

### PAUL STREET EXCAVATIONS

The two year programme of rescue excavations undertaken in advance of the construction of the new Habitat store at the corner of Paul Street and Queen Street was completed early in 1984. Following the investigation of the Roman legionary fortress defences and a 17th-century bellfoundry in 1982, late Roman and medieval levels behind the City Wall were examined in 1983-4 and a trench was cut across Maddock's Row, a possible late Saxon street.

#### Prehistoric

Although almost every site in Exeter produces a few late Neolithic/early Bronze Age flints, only two or three sherds of prehistoric pottery have ever come to light in the town. It is therefore pleasing to report the discovery at Paul Street of a fragment from a pre-Roman Iron Age La Tene decorated jar or bowl of a type belonging to a fabric (Peacock's group 5) thought to have been manufactured somewhere on the Permian rocks between Torquay and Crediton. This is the first such sherd from the Exeter area, although the apparent absence of Iron Age material in the lower Exe valley merely reflects a longstanding and lamentable lack of archaeological excavation in Exeter's immediate hinterland. The notion current in earlier generations that the Roman settlement at Exeter was founded on the site of a native hill fort cannot now be sustained. However we are almost completely ignorant of the history of Rougemont before the Norman Conquest, and the possibility that it was enclosed in the pre-Roman period should not be ruled out. It is also worth recalling that a Durotrigian coin was found in 1978 on a site next to the North Gate, about 150m from the Paul Street site.

#### Fortress defences

The Paul Street excavation has brought about a notable advance in our understanding of the development of Exeter's Roman defences. The earliest fortifications were erected AD 50-55 for the fortress of the Second Augustan Legion, which occupied an area of about 41 acres (16.5 ha) beneath the modern town centre (Fig.2). These defences consisted of an earth and timber rampart and a large ditch up to 3m deep and 10m wide (Fig.1).

Outside the defences no pre-Roman turf layer remained anywhere on the site. Running alongside the ditch was a metalled roadway made up of trap rock fragments set in clay and laid on the natural subsoil (Fig.48). The road was exceptionally wide: over 14m or almost 50 Roman feet (pM).

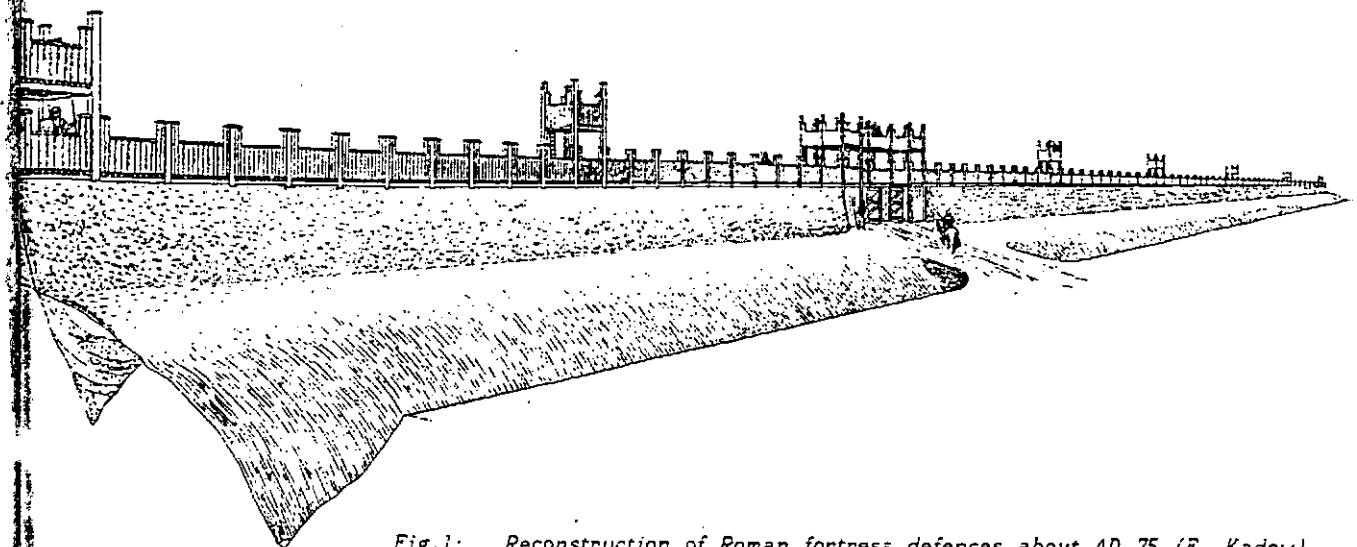


Fig.1: Reconstruction of Roman fortress defences about AD 75 (E. Kadow)

**Early town defences**

Although the earthen rampart and ditch of the 1st-century legionary fortress were retained to enclose Isca Dumnoniorum, the town founded about AD 30, it is apparent that these features were not maintained as a serious defensive barrier during the 2nd century. No doubt they marked the legal limit of the town and afforded a measure of protection from night intruders. They would also have served to control entry into the walled area as an aid to the collection of tolls.

**Aqueduct of 100/101**

Following the demolition, early in 1984, of the Georgian wine-merchant's premises behind Queen Street, a long section (trench 13, see Fig.4) was cut at right angles to the City Wall at a point where the wall no longer survives above ground. It was expected that the line of the aqueduct of 100/101 would be represented in trench 13 by a leat or water-channel similar to the one traced across the Guildhall Shopping Centre area in the early 1970s (Fig.3). No such channel was found and it seems certain none existed. Instead, a pair of post-holes was found cutting into the military road about 17m from the end of the timber aqueduct bridge discovered in 1982. This suggests that the water was conveyed towards the town defences in a raised timber water-channel or launder. This would probably have been a framed structure since the post-holes were not deep enough to have taken self-supporting uprights like the deeply-driven posts of the bridge across the town ditch. The height of the launder cannot be gauged, but two factors argue for a relatively low structure. First, a fairly narrow (1m wide) self-supporting structure consistent with the spacing and shallow depth of the post-holes would probably not have been stable if more than a few feet high. Second, since inside the defences the aqueduct took the form of an open leat, the launder is likely to have passed through the rampart at a height only

