

**SUPPLEMENT TO ISCA  
SILURUM, OR, AN ILLUSTRATED  
CATALOGUE OF THE MUSEUM  
OF ANTIQUITIES AT CAERLEON**

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Caerleon by John Edward Lee

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**JOHN EDWARD LEE**

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SUPPLEMENT  
TO  
"ISCA SILURUM,"  
OR AN  
ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE  
OF THE  
MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES  
AT  
CAERLEON,  
BY JOHN EDWARD LEE, F.S.A., F.G.S.

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1868.

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## P R E F A C E .

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Circumstances having, for the present, prevented the continuance of the publications on the general antiquities of the County, the Committee have arranged with the Honorary Secretary to issue a small supplement to the volume published some years ago, called "Isca Silurum," or an Illustrated Catalogue of the Antiquities in our Museum.—These few pages therefore, together with that volume, and the account of the Labyrinth pavement by our President, delivered to the members last year, will complete the notices of Caerleon and its antiquities up to the present time.

*Caerleon, 2nd October, 1868.*



SUPPLEMENT  
TO  
"ISCA SILURUM."

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PLATE I.  
PORTION OF A FIGURE BEARING A PALM BRANCH.

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This "torso," though the work is coarsely executed, still has been sculptured with some degree of spirit. All that can be said about it, however, may be comprised in a few words. It was found in the excavation in the churchyard, which brought to light the beautiful labyrinth pavement already described and illustrated by our President, Oct. Morgan, Esq., M.P. By the kindness of the Vicar, the Rev. H. P. Edwards, it has been placed in the Museum.

It is of oolitic freestone from the opposite side of the channel, and as the material is of a somewhat perishable nature, it has suffered to some extent from decay. The sketch given in the plate will show that it is only a fragment, but sufficient remains to enable us to recognise it as having been a figure, probably running, and holding the palm branch of victory, as usual, in the left hand.\*

As the sketch, which has been drawn with all defects, gives a very fair idea of the original, nothing more need be said respecting it.

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\*—Most of the coins which give the personification of victory, represent her as holding a palm branch in the left hand, and a garland in the right. In Rich's Dictionary of Antiquities there is the drawing of a sculpture representing a victorious charioteer, holding a palm branch in his right hand, and a purse of money, containing the prize, in his left.



## PLATE II.

INSCRIPTION WITH THE NAMES OF THE CONSULS.

In Coxe's History of Monmouthshire, published in 1801, some few of the Caerleon inscriptions are mentioned, and in the Appendix, page 433, copies are given in letter-press of some which at that time had recently been discovered:—they were found by a “Mr. Gethin, master of the Market-boat to Bristol, “who was building and repairing a house near the churchyard, “which he holds under the Bishop and Chapter of Llandaff.” The dimensions of the first stone are given, and then the following copy of the inscription:—

DEDICATV  
URF  
OG ES  
VE NIO  
MAXIMOIE  
FVRPANO  
COS

Mr. Coxe's remark respecting it is, “The only inference we can draw from this dilapidated inscription is, that it was “probably dedicated in the consulate of Maximus and Urinatus “Urbanus, in the last year of the reign of Alexander Severus.”

When the Museum was established at Caerleon, and all the inscriptions were carefully examined, and as far as possible

brought together under one roof, this stone and two others, also mentioned by Mr. Coxe, could not be found; nor could anything be ascertained respecting them from the oldest inhabitant. It was therefore concluded, to the great vexation of all those interested in the antiquities of the place, that this inscription was totally lost, and the annoyance was the greater from the fact of its being one of the few cases, in which a positive date can be assigned to inscriptions in Britain.

The account of this stone by Coxe, and the copy of it given in the appendix to a volume published some time since on the Caerleon antiquities, were by no means lost on an antiquary now resident in the New World,—the Rev. J. Mc.Caul, LL.D., President of University College, Toronto. It is but justice to him to give his views on the inscription in his own words. At page 124 of his work "Britanno-Roman Inscriptions," published at Toronto in 1863, he thus expresses himself:—

"It is evident that the inscription records a dedication or inauguration, probably of a building. In the second and third lines the day seems to have been mentioned; for it is not improbable that the third should be read **OCTOBRES**. The fourth probably contained the names of the dedicator, and the remaining stated the year; for there can, I think, be little doubt that the fifth and sixth are misreadings for **MAXIMO II ET VRBANO**, who were consuls in A.D. 234."

We have now to relate the last scene of this singular story; and here again the Vicar of Caerleon has come to our aid. About two years ago, in pulling down a cottage near the churchyard, which had become a part of the glebe, and which probably was the cottage referred to by Coxe, the labourers found one or two very large stones, and it soon became evident that they were inscribed. They were deposited in the Museum by the Rev. H. P. Edwards; and a careful examination of them led to the conclusion that the largest of the stones bore the identical

inscription mentioned by Coxe, and referred to above, which was thus restored to light, after having been hidden in brick and mortar for nearly seventy years.\*

The copy, however, given by Coxe, though in the main accurate, is defective in several minor particulars. The second line certainly does not contain **URF**; and the latter part of the fifth line is not an **E**; but **II**, as conjectured by Dr. Mc.Caul.

As this inscription, rough, decayed, and semidefaced as it is, seems of peculiar interest, an attempt has been made in Plate II. to give a sketch of it with all its defects, and to delineate those portions yet unread with as great an amount of truth as possible. This however is a work of no small difficulty where a stone is much decayed: there is, in the first place, a strong tendency to prejudice the reading, and to make the letters bend, as it were, to some favourite idea formed beforehand,—a temptation which can only be fully appreciated by those who attempt to draw a decayed stone inscription, after having spent many hours in the attempt to decipher it. But a weathered inscription presents many difficulties in itself, beside those called up by the imagination: an inscribed letter often has a totally different appearance with the light falling in one direction from what it has when the light comes from the opposite side; and sometimes even a chance passing shadow reveals a reading which to the full day light is illegible. In the present case, though a great amount of time has been spent in attempting to decipher the second line, yet it is almost impossible to decide what the reading has been. If we examine it without any reference to the next line, the first letter may have been a **V**; the second is almost certainly **E**; the third appears in some lights, but not in others,

\*—The other stones mentioned by Coxe had evidently been built into the walls of the same cottage, but not before they had been defaced by the mason. Only one or two letters now remain on the two fragments, but it is very certain that they are portions of the other inscriptions copied by Coxe.