

94.02

94.02 SOUTHERNHAY GARDENS 1974
(Roman military)

**EXCAVATIONS AT SOUTHERNHAY GARDENS,
EXETER, 1974
PART 1: ROMAN MILITARY**

by

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Report No. 94.02

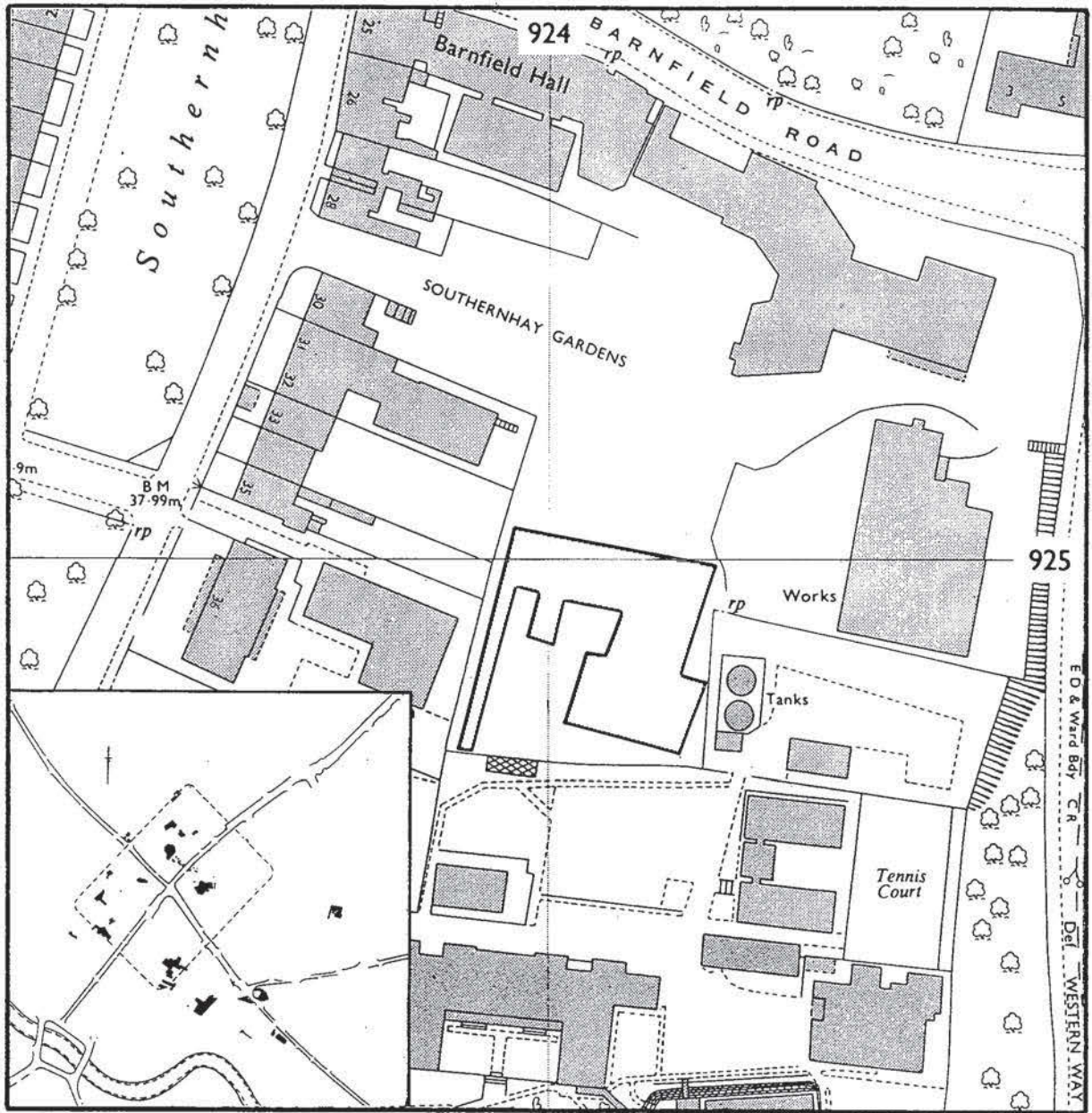


Fig. 1 The location of the Southernhay Gardens excavations Exeter 1974. The inset shows the approximate position of the site outside the fortress defences.

