman laws. Thus *Marcian* sais: *Religiosum locum unusquisque sua voluntate facit, dum mortuum infert in locum suum* (1). The same thing is said by *Justinian* (2). And in like manner *Ulpian* sais: *Locum, in quo servus sepultus est, religiosum esse Aristo ait* (3). Moreover, as a severe punishment was inflicted on those, who violated the sepulchers of the dead (4); so for their further security they

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(1) *L. 6. § 2. D. de divis. rer.*

(2) *Instit. § 9. eod.*

(3) *L. 2. princ. D. de religios. et sumpt. fun.*

(4) *L. 3. § 7. D. de sepul. violat.*

they were consecrated to the *Dii Manes*. And as temples and altars, dedicated by public authority to the *Dii Superi*, were stiled *loca sacra* (1); hence, as *Aggenus Urbicus* observes: *Sacrum proprie Dei est, religiosum hominum* (2).

It is well known, that by the laws of the *Twelve tables* burials were prohibited within the city of *Rome*. The words of the law are these: *Hominem mortuum in urbe ne sepelito, neve urito* (3). The like prohibition was afterwards extended to the provinces, by the emperors *Hadrian* (4), *Antoninus Pius* (5), and others (6). There were indeed some exceptions to this law, in favour of particular persons, which do not come under our present consideration. The *Romans* therefore commonly placed their sepulchers, either near the common roads, or within their own possessions, or in some place allotted for that purpose by authority. Instances of the first sort are to be met with in *Gruter*, and other writers upon this subject. And the reason of it is assigned by *Varro*, who says: *Monimenta in sepulchris ideo secundum viam sunt, quo praetereunteis admoneant, et se fuisse, et illos esse mortaleis* (7). As to private or family sepulchers, a very full and ample account of them has been given by the late *Roger Gale* esquire, a worthy member

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(1) *Festus in voce Religiosus. Instit. § 8. ubi supra.*

(2) *De controvers. agror. pag. 61. edit. Goef.*

(3) *Tab. x. L. 2. princ.*

(4) *L. 3. § 5. D. de sepul. violat.*

(5) *Ful. Capitol. in vit.*

(6) *L. 12. C. de religios. et sumpt. fun.*

(7) *De L L. Lib. v.*

ber and treasurer of this Society, in a discourse written by him upon that subject, and formerly printed in the *Philosophical Transactions* (1), to which I need only refer. The place at *Rome* most remarkable for the sepulchral monuments of illustrious persons, as appears from *Strabo* (2), was the *Campus Martius*, where they were buried by order of the senate. But the common burying place allotted for slaves, and other mean persons, is by *Varro* called *Puticulae*; which lay, as he saies, beyond the mount *Esquiliae* (3). And to this *Horace* alludes in the following verses :

*Hoc miserae plebi stabat commune sepulchrum,  
Pantolabo scurrae, Nomentanoque nepoti* (4).

And that the like custom obtained in other parts of the Roman empire, appears from a passage in *Aggenus Urbicus*, in which he saies: *Loca autem, quae sint publica, videamus*. And then, after some others there mentioned, he adds: *Sunt in suburbanis loca publica, inopum destinata funeribus, quae loca culinās appellant* (5). Where under the word *inopum* must be included all such persons, who had no private or family burying places of their own; unless some particular place was assigned them by order of the

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(1) *Num.* 441. pag. 211.

(2) Διόπερ ἱεροπρεπέστατον νομίσαντες τὸν τόπον τῆτον, καὶ τὰ τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων μνήματα ἐνταῦθα κατεσκευάσαν ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν. L. v. pag. 236. edit. Casaub.

(3) *De L. L. Lib.* iv.

(4) *Lib.* i. *Sat.* 8. v. 10.

(5) *Ubi supra*, pag. 60.

the magistrates, which was not uncommon, as we find by several antient inscriptions (1).