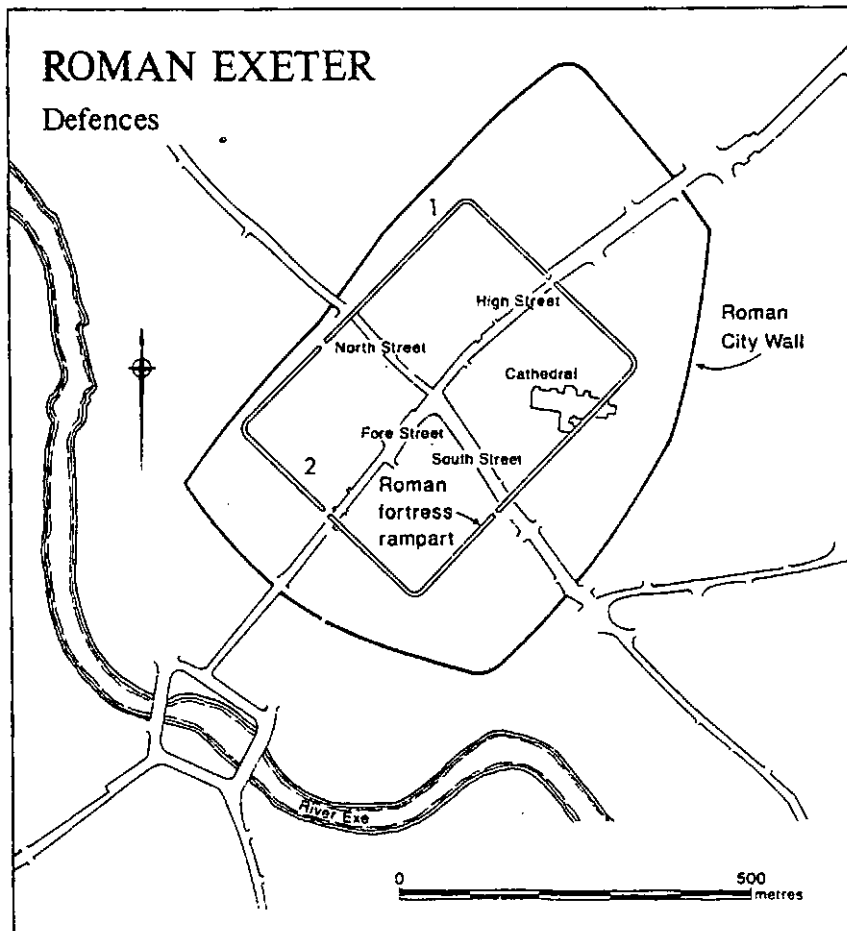


Fig.2: Defences of Roman Exeter and location of excavation sites at (1) Paul Street and (2) St Nicholas Priory (J. Brayne).

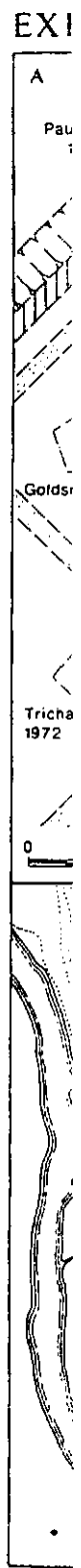


Fig.3. a little a Uncertain estimate a valley rem. in 50-55 c about 900m when const

EXETER : EARLY ROMAN TOWN

AQUEDUCT. AD 100/101

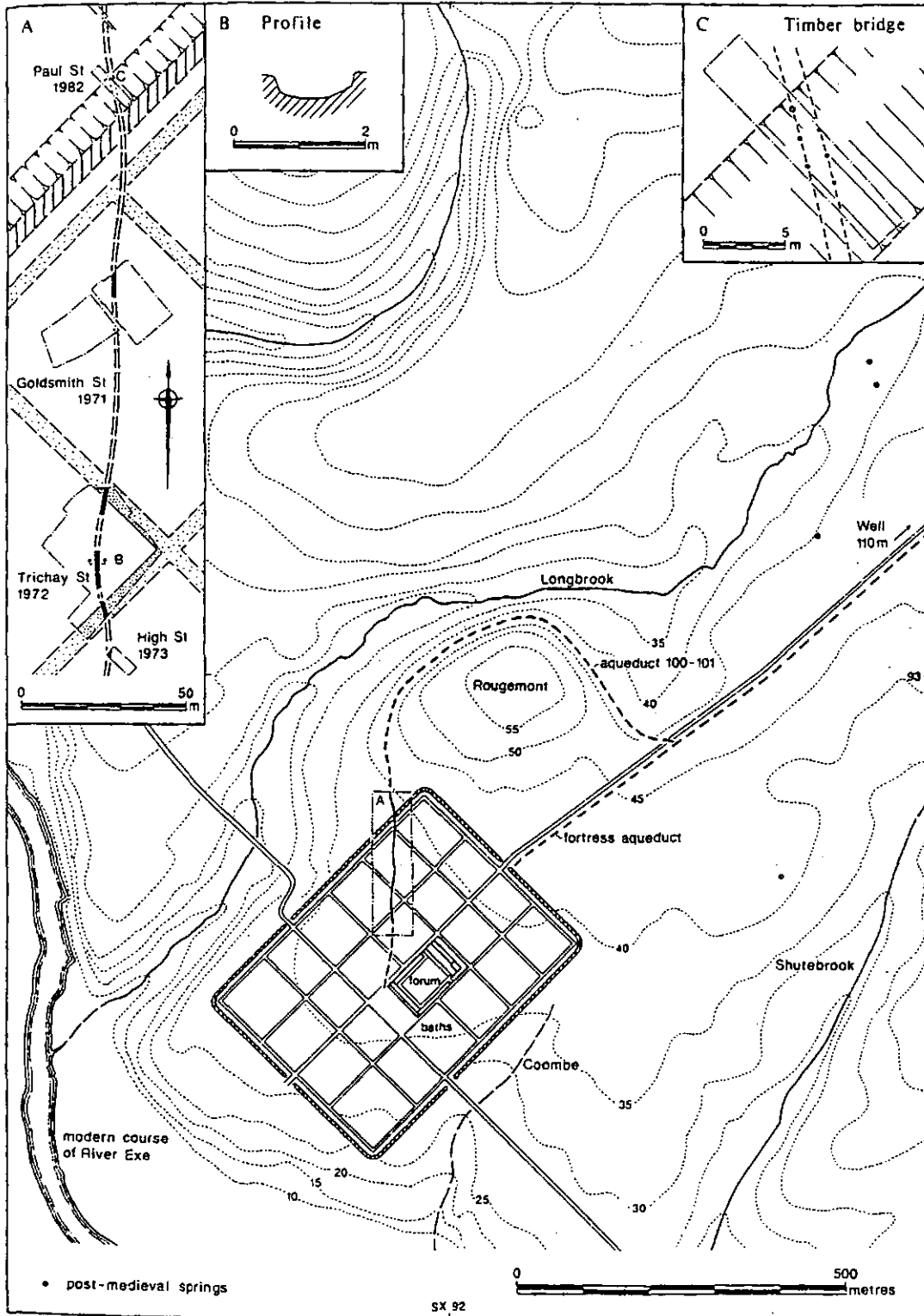


Fig.3: Aqueduct of 100/101 (B. Jupp, J. Dunkley)

a little above its base.