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SECTION 1

1 Introduction

From August to September 1974 the Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit (EMAFU) undertook an excavation on a plot of land on the south-east side of the city between Southernhay East and Western Way to the south-west of Barnfield Road. The site was to be developed by Lalonde Brothers and was to include an underground car park the foundations which would clearly destroy all archaeological levels within its footprint. The EMAFU is grateful to both the developers and the architects (Alec French Partnership in association with Reginald Gale Jaquiss Partnership) for permission to excavate. The site was excavated under the general directorship of M. Griffiths and under the on-site directorship of C.G. Henderson. The site supervisors were J. Allan, P. English, M. Freeman, and J. Pamment (now J.P. Salvatore).

The post-excavation work for this research archive was carried out by J.P. Salvatore.

1.1 The organisation of this report

Section 1 contains a site narrative for the Roman military period. This narrative is an interpretive account based upon the discussion of the evidence detailed in Sections 2 and 3.

Section 2 contains the detailed archaeological evidence for the features found on the site which may have dated to the Roman military period.

Section 3 contains a finds inventory which includes summary dating evidence provided by the pottery.

1.2 The site (Fig.1)

The site was situated about 140m south-east of the City Wall at SX 9243/9248 and was outside the Roman legionary fortress about 230m south-east of the corner of the defences. The site of the archaeological excavation encompassed the south-west area of the proposed building and included a long test-trench dug to the south-west behind the existing properties. The two excavation Areas (I and II) referred to in this report were created only in post-excavation and for the convenience of the report.

1.3 Method of excavation

Excavation in the main part of the site was by the open-area method with accompanying sections.

1.4 Excavation summary

Remains of the post-medieval, the medieval and the Roman civil periods were recorded overlying features which were suspected to be of the Roman military period. This period at Exeter is dated from c.AD 55/60 - c.75/80. Suspected Roman military levels were first encountered at about 34.75m O.D.

1.5 Post-excavation applications and site records

No post-excavation work had been carried out on this site. Context descriptions were constructed from the original site-record cards. The site records, comprising feature cards, field-plans, and plans on permatrace, are stored at the EMAFU offices, Gandy Street, Exeter under project number 49.

1.6 Site narrative: Roman military (Fig. 2)

Some remains of Roman occupation were recorded on two areas of the site (Areas I-II). It is unclear whether the earliest of the Roman remains represent purely military occupation or civilian occupation under the auspices of military control. The suspected remains of two lightly constructed timber buildings have been suggested by Henderson (pers. comm.) to be more likely to belong within the military period rather than the civilian period as first reported in *Britannia* (Wilson 1975, 276).

AREA I (see Groups 1-3 in Section 2).

The evidence for Building 1 comprised a shallow post-trench and a series of interrupted post-trenches and posts. The building would have been about 2.45m wide, orientated south-west/north-east; a length of 7.5m of the building was uncovered. Close by to the building on its north-western side was a well; a pit was also located directly behind the rear of the building at its south-western end. The well may have been associated with the building although this is uncertain. Its backfill produced a small group of material, none of which need date to later than the early Flavian period (Bidwell 1979, 15).

AREA II. (see Groups 4-6 in Section 2).

The evidence for Building 2 is even more tenuous than that found for Building 1. It comprised a shallow post-trench and a series of interrupted post-trenches and posts on a single line of orientation south-west/north-east. A gully, which if contemporary with the building would have drained from just inside it, was recorded over a length of 16m draining to the south. If the gully were contemporary with military occupation it would presumably have drained into the drainage system on the south-east side of the fortress. The gully was post-dated by a pit which might possibly have been civil in date.

1.7 Discussion

The excavations at Southernhay Gardens have demonstrated the presence of Roman activity of 1st. century date beyond the immediate environs of the fortress and beyond the area encompassed by the later Roman town wall. The legionary *canabae* has long been

