

5. The '*Via Principalis*', the Southern End of the *Via Praetoria*, and the Street to the North of the Granaries

INTRODUCTION

Parts of the '*via principalis*' and surrounding streets were found in several different excavation trenches; the evidence from all areas has been gathered together here in Part 5. These streets had been resurfaced several times and alterations made to their drains. As in other parts of the fort, four distinct periods of metalling were found on the '*via principalis*' and the southern end of the *via praetoria*, the final metalling including large reused blocks or slabs but without roadside drains. In spite of these frequent modifications, the '*via principalis*' suffered from subsidence into the soft fill of the pre-fort ditches. Its surface became uneven during all periods, and a fall from west to east was particularly notable.

PRIMARY STREETS (FIGS. 3.3, 6.1, 6.2 AND 6.6)

'*Via principalis*' 1

In front of the *principia* (fig. 3.3) the primary street metalling survived as an area of cobbles with some flag stones (419C) pressed into wheel ruts formed when heavy traffic had passed over the soft ground filling the east/west pre-fort ditch (447C; see Part 2). A similar strip of cobbles (190R1) was found close to the west granary (fig. 6.1), pressed into the clay fill of the short length of north/south ditch (195R1) (fig. 6.2).

Alley between the *principia* and *praetorium*

The earliest surviving deposit between these two buildings was a patch of cobbles (228C) (fig. 3.3).

Via praetoria 1

No primary metalling survived at this end of the *via praetoria*, but a robber trench (344R2)

for a roadside drain ran down the west side of the *via praetoria* towards the south-east corner of the granary, towards the robber trench (187R1) for a drain or eavesdrip gully running alongside the south granary wall (fig. 6.6). East of this junction, a hollow (uncontexted) ran beside the southern limit of excavation. This is possibly the robbed-out remains of a continuation of the granary drain, running across the end of the *via praetoria*; it may eventually have served the south wall of the east granary.

Street to the north of the granary

There was a broad area of metalling to the north of the west granary (fig. 6.1). Overlying the clay levelling layers beside the north-eastern buttresses were patches of cobble make up (334R2), and an isolated patch of metalling (337R2). Further north were patches of ashy clay and stones (333R2). Overlying subsoil to the west was another patch of cobbles (164R1).

Finds

Dating evidence – pottery

The cobbles in the alley (228C (79HW)) produced two sherds of pottery, a SENK cooking pot rim and another, probably East Anglian.

The street to the north of the west granary produced a sherd from a flagon (334R2 (78CH)) and another of unknown grey ware (337R2 (78CL)).

THE '*VIA PRINCIPALIS*' FROM THE SECOND QUARTER OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

(FIGS. 3.7, 6.3 AND 6.6)

'*Via principalis*' 2 – new metalling (336C) and drain (335C)

A widespread levelling layer of orange sand (393C*) overlay the remains of the primary

street (419C) and a layer of smooth brown clay (420C*), possibly also levelling, lay just to the north of the *principia*. Overlying the sand was a small patch of very hard pale mortar (395C*); this lay at the junction of the '*via principalis*' and the alley, and could be derived either from construction of the new wall of the *praetorium* (131C) or the north wall of the *principia*.

On top of the levelling material was set a new metallated surface (336C) of small cobbles which overlay the offset foundations (385C*) of the north wall of the *principia* (248C). A small isolated patch of metalling (401C*) was also found overlying the levelling (393C*), probably also equivalent to 336C. There was a fall of c. 0.20m from west to east, the low-lying part of the street coinciding with the entrance to the *principia*.

A drain (335C) ran from west to east down the centre of the street. The lining stones were blocks of varying sizes, smaller to the east; no capstones survived *in situ*. The line of this drain had been interrupted by later features after it had gone out of use.

On the northern side of the street next to the granary were layers overlying the primary cobbles (190R1). These consisted of a make up layer of cobbles, sand and mortar (185R1*), overlain by a cobble metalling (181R1) (fig. 6.3). The make up layer was said to overlap the foundations (193R1) for the south wall of the granary, although this is not apparent on fig. 6.3. However, the same section does show a layer of mortar, stones and clay (188R1) overlying the foundations and the first offset course of the south wall; possibly this was the equivalent or a continuation of the same layer.

Alley 2 – new metalling (170C)

A metalling of small cobbles (170C) was deposited over the earlier cobbles (228C) in the alley. Like the metalling of '*via principalis*' 2, it overlay the offset foundations of the north wall of the *principia* (248C) (fig. 3.7).