Uncertainty about the height and gradient of the aqueduct outside the town makes it difficult to estimate a likely source for the supply. A spring on the flanks of Rougemont or the Longbrook valley remains a possibility. A more likely point of origin however is the stone aqueduct built in 60-65 to supply water to the fortress baths. This is thought to have tapped St Anne's Well, about 900m beyond the east gate of the fortress. The military baths were demolished around 80 when construction of the forum commenced on their site. New town baths were eventually provided

tained to  
ures were  
arked the  
hey would  
olls.  
  
ind Queen  
fall at a  
e of the  
ar to the  
  
No such  
was found  
discovered  
ed timber  
ost-holes  
ts of  
ors argue  
structure  
have been  
took the  
ght only

street

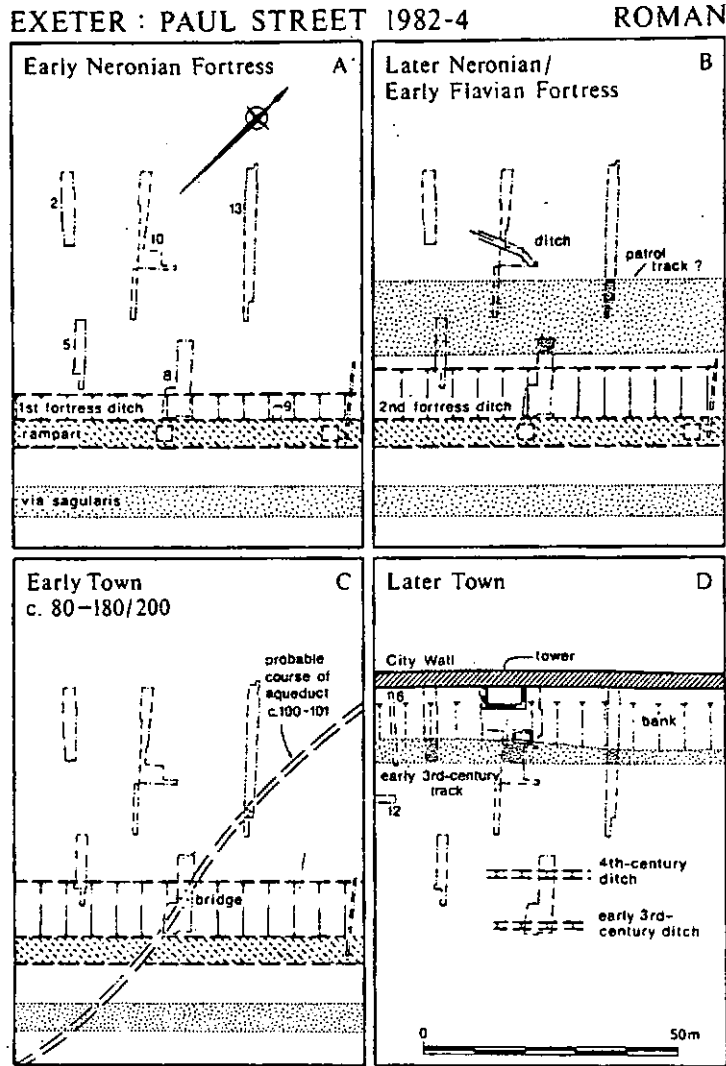


Fig.4: Sequence of Roman features in Paul Street site (E. Kadow)

on a plot to the SE of the forum. These are poorly dated but may not have been started until work on the forum was finished or well advanced, since the two building projects in progress together would have imposed a heavy financial burden on the town. The old aqueduct of the fortress was no doubt re-routed within the defences to bring water to the new town baths. The new arrangements presumably also provided for the supply of water to one or more public fountains in the town. Prior to the completion of the baths there may have been a period when the lower section of the aqueduct was out of commission. This seems the most likely occasion for the construction of the temporary aqueduct of 100/101, which apparently conveyed water to the open market place in front of the forum. This would have been relatively quick and cheap to build and easily dismantled once the work of re-routing the main aqueduct had been completed. The temporary aqueduct seems to have gone out of use some time during the first quarter of the 2nd century.

**Late 2nd-century rampart**

Around 180 the early Roman defences were systematically demolished and levelled. At about the same period new defences were erected to enclose an area of 93 acres (37.5 ha) - more than twice the size of the fortress and early town (Fig.2). The line of these new defences is marked today by the City Wall. At the back of the wall is a substantial earth bank originally up to 12m wide and perhaps 5m high (Fig.5). In many places this has been dug away or, as at Paul Street, reduced in height and covered over by later deposits.

Aileen wall its  
Archaeol  
unimpre  
east, Sv  
been cut  
of the  
layers  
Aileen  
earlier  
in his  
upcast  
resolved  
In tren  
the back  
narrower  
lip. Th  
at a po  
height  
wall for  
section  
Bradninc  
It can  
defensiv  
the orig  
13 it ap  
front.  
revetmen  
consiste  
been les  
solid st  
more sui

g  
Fig

Aileen Fox's post-war excavations showed the first stage of this bank to be earlier than the wall itself and this relationship has been confirmed in further sections cut since 1973 by the Archaeological Field Unit. On each site the first-stage bank has proved to be a low, rather unimpressive feature, usually 5-6m wide and up to 1.6m high. In all sections observed on the east, SW and NW sides of the circuit as far as the North Gate, the first-stage bank had clearly been cut back to accommodate the Roman City Walls. At Lower North Street, for example, just NE of the North Gate and about 150m SW of the Paul Street site, excavations in 1978 showed the layers of the bank to have been severed by the wide foundation trench of the wall.

Aileen Fox regarded the first-stage bank as the much reduced remnant of a defensive rampart earlier than the City Wall. However the small size of the bank prompted Paul Bidwell to suggest in his book *Roman Exeter: fortress and town* (1980) that the bank might merely represent the upcast spoil dug from the foundation trench of the wall. The Paul Street excavation has now resolved this matter beyond all doubt.