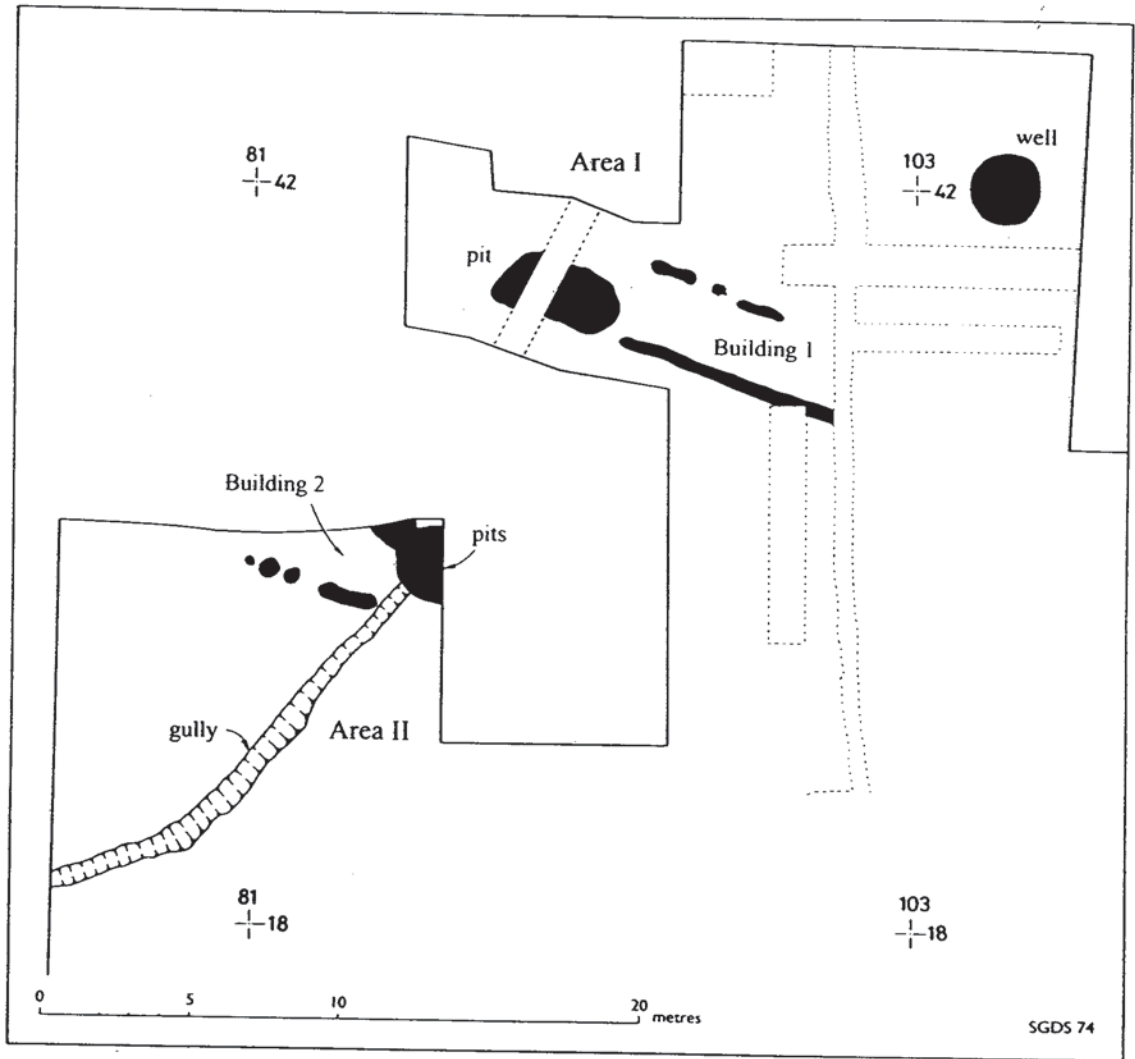


Fig. 2 A composite plan of the Roman military remains. Scale 1:250

suspected to have lain in the relatively flat ground beyond the *porta decumana* (Bidwell 1980, 41).^{*} The remains at Southernhay Gardens could represent a part of such occupation but further to the south-east. The relationship of the site to the fortress as a whole will be discussed in a future Exeter Archaeological Report (Salvatore and Henderson forthcoming).

* Note that the orientation of the fortress in Bidwell (1980) was subsequently reversed (see Henderson 1988, 94-95). Thus the *via praetoria* referred to in Bidwell (1980) is in fact the *via decumana*.

Acknowledgements

Site location plan by T. Ives and S. Blackmore. The 800 series plan was drawn by S. Blackmore and was photographed for reduction by G. Young. On-site photographs were taken by N.R. Childe. Pottery listings were provided by G. Langman.

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- Wilson D.R. 1975 'Roman Britain in 1974: Sites explored', *Britannia* 6, 276.

SECTION 2

2 Introduction

This section of the report contains a record of the detailed archaeological evidence upon which the narrative produced in Section 1 is based. The lack of a clear stratigraphic sequence on the site has resulted in no matrix diagrams having been produced although the features have been grouped and individual contexts are described in a standardised form in numerical order.

2.1 Group and sub-group identification

The Roman military contexts for the Southernhay Gardens site have been divided into six groups. Each group represents a grouping of contexts which have some association and which can be more easily discussed under the group umbrella. The nature of each group is given in the group discussions; this

section includes the interpretational conclusions that can be drawn from a consideration of the stratigraphic and other evidence. Where appropriate, the group may be divided further into sub-groups. These sub-groups represent distinct stages in an archaeological event and they usually consist of a number of contexts that have a clear association. The nature of each sub-group is given in the sub-group descriptions.