But there was no town, to which this could be more suitable than *Bath*, on account of the great number of strangers, who resorted thither for the benefit of the salutiferous springs. For as some of those, who came from distant parts, may be supposed from time to time to have died there; a public coemetry for the burial of them was highly requisite. All the Roman inscriptions hitherto found at or near *Bath* have been of the sepulchral kind; except that now under consideration, which however has some affinity with them. The rest are five in number; four of which were first published by *Camden* (2), and since by Dr. *Guidott* (3) and others; and the fifth, relating to *Julius Vitalis*, by Dr. *Musgrave* (4). But of the four in *Camden*, two at least appear to have belonged to persons, who were not settled there, but came from distant places, probably upon the account of their health. One of these is called *decurio coloniae Glevensis*, that is, a senator or alderman of *Gloucester*, which was then a Roman colony named *Glevum*. The other is said to have been a foldier *legionis secundae adjutricis*, as those words have been generally read. But, as *Horsley* has remarked, it does not appear, that this legion ever was in *Britain* (5). As most of those inscriptions were found at *Walcote*, a village

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(1) See *Sertorii Monument. Patavin.*

(2) *Britann. pag. 171, 172. edit. 1607.*

(3) *Discourse of Bath, Chap. x.*

(4) *Julii Vitalis Epitaphium.*

(5) *Britann. Roman. pag. 326.*

village upon the *Fosse road*, about a mile north east from *Bath*; the coemetry is supposed to have lain at or near that place (1), where, as *Dr. Stukeley* observes, there was also a Roman camp (2).

2. The next words in the inscription, *PER INSOLENTIAM ERVTVM*, are attended with no small difficulty. Some persons, as I was informed, had taken the first letter of the last word for a *D*, which led them to read it *dirutum*; tho there is no appearance of an *I* after the *D*, nor indeed room for it upon the stone, to support that reading. But on viewing the cast, the perpendicular stroke of that letter seemed to me to be carried somewhat higher than the other letters of that line, which stood before it. And this occasioned me to suspect, that it might have been designed for an abbreviation of the two letters *DI*, as in another of our British inscriptions, where those two letters are so combined in the word *BLECTI* (3). But having consulted *Mr. Hoare* concerning it, he informs me, that upon a reinspection he thinks it to be an *E*; for which reason I have written it *erutum*. However, this will make no difference in the sense; for so *Tacitus* uses *eruer* for *diruere*, when he says: *Cerialis postero die coloniam Trevirorum ingressus est, avido milite eruendae civitatis* (4).

When this inscription was last before the Society, a learned gentleman then present was pleased to query, whether the words *per insolentiam* might not here signify

(1) See *Musgrave, Jul. Vital. Epitaph. p. 172.*

(2) *Itiner. curios. pag. 140.*

(3) *Britann. Roman. York, XIII.*

(4) *Hist. Lib. iv. cap. 72.*

signify *through disuse*. In relation to which I would beg leave to observe, that there are indeed some passages in the Roman writers, which may seem to favour such a sense. So *Turpilius* the poet: *Quid mihi vellem, ex insolentia nesciebam* (1). And *Cicero*: *Non superbia, sed istius disputationis insolentia, atque earum rerum inscitia feci* (2). And again: *Moveor loci insolentia, quod tantam causam dico intra domesticos parietes* (3). But in each of these places, and some others, which might be mentioned, the word *insolentia* refers to what never had been used; and not what ceased to be so, as the sense would here require. Besides, it does not seem to suit with the participle *erutum*, with which it is joined. For tho a building may be said to fall down, and come to ruin, through neglect or disuse; yet it is not, I think, usual to say, that it was pulled down or demolished, meerly by length of time, or from want of care to support it. The Latin word commonly used in that case is not *erutum* or *dirutum*, but *collapsum*. And so we find it expressed in another of our British inscriptions: *Templum olim vetustate conlapsum Gaius Julius Pitavus, provinciae praeses, restituit* (4).