In trench 10, dug in 1983, the first-stage bank was about 1.3m high and appeared to run under the back of the wall. It was assumed that the foundation trench for the wall was somewhat narrower here than elsewhere and that the back of the wall slightly overlapped and obscured its lip. The true picture emerged only in 1984 when trench 13 was cut across the line of the wall at a point where it does not survive above ground. Here the early bank was preserved to a height of 1.6m but to our considerable surprise it was found to extend under the base of the wall for a distance of at least 2.3m from its rear face. Figure 5 is a reconstructed sketch section showing the relationship between the two-stage bank and the wall in the Paul Street and Bradninch Place area.

It can no longer be doubted that the first-stage bank does indeed represent the remains of a defensive rampart earlier than the City Wall. It is worth considering what can be deduced about the original form of this rampart and the circumstances of its erection. In Paul Street trench 13 it appears to have been at least 10m wide although perhaps as little as 2.5m high at the front. The face of the rampart would presumably have been furnished with some form of revetment. This could have been formed in turf or timber but is perhaps more likely to have consisted of a narrow stone facing wall a single course thick. The latter treatment would have been less liable to erosion and decay than the alternatives whilst giving the appearance of a solid stone wall at a fraction of the cost of the real thing. It would also have provided a more suitable setting for the stone gates (see below).

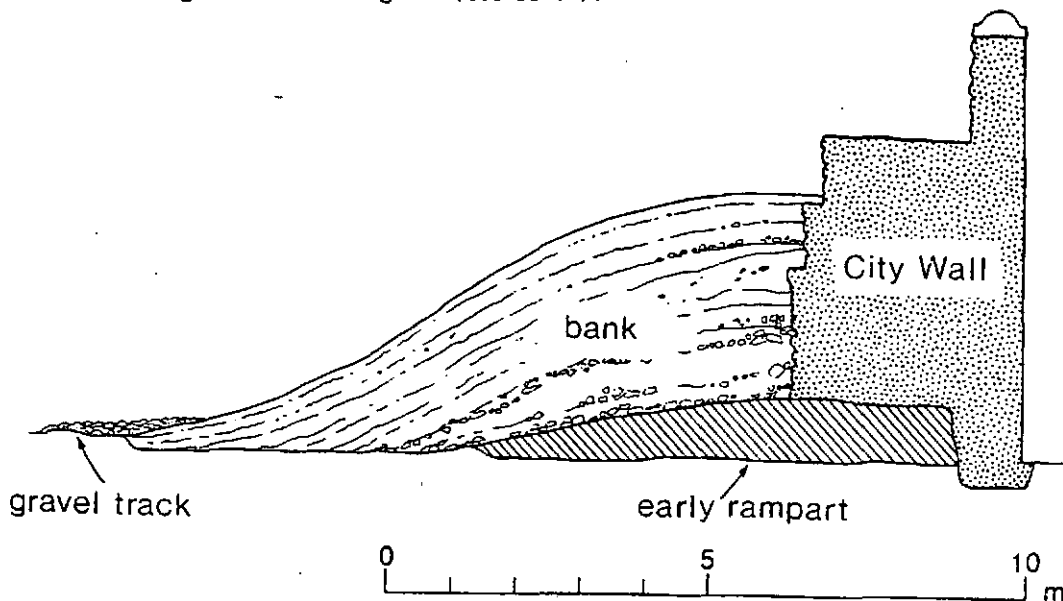


Fig.5: Reconstructed sketch section of Roman City Wall and bank in Paul Street area (J. Brayne)

#### Date of rampart

The rampart can be dated on the basis of pottery found in it at Paul Street and elsewhere to around 180 or a little later. This is also the period when the early defences were slighted. Pottery assemblages cannot of course be dated more precisely than to a 10 or 20 year span at best. Hence it is not possible to prove that the two events took place at the same time, and in theory at least there could have been a gap of one or two decades between the demolition of the old defences and the construction of the new rampart. In practice, however, it seems rather unlikely that the old rampart marking the official limit of the town would have been removed except in a rebuilding programme involving the replacement of the old defences by a fresh circuit enclosing a larger area.

#### Roman gates

At the South Gate Aileen Fox showed the Roman gate to have been built prior to the adjoining portion of the Roman City Wall. The relationship between the stone gate and the first-phase bank could not be ascertained, but the excavator suggested an arrangement which has been demonstrated at a number of other towns, where 2nd-century stone gates were associated with contemporary earthen ramparts. Whether or not the defences of these towns were all erected at the same time in the later 2nd century, they are sufficiently close in date and form to suggest that their builders probably had in mind a similar model. It therefore seems reasonable to suppose that the new earthen town defences at Exeter incorporated, from their inception or shortly afterwards, one or more stone gates.

#### Foundations of the Roman City Wall

The City Wall has been examined archaeologically in about a dozen places over the past half century. The wall seems normally to have been built in replacement of the front part of the earlier rampart, so that its face would have followed roughly the same line as the front of the rampart. The base of the wall is usually up to 3.5m wide, set in a foundation trench penetrating 1-1.5m into the subsoil (see Fig.7), although where the ground slopes very steeply, as at Cricklepit Street, the foundation can be considerably deeper.

As we have seen, in the Paul Street area the earlier rampart was only partially dug away to receive the new wall since it was evidently not considered necessary for the whole width of the wall to rest on the underlying subsoil. Presumably the front metre or so would have been more deeply founded in a manner similar to the reconstruction shown in Fig.5. This failure to provide the wall with a firm, uniform foundation had serious consequences. Wherever Roman masonry is visible in the rear of the wall at Paul Street and Bradninch Place, frequent shear cracks indicate where sections of wall have tilted forward. This can be explained by settlement over the bank placing undue pressure on the narrow front section of the foundation, which must have cracked and become so weakened as to allow the main body of the wall to tilt forward.

Movement of this kind seems to have taken place at an early stage in the building programme. In Paul Street trench 10 a shear crack was associated with a void space separating a group of layers in the lowest part of the second-stage bank from a section of wall which had tipped forward. The void was sealed by higher bank layers abutting the back of the wall, and this suggests that building work in this sector was incomplete when the movement occurred.

It seems likely that construction of the wall commenced on Rougemont, where the stone was probably quarried, and that the length of wall between Rougemont and Paul Street was erected before the lower parts of the circuit. The need for a more solid footing must have become apparent at quite an early stage in the work, and somewhere between the Paul Street site and the

North Gate the depth of the foundation was increased accordingly. It is of course possible that building commenced on both flanks of Rougemont simultaneously.