2.2 Context information

Information about individual contexts is provided by the general context index. This index employs an abbreviated 'type' description (e.g. C/F = Cut/Fill). Secondly, a standardised summary description of each context in numerical order is included in the report.

2.3 The group discussions and sub-group descriptions

Group 1

This group incorporates the digging, life, and subsequent infilling of a well (Feature 1) which was located about 5m NW of Building 1 in Area I. It is not known whether the well was in use at the same time that Building 1 was functioning although this is a possibility. The pottery finds - all of 1st. century date but with no recognised forms dating from later than the early Flavian period - from the infill of the well, suggest that it was probably open during the military period and may have been backfilled at the end of military occupation.

Contains sub-groups 1.1, 1.2.

Sub-group 1.1

This sub-group is for the cut only of the well. The well had a diameter of 2.7m and was still unbottomed after being excavated to a depth of just over 5m.

Contains context: 1 (Fig. 3).

Sub-group 1.2

This sub-group includes all of the various layers deposited into the well after its abandonment. Six separate deposits were recorded. The top fill of re-deposited gravel may represent an attempt to seal off the well head after a deliberate infilling. Pottery was recovered from all levels.

Contains contexts: 1.1-1.6.

Group 2

Group 2 includes all those features which together may have formed a structure identified here as Building 1 in Area I. A shallow post-trench (20) was fronted on its NW side, at distance of 2.45m, by a parallel series of what appear to have been a series of shallow interrupted post-trenches and post-holes (sub-group 2.1). The orientation of this suspected building was SW/NE. A further two post-holes (26 and 27) were recorded in the space between the two parallel rows of

features and another two post-holes were recorded outside this area (15 and 16).

Contains contexts: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3.

Sub-group 2.1

Sub-group for features thought to constitute Building 1. These were a continuous post-trench (20) and a series of post-holes and interrupted post-trenches (22, 24-25, 28).

Contains contexts: 20, 22, 24-25, 28 (Fig. 3).

Sub-group 2.2

Two post-holes, one of which (26) may have been a double post-hole, were recorded within the area identified as Building 1.

Contains contexts: 26, 27 (Fig. 3).

Sub-group 2.3

Four suspected post-holes were recorded about NW of the series of interrupted posts of Building 1. Three of these (15-16, 18) had a similar fill and may have been associated.

Contains contexts: 10, 15, 16, 18 (Fig. 3).

Group 3

This group is for a single context only. A large pit (1.9m x 4m) was excavated at a distance of about 0.4m SW of the suspected SW end of Building 1. It is not known whether the pit was contemporary with the use of the building.

Contains context: 42 (Fig. 3).

Group 4

This group incorporates those features in Area II which might indicate the presence of a building (Building 2) although this is uncertain. A row of post-holes and a possible post-trench may give the position of a wall of a lightly built structure.

Contains sub-groups: 4.1, 4.2.

Sub-group 4.1

Three possible post-holes (48-49, 60) and a post-trench (50) on a SW/NE orientation may have been part of a wall foundation (Building 2).

Contains contexts: 48-49, 50, 60 (Fig. 3).

Sub-group 4.2

Post-hole to NW of suspected wall-line.

Contains context: 45 (Fig. 3).

Group 5

This group is for the single context 47 which was a gully draining from NW to the South in Area II. If the suspected Building 2 was contemporary then the gully may have drained from just inside the building. In addition, if the gully were contemporary with military occupation it would presumably have drained into the drainage system on the SE side of the fortress.

Contains context: 47 (Fig. 3).

Group 6

This group contains two pits, one of which (57) cut the gully 47. This pit also cut an earlier pit (58). It is possible that both pits could be late Roman military or later.

Contains contexts: 57-58 (Fig. 3).

GROUP/ CONTEXT INDEX

<i>Context</i>	<i>Group/Sub-group</i>
1	1.1
1.1	1.2
1.2	1.2
1.3	1.2
1.4	1.2
1.5	1.2
1.6	1.2
10	2.3
15	2.3
16	2.3
18	2.3
20	2.1
22	2.1
24	2.1
25	2.1
26	2.2
27	2.2
28	2.1
42	3
45	4.2
47	5
48	4.1
49	4.1
50	4.1
57	6
59	6
60	4.1

2.4 The context descriptions and main indices

List of abbreviations (for contexts)

Depth	D	North	N
Diameter	diam	Occasional	occ
East	E	South	S
Fragment	frag	Volcanic	volc
Frequent	freq	Waterworn	ww
Height	H	West	W
Length	Le	Width	Wth
Maximum	Max		