This coemetery therefore, as I imagine, had been plundered, and reduced to a ruinous state, by some illegal acts of fraud or violence. Nor does this seem to have been a very uncommon case, notwithstanding

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(1) *Apud Nonium in voce Insolens.*

(2) *De orat. Lib. 1. cap. 22.*

(3) *Pro Dejotar. cap. 2.*

(4) *Britann. Roman. Cumberl. xxxiv.* See likewise *Norihumb.*



ing the many Roman laws yet extant, which were made for their security (1). For as *Aggenus Urbicus* remarks, speaking of such licentious practices: *Ex his locis, cum sint suburbana, sine ulla religionis reverentia solent privati aliquid usurpare, atque hortis suis applicare* (2). What is here referred to by this writer, is sufficiently explained by *Julius Paulus* in the following passage: *Qui monumento lapidem columnamve sustulerit, sepulchrum violasse videtur* (3). Another inducement for plundering sepulchers might be the expectation of finding money, or other things of value, deposited in them. Among the several prohibitions against expensive funerals, enjoined by the laws of the *Twelve tables*, it is said: *Neve aurum addito* (4). This indeed was very suitable to the frugality of those antient times. But that it was not constantly attended to afterwards, is very evident from the many laws, which were made by several emperors in succeeding ages to prevent the burying of money in sepulchers; which laws would have been unnecessary, if that practice had not continued. And it has sometimes happened, that coins, rings, bracelets, and other small ornaments, have been found in Roman urns, both in this and other countries. However, as this practice was strictly speaking illegal, those, who had a property in the sepulchers, were permitted to take away the money found in them; tho

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(1) *D. Lib. XLVII. tit. 12. de sepul. violat. And C. Lib. IX. tit. 19. eod.*

(2) *Ubi supra,*

(3) *Sentent. recept. Lib. I. tit. 21. § 8.*

(4) *Tab. X. cap. 11.*

it was judged highly criminal and impious for other persons, upon any account, to disturb the ashes of the dead (1). But I shall now proceed with the inscription.

3. The next words, *VIRTUTI ET NUMINI AVGVSTI REPVRGATVM REDDIDIT*, acquaint us with the method, which was taken to redress this ruinous state of the burying ground. And this, I presume, by the word *repurgatum* here used, was done by removing the rubbish; repairing the sepulchers, which had either been plundered, or in any measure demolished; and very probably renewing the fence, which in such places was usually a wall of stones, laid close upon one another without mortar, called by them *maceria*.

But this, it seems, was not thought sufficient for its future security, without putting it under the immediate protection of the emperor, as its tutelar deity; for nothing less than this could, I think, be meant by the words, *virtuti et numini Augusti reddidit*. The word *numen* in its primary sense signifies the *divine power*, as when *Cicero* says: *Omnes naturae numini divino parent* (2). And elsewhere he thus addresses himself to the body of the Roman citizens: *Vos, quorum potestas proxime ad deorum numen accedit* (3). But soon after, upon the change of the government, when the emperors were revered as deities, their power is likewise expressed by the term *numen*, as rivaling that  
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(1) See *Kirchmann. De funer. Rom. Lib. III. cap. 24.*

(2) *De natur. deor. Lib. I. cap. 9.*

(3) *Pro Rabir. cap. 2.*

of the gods. And as words, which denote the properties of things, are often made use of to express the things themselves; so *numen* is sometimes used in a personal sense for a deity. Thus *Horace* complimenting *Augustus* upon the divine honours, which were paid him by the Roman people, says:

*Laribus tuum  
Miscet numen (1).*

Nor was this extravagant flattery peculiar to the poets; for, as *Tacitus* informs us: *Rubrio crimini datur violatum perjurio numen Augusti (2)*. And in another place he says: *Fortunam, et deos, et numen Othonis adesse testabantur (3)*. We find the like use of the word also in *Valerius Maximus*, who speaking of some persons, who falsely pretended to have sprung from noble families, thus expresses himself: *Nec divi quidem Augusti, etiamnum terras regentis, excellentissimum numen intentatum ab hoc injuriae genere extitit (4)*. But this occurs most frequently in their monumental inscriptions. So among many other instances in *Gruter*, there is one upon an altar at *Narbo*, which has this title:

NVMINI. AVGVSTI. VOTVM  
SVSCEPTVM. A. PLEBE. NARBO  
NENSIVM. IN PERPETVOM (5).