Via praetoria 2

On the *via praetoria* beside the south-east corner of the granary was a make up layer

(363R2), which included some large flags or slabs (fig. 6.6). Possibly there was still some problem of subsidence into the fill of the pre-fort ditches, and this unusually heavy make up was intended to compensate for that. It was overlain by a metalling of smaller cobbles (362R2).

Street to the north of the granary (fig. 6.6)

To the north of the eastern end of the granary the earliest metalling (334R2) was overlain by a new metallated surface (335/272R2), of which patches survived (fig. 6.6). Further west, another surviving patch of primary cobbles (164R1) was covered by a make up of clay and rubble (163R1*) and then another a cobbled surface (152/162R1*). There was no direct relationship between the latter and deposits immediately to the south which consisted of a layer of large flat stones (178R1), overlain by yellow clay (177R1*), to a maximum of 0.18m in depth. However, since these filled the hollow caused by subsidence into the pre-Roman feature (179/194R1), they are included here with the other make up and levelling layers.

Finds

Dating evidence for '*via principalis*' 2

The levelling layers (420C* (79LT); 393C* (79KW)) on which the new metalling rested produced no pottery that need be later than the third century; the patch of construction mortar (395C* (79KX)) overlying the levelling contained one sherd of possible Local Traditional Ware. However the metalling itself overlay the foundations of the rebuilt north wall of the *principia*, which contained coins of the 330s (see Part 3).

It is clear that '*via principalis*' 2, or at least part of it, remained in use for a long time. The latest finds from it are comparable in date to the latest finds from '*via principalis*' 4. The explanation for this comes from the uneven nature of the street, which during all periods had been pressed into the soft fill of the underlying pre-fort ditches. This effect was particularly marked down the centre of the street, and

probably compounded by the presence of the central drain (335C), with subsidence of later layers into the drain fill. There was also a low-lying area in front of the entrance to the *principia*. The metalling described in this report as 'via principalis' 3 certainly did not extend over the whole of 'via principalis' 2, being only patching over the infilled drain. It is likely that 'via principalis' 4, belonging to the second half of the fourth century, was similar in nature. Fig. 3.8 shows that the large slabs of this street were concentrated in areas which had suffered most from subsidence. It is likely then that the 'via principalis' in the late fourth century comprised elements of phases 2, 3 and 4, all in use together. All datable finds from phases 2, 3 and 4 of the 'via principalis' have therefore been grouped together at the end of the description of 'via principalis' 4.

Other finds

Via praetoria 2:

Antler: fig. 18.5, no. 74, rake/hoe fragment, 362R2

'Via principalis' 3 – new drain (334C) and patching (330C) (figs. 3.7, 6.3 and 6.6)

The drain down the centre of the street (335C) went out of use. The fills were clay deposits (337C*, 338C* and 339C*) and silt (394C*), which also contained broken capstones (372C*).

There was a change to the drainage system. A new stone-lined drain (334C) was recorded running south from the line of the disused drain (335C), across the southern half of the 'via principalis' and down the alley between the *principia* and the *praetorium*. Apparently this drain did not cross the northern half of the 'via principalis' because any northward extension of the line of 334C would have appeared at the south-west corner of the 'via principalis' shown on fig. 6.6; no such drain is visible there or in section (fig. 6.3). Presumably the original drain down the centre of the 'via principalis' (335C) could have remained in operation to the east of the excavated area, but was diverted to run down the alley between the *praetorium* and

principia at this period. The continuation of the new drain (334C) was contexted as 171C in the alley. The stone lining from the sector in the alley had later been robbed, so only the base of the cut survived.

A stony layer (330C) was deposited over the fill of the earlier drain (335C) down the centre of the 'via principalis'; this layer included a slab (340C*) and a possible re-used socket stone (331C*).

Beside the west granary, the previous metalling of the 'via principalis' (181R1) was overlain by a metalling of small cobbles (180R1). The layer of mortar stones and clay (188R1) overlying the granary foundations was itself overlain by clay and soil (167R1) which lapped over the top of the second offset course (figs. 6.3 and 6.6).

Disuse and robbing of drains (figs. 4.4, 6.3 and 6.6)

'Via principalis' 3 and alley

The north/south drain (334C) became filled with silt (329C*). There was a patch of clay (349C*) over the street. A gully (388C*) ran north-west/south-east across the 'via principalis' to cut the disused drain (335C); the fill of the gully was gravel (384C*). Several late post holes cut the street, but it is not known from what level they were cut. One (390C*) cut down into the southern end of the gully. Another (426C*) was close to the north face of the north wall of the *principia* (248C).