### Construction of the City Wall and bank

Above the level of its foundation trench the wall at Paul Street was constructed free-standing with a roughly-coursed rear face, the lowest section of which is about 1.0m in height. The second-stage bank included layers of basaltic trap chippings derived either from stone dressing on the spot or from quarry waste. It was clearly observable that the bank had been built up layer by layer to keep step with the construction of the wall, so that at no stage did the wall rise more than 2 or 3 courses before further layers of bank material were heaped against its rear face. The second section of facework, also about 1.0m in height, comprises six courses of larger, rough-dressed stones. Then the face steps back 0.15m by means of a scarcement above which only one further course of masonry survives.

At Bradninch Place, between Paul Street and Rougemont, the upper parts of the wall are better preserved; here two scarcements and three levels of rough-dressed stonework may be seen (Fig.6). Taking all the evidence together, it appears that the wall-walk must have been at least 5.5m above the original ground level and that the bank probably rose against the rear of the wall almost to this height. The bank was about 11.5m wide at Paul Street. One area of exterior facework at Bradninch Place (visible behind shrubs in Northernhay Gardens) may be of Roman date and at this point the wall is about 2.8m thick at the base of the lowest rear offset course.

### Date of the City Wall

The Paul Street excavation has produced much the largest body of dating evidence yet to come from the wall and bank. Trench 10 alone yielded over 600 sherds of pottery: 31% from the primary rampart, 43% from a layer thought to have accumulated after the erection of the rampart but before the building of the wall, and 26% from the second-stage bank. The pottery assemblages from Paul Street and elsewhere on the wall are indistinguishable from the large rubbish groups which fill the early town ditch and immediately precede the demolition of the old

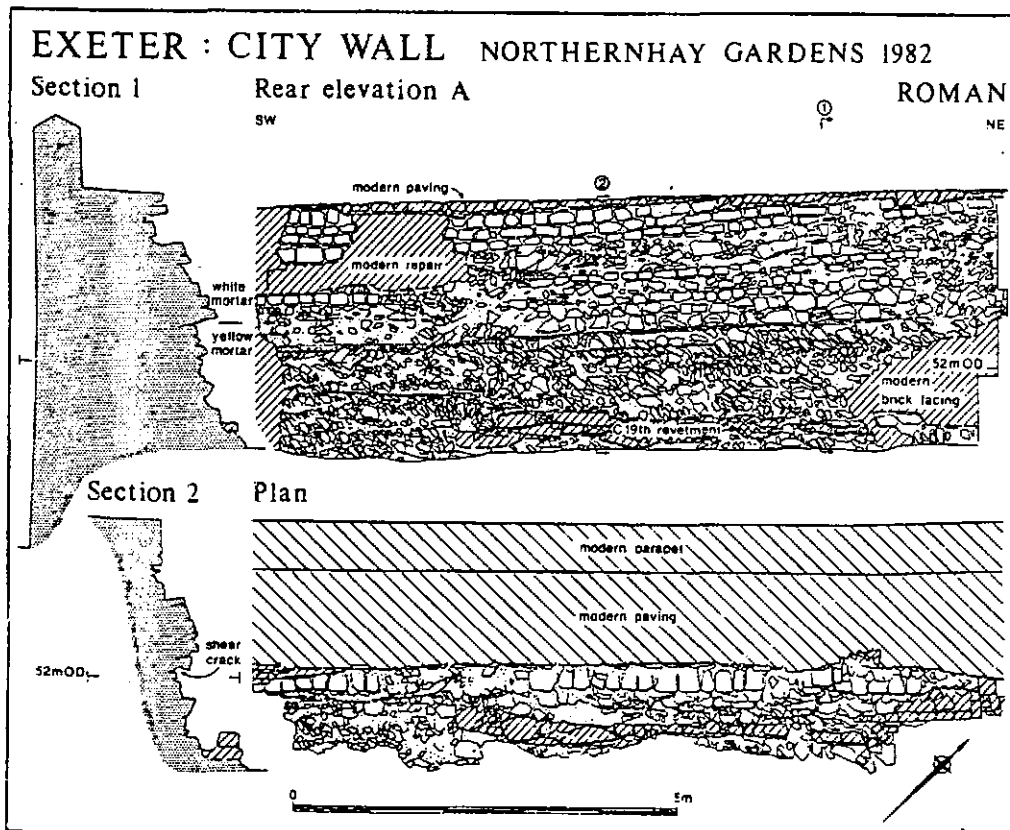


Fig.6. Elevation of Roman City Wall at Bradninch Place (B. Jupp)

fortress rampart. The material from the bank contains relatively little residual material and can be dated within outside limits of 180-210, although a date before 200 is probable. The latest datable pottery is Antonine samian, and a number of common wares that first came into circulation around 200 are absent. None of the groups contains any Lezoux, Nene Valley, Rhenish or obtuse-lattice decorated black-burnished wares. There is no discernible difference between the pottery from the primary rampart at Paul Street and that from the second-stage bank. A high degree of similarity is only to be expected since the latter must be composed almost entirely of material dug from the earlier rampart to make way for the wall. However, even though the bulk of the material in the second-stage bank must undoubtedly be residual, one would normally expect to find at least a few contemporary wares in a group of this size if any very lengthy period of time had separated the construction of the primary rampart from that of the City Wall. Thus whilst it is possible that the wall belongs to a period later in the 3rd century, both the date of the pottery and the lack of a turf line at the back of the earlier rampart argue for a construction date in the first quarter of the 3rd century.

Whilst the construction of the new stone wall in the 3rd century brought about a notable upgrading of the town defences, the laying-out of the primary rampart late in the 2nd century represented a much more significant departure in the planning of the later Roman town since it more than doubled the enclosed area.

It is impossible to say over how many years the construction of the wall was spread. However this was certainly not a project conceived and executed in haste, and if documented medieval wall-building campaigns are any guide the building of Exeter City Wall may have taken many years to complete. A 62m length of wall recorded in detail in 1982 at Bradninch Place contains four distinct sections of Roman masonry. These probably represent the work of different gangs of masons but some junctions between builds could also mark breaks between the work of different years. It is quite possible, therefore, that somewhat later dating evidence for the wall than that obtained so far will eventually be forthcoming from the second-stage bank elsewhere on the circuit. In this connection it is worth noting that the section of Roman wall which Aileen Fox examined next to the South Gate contained in its footings river cobbles which may be indicative of a construction date later in the 3rd century (see below).