This

(1) *Carmin. Lib. IV. 5. 34.*

(2) *Annal. Lib. I. cap. 73.* Where see the *Commentators*.

(3) *Hist. Lib. II. cap. 33.*

(4) *Lib. IX. cap. 15. § 3.*

(5) *Pag. CCXXIX.*

This altar is there said to have been erected in the consulship of *T. Statilius Taurus* and *L. Cassius Longinus*; that is, in the year of Rome 763, as *Pigbius* places it (1); or 764, according to cardinal *Noris* (2): which shews it to have been done, while *Augustus* was yet living. And that the same practice continued in the time of the following emperors, is evident from several of our British inscriptions, where the like compliment is paid to them. So we meet with *Numen domini nostri Augusti*, *Numen imperatoris*, and *Numen principis optimi* (3), with other variations in the manner of expression. From hence therefore, I think, we may conclude, that by the words *virtuti et numini Augusti* in this inscription, not only the prowess or fortitude of the emperor then reigning, but likewise the divine power here ascribed to him, is called in aid for the defence and preservation of this coemetry. As to the form of the expression here used, things were said *diis reddi*, which were offered or consecrated to them. Thus *Suetonius* saith: *Cavebatur, ut in posterum simili modo exta Marti redderentur* (4). The horizontal stroke over the letter *N* appears on the stone, which is often omitted or defaced.

4. The person, who conducted this affair, is called *CAIVS SEVERIVS*; the former of which names occurs very frequently, and the latter several times, in *Gruter*. But the following word *EMERITVS*, tho' it  
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(1) *Annal. Roman. Tom. III. p. 539.*

(2) *Cenotaph. Pisan. Dissert. I. pag. 52.*

(3) *Britan. Roman. Northumb. LXXX. Cumberl. LI, LII.*

(4) *In vit. August. cap. I.*

be found also as a proper name in *Gruter*, yet more usually signifies a *veteran soldier*. And therefore, as the inverted  $\complement$ , which comes after it, is the common character for CENTVRIO, a military officer in the Roman infantry, who commanded a hundred men; it may possibly be doubted, whether by *emeritus centurio* might not here be meant a *superannuated captain*. Besides, it is well known, that the word *centurio* in other inscriptions is generally followed by the name of the legion or cohort, to which that officer belonged; which is here wanting. And in *Gruter's* collection mention is made of one *Sergius Terentius, Sergii filius, Aemilianus, centurio emeritus* (1). But however, as in *Gruter* not only the word *emeritus* is put after *centurio*, but the person has likewise the *cognomen* of *Aemilianus*; I am inclined to think *Emeritus* was the *cognomen* of this *Caius Severius*, and that the legion or cohort might be omitted for want of room to insert it on the stone.

5. The single imperfect word in the last line is neither by far so large, nor so deeply cut, as the rest of the inscription; which, I presume, was occasioned also merely for want of room. In all the copies I have seen, it is written PEG. and Mr. *Hoare* tells me, that the last letter is certainly a G. However I cannot much doubt, but it was designed for an abbreviation of the word PECVNIA, and had once the pronoun SVA before it. For nothing was more common in public benefactions, than for the persons, who bore the expence of them, to express it by the  
words

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(1) *Pag. DLXIII. num. 4.*

words *sua pecunia*, *sua impensa*, or *suo sumptu*, in the inscriptions prefixed to them, for the sake of perpetuating their own memory. There are, it seems, no traces of the word *sua* now remaining; but on the contrary, as Mr. Hoare says, the stone is *remarkably smooth* in that part: which makes me suspect, there has been an erasement; tho when, or for what reason it was made, would now be in vain to inquire at so great a distance of time. Nor is this a single instance of that kind. I shall therefore only observe further, that the letter c is no objection against the word *pecunia* being there intended. For as the two letters c and g had a great affinity in their sound, so they were often written one for the other. *Reinesius* has collected a large catalogue of both these changes from antient authorities. Among the latter sort, with which we are concerned, are *Progne* for *Procne*, *legtus* for *lectus*, *Tutigia* for *Tuticia*, and *carruga* for *carruca* (1); to which I shall only add *Gaefari* for *Caefari*, from another of our British inscriptions (2).