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

- 1 An unbottomed well infilled with six recognised levels of deposit (see below 1.1-1.6). D = c.5M. Produced only 1st century finds from infill.
- 1.1 Top infill of well. Yellow re-deposited gravel and degraded clays. Max D = 0.05m.
 1.2 Fill in well below 1.1. Mid-brown coarse sand, gravel, pebbles, occ charcoal flecks. Max D = 0.8m.
 1.3 Fill in well below 1.2. Reddish-brown coarse sandy loam with gravel, red clay lumps, pebbles, charcoal, volc stones, lump of decayed granite. Max D = 0.95m.
 1.4 Fill in well below 1.3. Clean yellow-brown gravel with sand at top. Grades into larger pebbles towards bottom of layer, Red clay lumps adhere to the edge. Max D = 0.6m.
 1.5 Fill in well below 1.4. Pure natural orange gravel with very occ charcoal flecks. Max D = 1m.
 1.6 Lowest fill of well recorded. Spotted volcanic blocks. Fine mid-brown and red and grey clays with fine gravel.
- 10 Scoop. Soft mid-brown gravel fill. Diam. = 0.4m, D = 0.7m.
- 15 Circular feature. Fill of reddish-brown clay with charcoal flecks. Diam = 0.6m, D = 0.14m.
- 16 Circular feature. Fill of reddish-brown clay with charcoal flecks. Diam = 0.3m, D = 0.14m.
- 18 Rectangular feature. Fill of reddish-brown clay with charcoal flecks. Le = 0.4m, Wth = 0.2m, D = 0.16-0.18m.
- 20 Shallow trench SW-NE with a terminal end at the SW. Three recognised layers of fill (see below 20.1-20.2). Le = 7.4m, Max D = 0.19m.
- 20.1 Layer of top fill, no description.
 20.2 Dark areas on east side of feature - loose mid grey/brown gravel in a loamy matrix, some charcoal flecks. D = 0.08m.
 20.3 Variable yellow-brown clay and gravel with charcoal flecks and lumps.
- 22 Rectangular feature deeper at both ends - possibly two adjacent post-holes excavated as one feature. Fill of brown, stony soil, slightly darker than natural, with a few charcoal flecks. Le of combined features = 1.5m.
- 24 Shallow straight sided feature. Fill of brown soil and gravel. Le = 1.5m, wth = 0.3m.
- 25 Small circular post-hole with fill of brown gravel. Diam = 0.2m, D = 0.25.
- 26 Small depression - possible tree root-hole but could be double post-hole. Max wth 0.5m.
- 27 Small circular ?post-hole with fill of brown gravel. Diam = 0.2m, D = 0.25.
- 28 Small depression in natural gravel. Fill darker than gravel. Max wth 0.4m, D = 0.05m.
- 42 Pit. Fill of mid brown claysoil with few pebbles. Dimensions of 1.9m x 4m. D = 0.15m.
- 45 Oval pit. Fill of dark brown sandy soil with some gravel. Le = 1m, wth = 0.64m, D = 0.2m.
- 47 Gully, curved across site from NW to South appearing to be deeper at south. Three recognised layers of fill (see below 47.1-47.3). Length of just over 15m excavated. D = 0.4m at NW, 0.9m at S.
- 47.1 Top fill. Mid brown - yellow brown soft sandy clay with very few stones. Max D = 0.18m.
 47.2 Layer of pea grit.
 47.3 Bottom fill. Hard, brown gravel with some small charcoal flecks, very small tile frags, and white lime flecks (plaster?).
- 48 Shallow circular feature, possible post-hole. Fill of soft black humus with few stones. Diam = 0.25m, D = 0.06m.
- 49 Circular feature, possible post-hole. Fill of black-brown humus with charcoal flecks and few pebbles.
- 50 Rectangular feature with two recognised layers of fill (see below 50.1-50.2). Le = 1.9m, wth = 0.4m, D = 0.4m. V-shaped section with three possible stakeholes visible in bottom.
- 50.1 Mid brown sandy soil with few small stones.
 50.2 Orange brown clay and soil mixed with gravel.
- 57 Scoop. Cut 58 and 47. Mid brown gravelly claysoil, edges lined with pea grit. Contains small tile frags. Could be civil. D = 0.32m.
- 58 Scoop. Cut by 57. Slightly discoloured gravel. Very gritty. D = 0.08m.
- 60 Circular feature, possible post-hole. Fill of mid brown sandy soil with few stones.