**Third-century intra-mural track**

Overlying the tail of the bank in trenches 2, 10 and 13 at Paul Street was a substantial strip of gravel which seems to represent an intra-mural street or track laid down soon after the second-stage bank was made (Figs.4, 5, 8). In trench 2 this had a fairly smooth compacted surface, but in the other trenches the surface was somewhat looser and had evidently not seen much use. Only excavation further along Paul Street will confirm whether this really was a street, but if it was it must have fallen out of use quite soon after it was made. One wonders whether an intra-mural street was provided around the whole circuit of the walls as part of the new defensive scheme. Such streets are a familiar feature of the defences of both Roman forts and late Saxon towns but are not normally found in later Romano-British towns.

The track was overlaid by 3rd- and 4th-century loam deposits up to 0.4m in thickness. The latest Roman feature in the sequence was a small building 2.5m wide by no more than 4m long with narrow stone footings probably intended for a timber superstructure. The purpose of the building is unknown. No other late Roman structure was located in the area behind the wall.

**Third-century tower**

The Paul Street excavation has also provided evidence of a previously unknown element in the later town defences: a stone tower whose footings cut through the layers of the second-phase

bank  
1.1:  
apar

Fig

This  
with  
of t  
also  
perh

The

lowe

main

in E

the

expl

supe

or t

The

alth

of t

of t

Roma

Exte

most

for

poss

coul

Ther

the

Malm



l material and  
probable. The  
irst came into  
Valley, Rhenish  
erence between  
; bank. A high  
st entirely of  
hough the bulk  
ormally expect  
gthy period of  
y Wall. Thus  
both the date  
t argue for a

bank and abutted the back of the wall (Figs.4, 7, 8). The foundations of the tower were up to 1.1m wide; the back wall was 2.3m from the rear of the City Wall, and the side walls were 6.5m apart internally.

out a notable  
ie 2nd century  
town since it  
  
ead. However  
ented medieval  
ken many years  
contains four

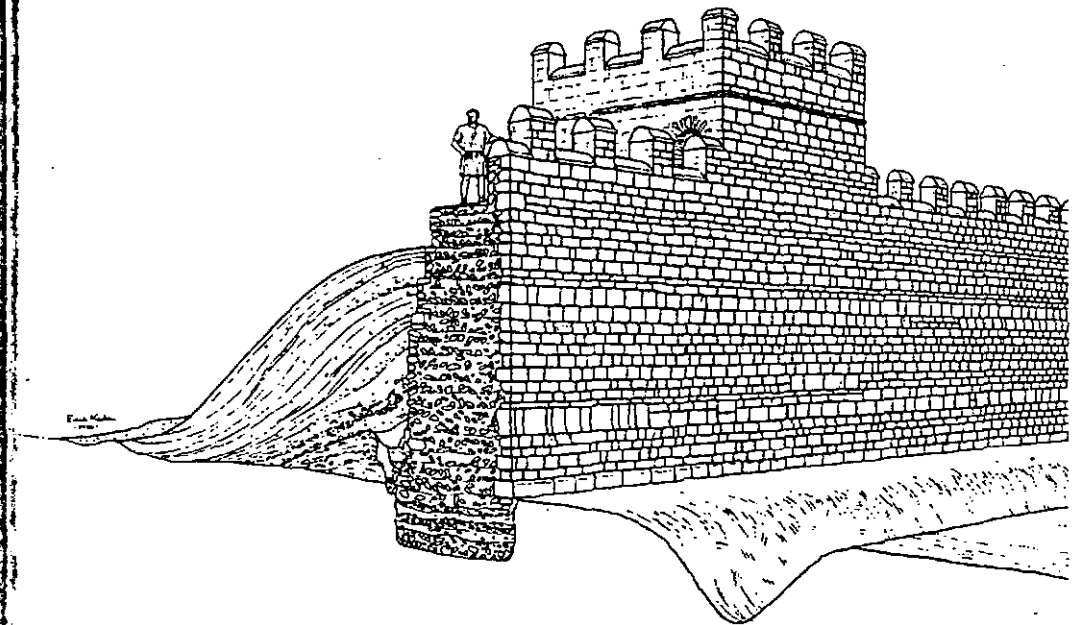


Fig.7: Reconstruction of Roman City Wall and later 3rd-century defensive tower (E. Kadow)

rent gangs of  
of different  
the wall than  
ewhere on the  
ch Aileen Fox  
be indicative

This is the first Roman mural tower known from Exeter. It was probably of non-projecting type with its front wall built flush with the face of the City Wall as depicted in Fig.7. This kind of tower is known from a number of other Romano-British towns (e.g. Lincoln, Cirencester) and also from forts such as Chesterholm and Binchester. Others probably stood at intervals of perhaps 60m or so around the circuit of the walls.

tantial strip  
on after the  
oth compacted  
ntly not seen  
really was a

The Paul Street tower clearly represents an addition to the wall. The stones in the unrobbed lowest courses of its footings are almost exclusively river cobbles, which never occur in the main build of the wall except near the South Gate (above). Cobbles were in common use on sites in Exeter by the early 4th century. In the basilica they first appear in walling dating from the last quarter of the 3rd century. On present evidence it seems unlikely that they were exploited as a building material before the middle of the century. This type of tower was superseded towards the end of the 3rd century by externally-projecting ones which, except in one or two transitional examples, did not normally extend much beyond the rear of the curtain wall.

One wonders  
part of the  
a Roman forts

The Paul Street tower is therefore likely to date from the second half of the 3rd century, although an earlier date cannot be ruled out entirely and it is conceivable that the tower was of transitional externally-projecting type.

Roman external towers ?

s. The latest  
g with narrow  
building is

Externally-projecting towers are known from the majority of Romano-British walled towns. In most cases they seem to have been additions of the mid 4th century. No archaeological evidence for such towers has ever come to light from Exeter although it has long been considered possible that the medieval towers on the wall, which date from the late 12th century onwards, could occupy the sites of Roman ones.

ement in the  
second-phase

There is one important source of evidence relating to this question which has been neglected in the past. Two early 12th-century chroniclers mention towers on the walls of Exeter. William of Malmesbury describes how Athelstan, having purged the city of the vile British, fortified it

with towers and surrounded it with a wall of squared stones'. Orderic Vitalis, in his Ecclesiastical History, relates how the townsmen of Exeter 'rebuilt or repaired walls and towers' prior to William the Conqueror's siege of the city in 1068. Writing later in the 12th century the author of the Gesta Stephani, who is thought to have been an eye-witness at Stephen's siege of 1136, described Exeter as 'a large city, walled with very old Roman work and, they say, the fourth principal city of England ... A castle stands there, raised on a very high mound, surrounded with an impregnable wall, fortified with Roman towers made of the hardest mortar'.