6. There are no points in the whole inscription, except one in the third line, after the word *insolentiam*; which may be supposed to have come there rather by chance, than design, as it can be of no signifi-  
cancy.

7. After the *Romans* had abandoned this island, their monuments of all kinds were left as spoils to the inhabitants; who either destroyed or converted them to their own use, as they pleased. And many  
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(1) *Reinesf. class. I. num. 2. p. 4.*

(2) *Brit. Rom. Northumb. LXXVII.*

of them have at different times been removed to a considerable distance from the places, where at first they stood. So two of those mentioned by *Camden*, as then fixed in the inner side of the wall at *Bath*, between the north and west gates (1), had doubtless been conveyed from the coemetery. And it may with equal reason be supposed, that this was likewise brought from thence.

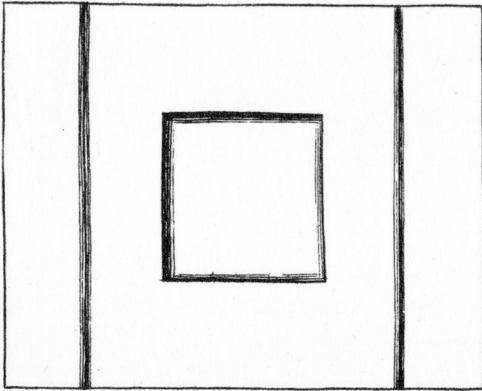
But who the reigning emperor was, at the time this stone was set up, no intimation is given in the inscription. Tho, if one may be allowed to conjecture, the form of the letters suits very well with some others in the reign of *Severus*. And perhaps no time was more open for such licentious practices, as might justly merit the name *insolentia*, than the loose reign of *Commodus*; who, altho he was not the immediate predecessor of *Severus*, yet died but a few months before he came to the empire. Besides, we have two other inscriptions found in *Britain*, addressed *Numinibus Augustorum*; both which are thought to relate to *Severus* and his elder son *Caracalla*, after he was joined with his father in the government (2). Nor can there be any doubt of this, as to one of them at least; which is an altar, and has on one side of it the names of both his sons, *Caracalla* and *Geta*, as consuls that year. So that upon the whole, I can find no other period of time so probable for fixing the date of this inscription.

G. C. Nov. 2. 1753.

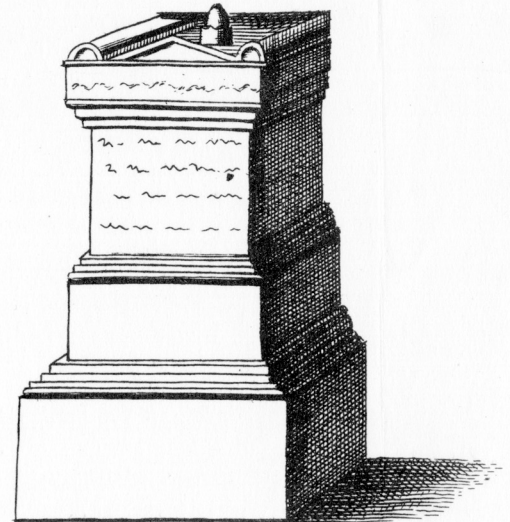
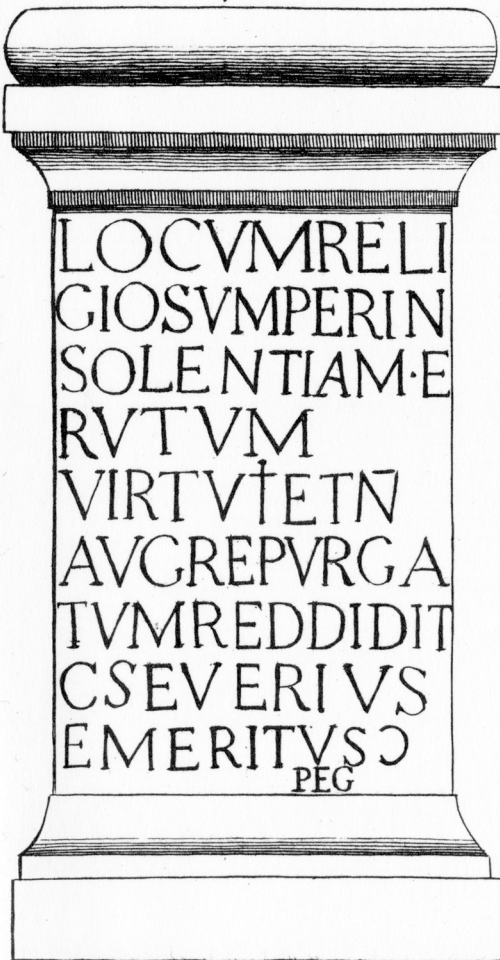
John Ward.