A layer of charcoal (169C*) was deposited over the alley metalling (170C), grey silt and mortar (205C*) was deposited over the northern end of the alley and greenish silt (250C*) over the metalling to the east of the drain (171C). The lining stones of the drain (171C) were robbed, and the cut filled in with a stony layer (130C) (fig. 4.4), overlying a sandy fill in the drain (132C*). The charcoal layer was not planned, but the description given in the context book indicates its eastern edge was close to the western edge of the stones (130C), suggesting that the charcoal may have been cut by the robber trench for the drain.

Robbing of roadside drains beside the west granary

The robber trench for the drain or gutter along the northern edge of the 'via principalis' (fig. 6.6), beside the granary wall (187R1) was filled with stones, mortar and clay (186R1) (fig. 6.3). The cut for the drain down the east side of the *via praetoria* (344R2) had a fill resembling the street metalling. Where the two drains met, at the south-east corner of the granary, was a wider area of robbing; this area was difficult to excavate because of limited space, but the robber trench fills appear to have been a yellow clay (364R2) overlain by ginger soil and small stones (366R2).

Finds

Dating evidence – pottery

There was no pottery that need be later than the third century in the alley (169C* (79HM)) or in the robbed out drain down the east side of the *via praetoria* (344R2 (78CY)).

Other finds

Robbing of roadside drains:

Copper alloy: Not illustrated, no. 47, pin end, 187R1
Antler: Not illustrated, no. 94, cut tine, 186R1
Glass: Not illustrated, no. 119, armlet fragment, 186R1

THE STREETS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE FOURTH CENTURY (FIGS. 3.8, 5.1, 6.3 AND 6.7)

New metalling – 'via principalis' 4

The street was re-metalled with cobbles and large slabs. In the area in front of the *principia* the cobbles were contexted as 290C (fig. 3.8). Close to the north wall of the *principia* were small patches of cobbles and sand (302C*) and cobbles and tile fragments (303C*). This new metalling (290C) still showed the same fall from west to east, as in the metalling of the previous period, and there was patching (367C*) over the eastern end. Also overlying the eastern end of the metalling were deposits

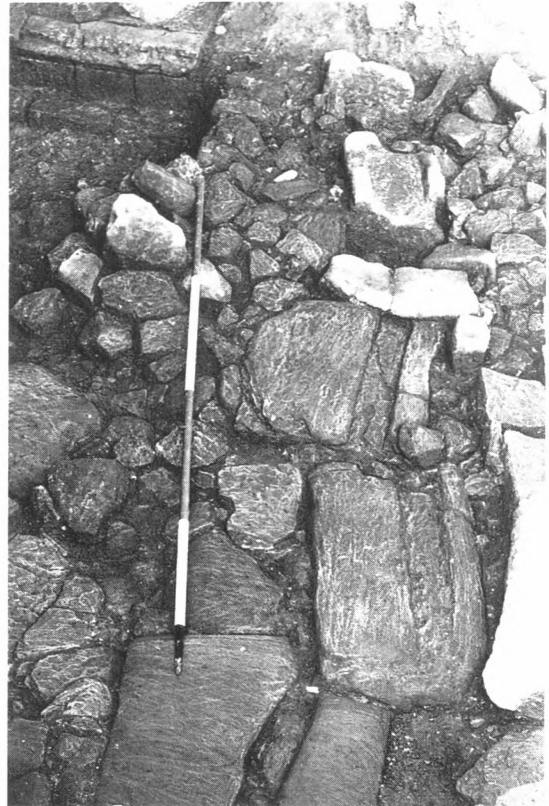


Fig. 5.1 Remetalling of the 'via principalis' to the south of the west granary, incorporating re-used Roman stone. Two stones with slots may originally have carried the aedes screen in the *principia*. Fragment of a gutter stone also included. Note heavy wear on stones. Viewed from the south.

of silt (427C*) or silt containing mortar flecks and stony rubble (275C*, 286C* and 298C*), possibly derived from decay of the north wall of the *principia*. The patches of silt were overlain by large flagstones (366C). These lay in two areas, a strip leading to the main entrance of the *principia*, the surviving width of the strip being 1.20m, and over a patch of subsidence above the western end of the earlier drain (335C).

Beside the west granary the surface of the 'via principalis' adjacent to the two buttresses at the eastern end of the south wall was raised an average of 0.12m by a layer of large stone

blocks (174R1) (fig. 6.7). No direct relationship is recorded between this resurfacing and the granary walls. Robbing of stone from buildings in the central range at this date is indicated, although this is likely to have been restricted to stripping out the interiors or removing minor features. The evidence suggests that the buildings themselves remained standing and were occupied.