Although Athelstan may well have repaired the walls of Exeter, it is certain that the wall of 'squared stones' referred to by William of Malmesbury was in fact the old Roman wall. Were the towers also perhaps Roman in origin? At the very least it is safe to assume that the towers mentioned in the three 12th-century accounts were of pre-Conquest date. The only late Saxon towns known to have possessed stone towers are those which stood within Roman walls. Indeed, what little evidence there is suggests that stone towers did not become a feature of town defences before the late 12th or early 13th century except where they occurred as survivals from the Roman period. It is therefore very probable that the towers which graced the walls of late Saxon Exeter were late Roman in origin.

#### Dark Ages

The Roman town became depopulated in the 5th century following a period of economic decline and social and political upheaval. Exeter was probably re-founded as an urban centre in the late 9th century when King Alfred is thought to have founded a Saxon burh within the old Roman walls. It is probable that the street system which in large part survives to this day was planned in the reign of Alfred.

#### Late Saxon street system

Figure 8 shows a series of four plans illustrating the suggested topography of the Paul Street area in the Roman, late Saxon and medieval periods. It must be admitted that for the two later periods the street plans can only be described as speculative. The proposed two-stage development of the Saxon and medieval streets in this area rests upon the assumption that the first Saxon streets were planned on a model similar to that followed in laying out the Winchester street system, in which a series of long side streets ran off at right angles from the main street to join an intra-mural or wall street running around the inside of the defences. Away from the main street at this initial stage one must envisage large tenements, sometimes several acres in extent, all capable of being reached from the side streets. In the second stage, well advanced by the 12th century, the original large tenements would have been subdivided to form groups of smaller strip tenements of the familiar medieval urban type. In certain areas the creation of these smaller tenements necessitated the introduction of new streets to provide frontages at right angles to the original side streets.

#### Paul Street

Paul Street is an example of a street which appears to have been inserted into the Saxon street pattern in the 11th or 12th century. Given the condition of the street today, this proposition is not of course capable of proof. There were probably four medieval tenements fronting on Paul Street in the area excavated to the NE of Maddock's Row. The tenements were a little over 50m in length, their average width was 11.5m and together they occupied about 2300m<sup>2</sup>. Around 10% of this area was excavated for Saxo-Norman levels. Road widening had removed 10m from the front of the tenements, so that only the rear parts of later medieval buildings survived. Nevertheless it is quite clear that the Paul Street tenements did not witness intensive Saxo-Norman occupation

EX

Ea

La

City

bank

La

M

0

Fig

# EXETER: Suggested Development of Paul Street Area

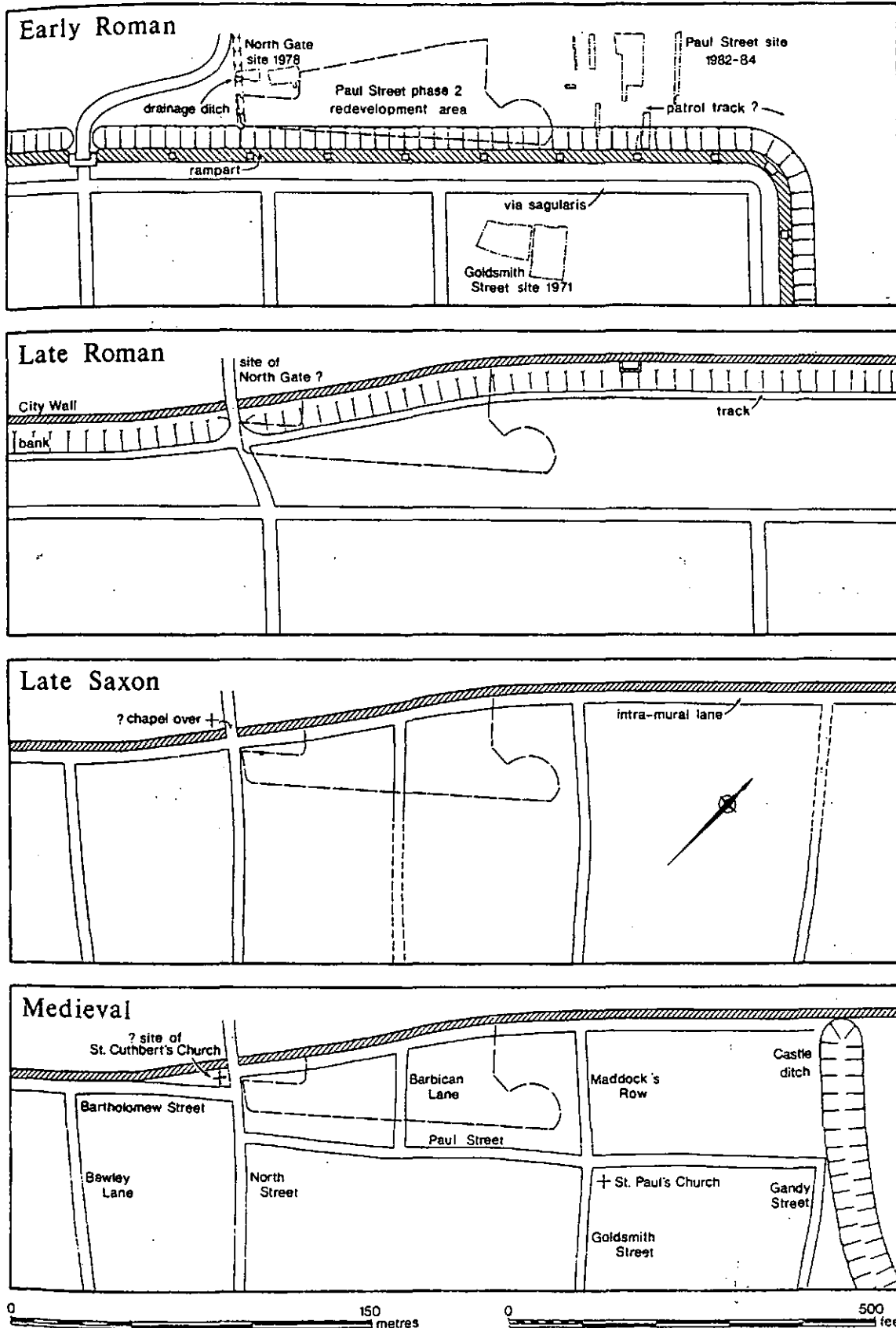


Fig.8: Suggested topographical development of Paul Street area (S. R. Blaylock)

is. in his  
 walls and  
 in the 12th  
 -witness at  
 in work and,  
 a very high  
 the hardest

the wall of  
 . Were the  
 the towers  
 late Saxon  
 s. Indeed,  
 re of town  
 -ivals from  
 ills of late

decline and  
 in the late  
 Roman walls.  
 planned in

Paul Street  
 e two later  
 i two-stage  
 on that the  
 ng out the  
 angles from  
 re de...  
 , sometimes  
 the second  
 have been  
 a type. In  
 ion of new

axon street  
 proposition  
 ing on Paul  
 ie over 50m  
 ound 10% of  
 the front of  
 rtheless it  
 : occupation

of the kind attested by the numerous inter-cutting rubbish pits found in more central areas such as Goldsmith Street and Waterbeer Street. The earliest pits and occupation levels located on the site date from the 12th century.