(1) *Britann.* pag. 172. edit. 1607.

(2) *Britann. Rom. Northumb.* LXXXVIII. *Yorksh.* XVIII.



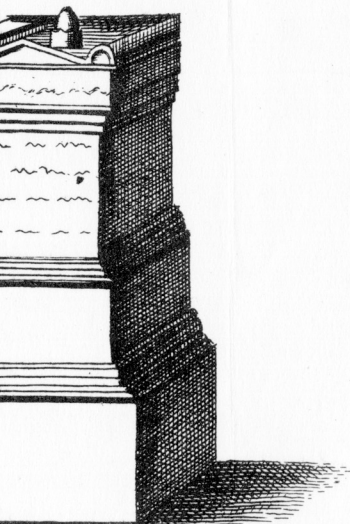
*Fig. 3. p. 333.*



*A perspective View of  
Fig. 1.*



Fig. 2. p. 124.



View of  
1.



Fig. 1. p. 34.

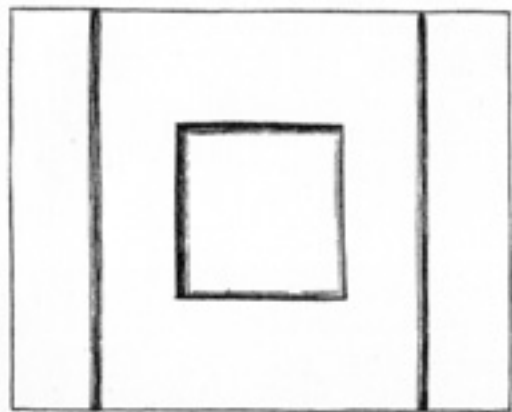


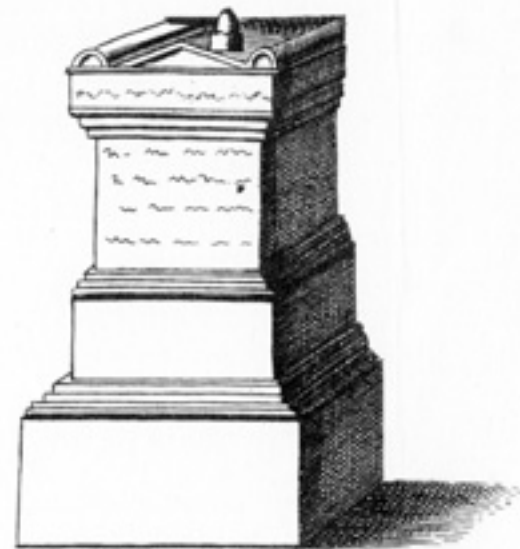
Fig. 3. p. 333.



Fig. 2. p. 124.



LOCVM RELI  
GIOSVM PER IN  
SOLENTIAM. E  
RVTVM  
VIRTVTETN  
AVGREPV RGA  
TVM REDDIDIT  
CSEVERIVS  
EMERITVS O  
PEG



A perspective View of  
Fig. 1.



Fig. 1. p. 34.

MATAITAGN

M MINVWDE  
MIRREGVVIC  
CVBERREGVI  
V S R M