GENERAL CONTEXT INDEX

C = Cut F = Fill

Context	Area	Type	Plan
1	I	C	801
10	I	C/F	801
15	I	C/F	801
16	I	C/F	801
18	I	C/F	801
20	I	C/F	801
22	I	C/F	801
24	I	C/F	801
25	I	C/F	801
26	I	C/F	801
27	I	C/F	801
28	I	C/F	801
42	I	C/F	801
45	II	C/F	801
47	II	C/F	801
48	II	C/F	801
49	II	C/F	801
50	II	C/F	801
57	II	C/F	801
58	II	C/F	801
60	II	C/F	801

ARCHIVE SECTION INDEX

Context	Number	Sheet	Location
1	25	802	801
20	5	802	801
22	9	802	801
24	12	802	801
42	29	802	801
45	20	802	801
47	1	802	-
	2	802	801
	3	802	801
	4	802	801
60	14a	802	801

SECTION 3

3 Introduction

Found below are details of the pottery finds including some notes on the dating of individual shards and other information where relevant. Page references (eg. P.79, 19.3) refer to page and illustration in EAR 4.

Pottery from the site is stored at the RAM Museum, Queen Street, Exeter under site code SHG.74.

3.1 The finds listings and other indices

Glossary of abbreviations for finds inventory

Fabric No.	Type
5*	South Devon Ware
10	Native Type (EAR 1)
31*	South-East Dorset Black-Burnished Ware
40*	South-Western Black-Burnished Ware
151*	Exeter Sandy Grey Ware

190*	Fortress Ware B
191*	Fortress Ware C
372*	Imitation <i>Terra Nigra</i> Type
373*	Imitation <i>Terra Nigra</i> Type
500	Samian-South Gaulish Type
503	Lyon Ware (Pre-Flavian)
517	<i>Terra Nigra</i> (Gallo-Belgic Ware)
600	Dressel 20 (Peacock & Williams 1986, Class 25), amphora
607	Carrot (Peacock & Williams 1986, Class 12), amphora
612	Unspecified/Unassigned, amphora
614	Dressel 2-4 (campanian black sand), amphora
615	Pélichet 47 (Peacock & Williams 1986, Class 27), amphora
705	FC3 (Gallia Belgica), mortaria
706	FC4 (Gallia Belgica), mortaria
727	FC/B1 (?Rhineland/?SE England), mortaria

(* = Fabric Number Used In EAR 4)

For descriptions and discussions of fabric and types mentioned see Holbrook and Bidwell (1991).

Type abbreviations

999	Unspecified Type
BKR	Beaker
CAM	<i>Camulodunum</i>
Dr.	Dragendorff (Samian type)
FL	Flagon
JAR	Jar
LAMP	Lamp (Lyon Ware)
LID	Lid
OF	Open Form
Ritt.	Ritterling (Samian type)
TC	Type Continental (mortaria)
TC/B	Type Continental/British (mortaria)

Miscellaneous

MNV	Minimum number of vessels
Qty	Quantity
Wt	Weight in grams

FINDS INVENTORY

Pottery

1					
Fabric	5	MNV	1	Wt	15
Fabric	10	MNV	1	Wt	?
Fabric	31	MNV	5	Wt	215
Type	16.1			Qty	2
Type	999			Qty	2
Type	OF			Qty	1
Fabric	40	MNV	5	Wt	925
Type	8.1			Qty	1
Type	16.1			Qty	1
Type	19.1a			Qty	1
Type	20.1a			Qty	1
Type	FL			Qty	1
Fabric	151	MNV	1	Wt	55
Fabric	190	MNV	4	Wt	155

Type	2.1			Qty	2
Type	21.2			Qty	1
Type	LID			Qty	1
	(lid knob)				
Fabric	191	MNV 1	Wt	25	
Type	3.1			Qty	1
Fabric	372	MNV 2	Wt	15	
Type	JAR			Qty	1
	(P.79, 10)				
Fabric	373	MNV 2	Wt	10	
Type	BKR			Qty	2
	(P.79, 21)				
Fabric	500	MNV 12	Wt	200	
Type	Dr.18			Qty	1
	(1C, from context 1.1)				
Type	Dr.18			Qty	1
	(1C, from context 1.3)				
Type	Dr.18			Qty	1
	(?pre-Flavian, from context 1.6)				
Type	Dr.27			Qty	1
	(1C, from context 1.1)				
Type	Dr.27			Qty	1
	(1C, from context 1.3)				
Type	Dr.27			Qty	2
	(1C, from context 1.6)				
Type	Dr.29			Qty	1
	(1C, from context 1.3)				
Type	Ritt.12			Qty	1
	(?pre-Flavian, from context 1.6)				
Fabric	503	MNV 1	Wt	15	
Type	LAMP			Qty	1
	(c. 40-80 AD, Loeschcke type I or IV, P.76, not illustrated)				
Fabric	517	MNV 1	Wt	10	
Type	CAM 16			Qty	1
	(from context 1.1)				
Fabric	600	MNV 1	Wt	200	
	(P.218, 3, from context 1)				
Fabric	600	MNV 1	Wt	640	
	(from context 1.3)				
Fabric	607	MNV 1	Wt	25	
	(from context 1.1)				
Fabric	612	MNV 1	Wt	255	
	(handle, from context 1.3)				
Fabric	614	MNV 1	Wt	500	
	(from context 1)				
Fabric	615	MNV 1	Wt	155	
	(from context 1.3)				
Fabric	705/706	MNV 1	Wt	?	
Type	TC20			Qty	1
	(c. 50-85 AD, P.198, TC20)				
Fabric	727	MNV 1	Wt	?	
Type	TC/B1			Qty	1
	(c. 45-60 AD, P.207, TC/B1)				