The blocks adjacent to the granary (174R1) may be re-used stones derived from significant alterations to the *principia*. They included two large blocks each with a slot to take an upright slab (fig. 5.1). Similar stones from South Shields (Bidwell and Speak 1994, 146, nos. 3 and 4) are thought to have carried the *aedes* screen of the *principia*. Also included was part of a gutter block, which might have been part of an eavesdrip gully for the granary. Over the blocks was a make up layer of large stones (154R1*), overlain by an upper metalling of soil and small stones (149R1) (fig. 6.3).

Via praetoria 4

The robbed-out drains at the junction of the 'via principalis' and the *via praetoria*, beside the south-east corner of the west granary were covered by patch of large stones (361R2), resembling street metalling (fig. 6.7). Further east the *via praetoria* was remetalled with a layer (357R2), which also included some very large flags or slabs.

Street to the north of the granary

Above the metalling there were patches of ashy clay (328R2*) and green sandy soil (268R2*) with staining resembling iron pan.

Finds – 'via principalis' 2:

Dating evidence – pottery

A small pottery group from the metalling of 'via principalis' 2 (336C (79KJ)) consisted of eight sherds of second- or third-century material, and a rim sherd from a probable late fourth-century double-flanged Crambeck mortarium, the latter probably the result of contamination (see Paper II, p. 277).

Coins

- 336C (79KJ) No.48, Claudius II, 268–70, UW/SW
 No.57, 'Victorinus', 268 +, W/W
 No.95, Radiate copy, 273 +, ?SW/SW
 No.146, Constantine I, 330–35, SW/SW
 No.153, Constantine I, 330–35, SW/SW
 No.181, Constantius II, Caesar, 335–37, SW/UW
 No.184, Constantius II, Caesar?, 335–37, SW/SW
 No.295, Hse of Constantine, 335–41, SW/SW
 No.297, Hse of Constantine, 335–41, C/SW
 No.188, Theodora, 337–40, UW/UW
 No.200, Constans, 346–48, UW/UW
 No.201, Constans, 346–48, SW/SW
 No.202, Constans, 346–48, SW/SW
 No.203, Constans, 346–48, UW/SW
 No.204, Constans, 346–48, SW/SW
 No.216, Constans, 348–50, UW/UW
 No.223, Constantius II, 346–48, SW/SW
 No.273, Constantius II/Constans, 346–48, UW/UW
 No.310, 'Hse of Constantine', 341–46, SW/SW
 No.232, 'Constantius II', 353 +, C/C
 No.237, 'Constantius II', 353 +, SW/SW
 No.242, 'Constantius II', 353 +, C/C
 No.370, illegible C3rd/4th copy, C/C
 No.394, illegible AE, C/C
 401C* (79LB) No.51, Claudius II, posth., 270, ?SW/C
 No.80, 'Tetricus II, Caesar', 273 +, SW/C
 No.165, 'Constantine I', 341–6, C/UW

Other finds from 'via principalis' 2

Copper alloy: Not illustrated, no. 5, brooch catchplate; not illustrated, no. 19, fitting; not illustrated, no. 32, strip; not illustrated, no. 49, plate; not illustrated, no. 50, strip; all context 336C

Lead: Not illustrated, no. 72, stud caulking, 336C

Animal bone: There was much red deer antler in the central range deposits, occurring mainly in late Roman or post-Roman deposits, described below. The earliest deposit containing red deer antler was 'via principalis' 2 (336C); however, as noted above, this surface must have remained in use until the late fourth century.

'Via principalis' 3 (patching) and features associated with it*Finds**Dating evidence – pottery*

There was no pottery from the patch of metallurgy itself, but there was a little pottery in the fills of the gully (388*) and post hole cutting it. The gully fill (384* (79KP)) contained a single sherd, a Nene Valley colour coated coarse ware form of the fourth century. The fill of the post hole (390C* (79KQ)) also contained three sherds, one of which was of East Yorkshire grey ware.