**Maddock's Row**

If Paul Street was indeed a Norman addition to the late Saxon street system, one might expect some evidence of earlier occupation along the original side streets it crosses. Maddock's Row is taken to be one of these early side streets because it continues the line of Goldsmith Street, which ran off at right angles from the High Street. Only a very small area was sampled near the Maddock's Row frontage and this produced no pre-12th-century material. However this sample cannot be regarded as significant since in a peripheral area such as this the early tenements fronting on the side streets would probably have been relatively large and the length of the frontage actually built up relatively small.

In trench 12 (Fig.4D), cutting across Maddock's Row, the earliest medieval feature was a 12th-century terrace which penetrated Roman levels and had a roughly metalled surface. This would appear to represent a yard area, but whether it also incorporated a lane or access-way to the City Wall is impossible to determine on the evidence of one small trench. The terrace was infilled in the 12th century. A deep cesspit of around 1200 was cut by a ditch running NW-SE on the line of the NE side of the later Maddock's row. In the 14th century a revetment wall was built over the ditch and the first recognisable metalled surface of Maddock's Row was laid down in a narrow muddy alley.

**Late Saxon intra-mural lane**

The Paul Street excavations have occasioned a major advance in our understanding of the medieval street system by focusing attention on the problem of whether an intra-mural lane or track ran around the inside of the City Wall. A very strong case for the former existence of such a lane can now be made on the basis of excavation results, documentary evidence and early maps.

Except in the area of Rougemont Castle, which in 1068 comprehensively blotted out the existing streets and tenements in the northern corner of the city, there is evidence of one kind or another to show that a lane formerly followed the whole circuit of the walls. There seems little doubt that this lane must represent an early, presumably late Saxon, element in Exeter's street system.

At Paul Street the lane ran along the top of the old Roman rampart. Its SE edge was marked by the rear boundaries of the adjacent tenements from at least the 12th century down to modern times. The lane had probably gone out of use by the early 16th century when rubbish pits were dug which obliterated all trace of any metalling. The strip of ground formerly occupied by the lane between the North Gate and the castle outer bailey remained in civic ownership until quite recently. A continuous series of leases and rentals have enabled Stanley Harper to reconstruct the tenorial history of this ground from the mid 16th century down to the present day. It seems initially to have been divided into a relatively small number of long thin plots which were subsequently further subdivided and in most cases eventually became annexed to the adjoining Paul Street tenements whilst remaining in the ownership of the City Chamber. Similar strips of Chamber land can be traced elsewhere on the circuit of the walls. One existed between the garden of the Bishop's Palace and the South Gate and another extended from the South Gate to the Water Gate.

In recent years intra-mural lanes have been recognised in a number of Saxon and Norman towns, and in this wider context some of the documentary evidence from Exeter is of considerable interest in illustrating the uses to which such lanes were put. For example, a portion of the

lane which  
Inquisitio  
to show th  
refer to t  
repairs an  
lane was i  
on the no  
Bartholome  
much of th  
status to  
Cathedral  
could be u  
In additio  
evidence p  
surveyed i

The later  
occasion  
are schedu  
of 16th-c  
highly-dec  
Columbia ?  
distilling  
trailed wh

Waterlogge  
contained  
ostracods  
being stud  
up rapidly  
suggest th  
presence o  
polluted o  
of economi  
This spec  
throughout

Fig.9:



lane which had recently been enclosed by the Grey Friars was described in evidence to a Royal Inquisition of 1290 as having been used formerly by the citizens for assembling in time of war to show their arms and to provide for the defence of the city. Several 15th-century sources refer to the importance of other stretches of the lane in facilitating access to the walls for repairs and maintenance. In the late Saxon period it is likely that over much of its course the lane was in regular use as an essential thoroughfare. This would certainly have been the case on the northern side of the circuit if we are correct in thinking that Paul Street and Bartholomew Street West were creations of the post-Conquest period. By later medieval times, much of the original intra-mural lane, including the Paul Street section, must have declined in status to little more than an overgrown track. In the case of the portion adjoining the Cathedral Close it was represented in the 15th century only by a right of way 16 feet wide which could be used by the Mayor and Chamber in time of war and for carrying out repairs to the walls. In addition to the reference just cited, it may be noted in conclusion that a variety of other evidence points to a width for the lane of around 15-18 feet. This suggests that as first surveyed it may have been one rod (16½ feet or 5.03m) wide.

The later medieval evidence from the Paul Street excavations will be reviewed on a future occasion when results are also available from the Phase II development area where excavations are scheduled for late 1984. Notable medieval finds from the site include an exceptional group of 16th-century pottery and glass containing amongst other things a nearly complete highly-decorated South Netherlands maiolica spouted syrup-pot; two Spanish tin-glazed vessels of Columbia Plain ware, probably from Seville; a collection of North European forest-glass urinals, distilling vessels and flasks; and part of a very fine Venetian goblet in clear glass with trailed white threads.

ROMAN GRAIN WEEVILS FROM FRIERNHAY STREET

Waterlogged deposits from the second fortress ditch excavated at Friernhay Street in 1981 contained abundant and well-preserved remains of plant and animal origin. The seeds, insects, ostracods (small crustaceans) and cereal chaff preserved by the wet conditions are currently being studied in detail. These indicate that the ditch was wet and overgrown and that it silted up rapidly in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries; the seeds and insects in particular also suggest that open, possibly arable conditions were present nearby. The ostracods confirm the presence of standing water, but the restricted species diversity of these organisms implies that polluted or foul conditions prevailed in the ditch. Although human food debris or other plants of economic importance were not recovered, Sitophilus granarius, a grain weevil, was recorded. This species, which feeds on stored cereal crops, is thought to owe its original spread throughout Britain to the movement of military grain supplies.

Fig.9: Medieval floor tile designs of c.1300 from St Nicholas Priory (J. P. Allan, J. Brayne)