18

Fabric	500				
Type	999			Qty	1
	(1C, weight & MNV quantified in context 1)				

20.3

Fabric	500				
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Type	Dr.15/17			Qty	1
	(1C, weight & MNV quantified in context 1)				
Type	Dr.29			Qty	1
	(1C, weight & MNV quantified in context 1)				

42

Fabric	600	MNV 1	Wt	75	
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 Peacock D.P.S. and Williams D 1986 *Amphorae and the Roman economy*.

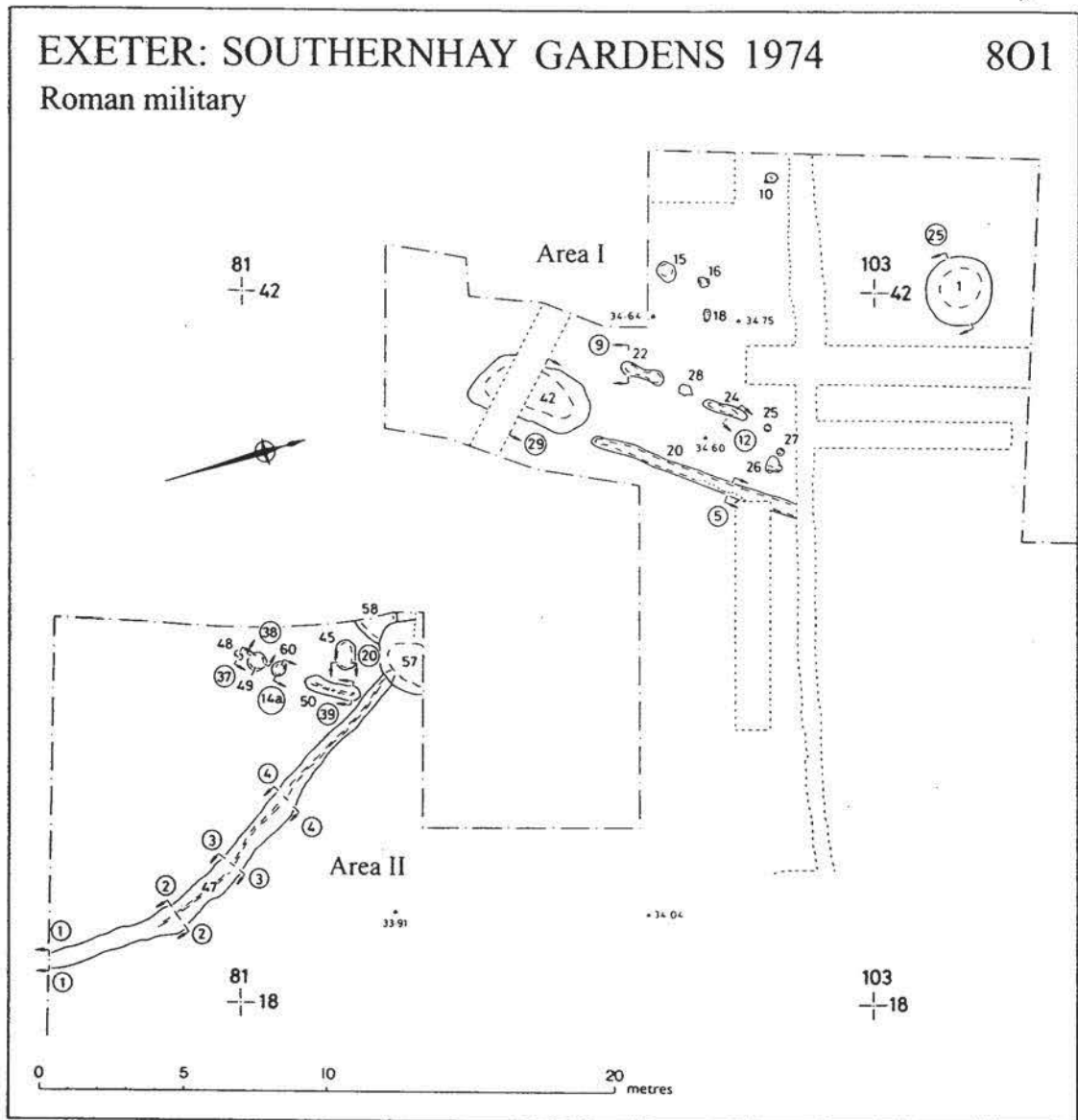


Fig. 3 Plan of the Roman military remains (801). Scale 1:250

EXETER: SOUTHERNHAY GARDENS 1974

802

Roman military

Sections

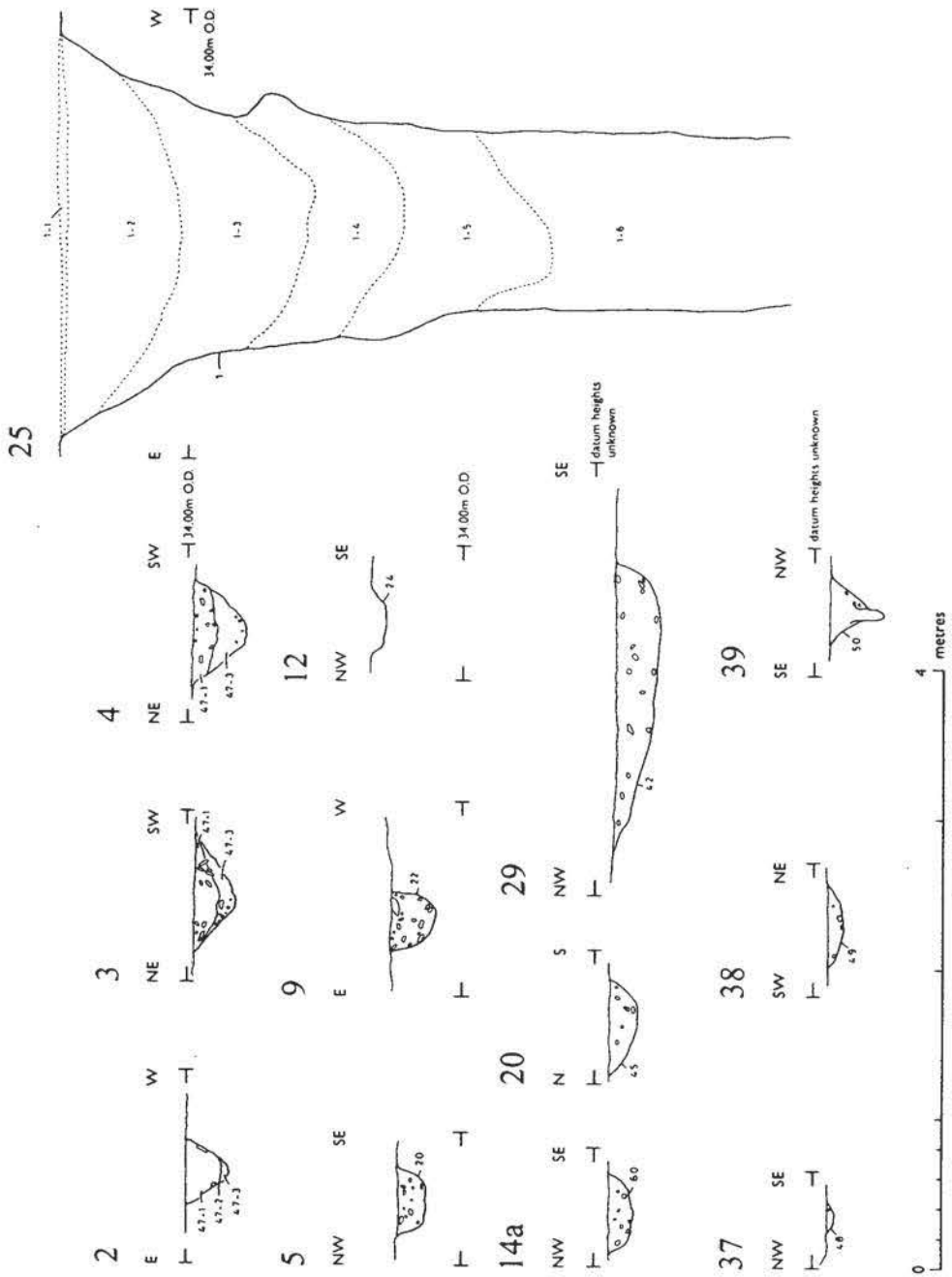


Fig. 4 Sections and profiles through the Roman military remains (802). Scale 1:50