*Coins**'Via principalis' 3 (patching):*

- 330C (79JW) No.271, Constantius II/Constans, 346–8, SW/SW
 No.140, Constantine I, 333, SW/SW
 180R1 (78EU) No.141, Constantine I, 333–4, SW/SW

Fill of drain of 'via principalis' 3:

- 329C* (79JU) No.162, 'Constantine I', 341–6, UW/UW
 No.206, Constans, 346–8, SW/SW
 349C* (79KB) No.289, Hse of Constantine, 330–5, C/C

Fill of gully 388C:*

- 384C* (79KP) No.133, Constantine I, 330–5, SW/SW

- No.169, 'Constantine I', 341–6, SW/C
 No.233, 'Constantius II', 353 +, C/C

Fill of post hole:

- 390C* (79KQ) No.50, Claudius II, posth, 270, ?SW/C
 No.224, Constantius II, 346–8, SW/SW

Other finds from features associated with 'via principalis' 3

The fill (384C*) of gully 388C* contained a copper alloy fragment.

'Via principalis' 4 and latest layers on street to the north of the granary*Finds**Dating evidence – pottery*

In the pottery group from 'via principalis' 4, late third- or fourth-century pottery made up 58% of the assemblage. This consisted of East Yorkshire grey ware, three Huntcliff type rims and a fourth-century Nene Valley ware bowl. There was also a body sherd of a fourth-century Crambeck mortarium, with closely packed grits. Contexts 174 (78EF); 290C (79JS); 302C* (79KG); 149R1 (78FF).

In the pottery assemblage from the silting above the metallurgy, 78.5% is late third century or later in date; in addition there is a sherd of black sand amphora from the second half of the third century or later. This group includes sherds from two Oxford red slipped ware vessels (fig. 15.7, no. 64), east Yorkshire grey ware and two Huntcliff type rims of 360 or later. Contexts 286C* (79JC); 298C* (79JK).

The ashy clay (328R2* (78CE)) overlying the street to the north of the granary produced a small group of pottery. This included a Dales ware cooking pot rim as well as a flagon neck with hollow flange in Nene Valley ware that is likely to be fourth century in date (fig. 15.7, nos 62, 63).

*Coins**'Via principalis' 4:*

- 290C (79JS) No.286, Hse of Constantine, 319–20, C/C

- No.124, Constantine I, 323-4,
SW/SW
No.134, Constantine I, 330-5, C/C
No.183, Constantius II, Caesar,
335-7, UW/UW
No.314, 'Hse of Constantine',
341-6, C/C
No.346, Constantius II, Caesar,
346-8, W/W
No.308, Hse of Constantine,
346-8?, C/C
No.328, Magentius, 350-1,
SW/UW
No.228, Constantius II, 355-8,
UW/SW
303C* (79KL) No.304, Hse of Constantine,
335-41?, SW/C

Patching over '*via principalis*' 4:

- 367C* (79KI) No.56, 'Victorinus', 268+, ?W/C
No.93, Radiate copy, 273+,
C/SW
No.307, Hse of Constantine,
335-48, C/C
No.311, 'Hse of Constantine',
341-6, SW/SW
No.207, Constans, 346-8, SW/UW

Silting over '*via principalis*' 4:

- 286C* (79JC) No.170, 'Constantine I', 341-6,
C/SW
No.309, 'Hse of Constantine',
341-6, C/C
298C* (79JK) No.368, illegible C3rd/4th, C/C
No.142, Constantine I, 330-31,
C/UW
No.183, Constantius II, Caesar,
335-37, UW/UW

- No.241, 'Constantius II', 353+,
C/C
No.293, Hse of Constantine,
335-41, C/C
No.294, Hse of Constantine,
335-41, ?SW/SW
No.304, Hse of Constantine,
335-41?, SW/C
No.305, Hse of Constantine,
335-41?, C/C
No.368, illegible C3rd/4th, C/C

Other finds from 'via principalis' 4:

Copper alloy: Not illustrated, no. 23, buckle pin, 302C*; not illustrated, no. 48, rod, 290C; fig. 18.2, no.6, bracelet fragment, not illustrated, no. 52, strip fragment, both from 174R1; fig. 18.3, no. 25, open-work plate, 154R1

Bone: fig. 18.5, no. 75, bobbin, 149R1.

Other finds from silting over metalling:

Copper alloy: Not illustrated, no. 22, buckle, 286C*; not illustrated, no. 24, buckle; not illustrated, no. 35, boss, and unidentifiable fragments, all from 298C*
Lead: Not illustrated, no. 73, stud caulking, 298C*
Bone: Not illustrated, no. 83, spindlewhorl, 286C*
Lead waste and red deer antler were found in the metalling and the silting above it.

THE POST-ROMAN PERIOD

After the end of the Roman occupation, the '*via principalis*', and possibly also the southern end of the *via praetoria*, became blocked with rubble from the collapsing buildings of the central range and the west granary. The '*via principalis*' in the post-Roman period is discussed in Part 12.

