

9. The Northern End of the *Via Praetoria*

Make up of the primary street (fig. 8.2)

Remains of the *via praetoria* were found in two excavation trenches. In the southernmost a widespread layer of compacted grey soil was found, in the centre of which was a shallow hollow, 2.40m wide, running north/south on the line taken by later metallings of the *via praetoria*. The edges were formed into ridges (eastern 181R3, western 180R3) also running north/south. The hollow was filled with a flat layer of rubble (179R3). The soil was also cut by a minor pit (177R3*). This seems to represent levelling material hollowed out by heavy traffic with some of the primary *via praetoria* metalling pressed into the wheel ruts (*cf.* the area of wheel ruts found on the '*via principalis*' and also filled with stone).

Finds

Dating evidence – pottery

From the levelling material (181R3 (80CZ), 179R3 (80CU)) there were seven sherds of BB2 (grey fabric) and local grey wares.

***Via praetoria* 1 and drains (fig. 8.3)**

Serving the east side of the *via praetoria* was a drain, a short length of which survived at the northern end of the excavated areas. Running parallel with and abutting the west wall of Building I was a stone lined channel (638), 3.50m in length and c.0.20m in width. The west wall of Building I formed its east side, with a line of sandstone blocks (680) continuing the drain southwards across the entrance to the street between Buildings I and II. As described in Part 8, the eavesdrip gully along the south wall of Building I ran into the *via praetoria* drain; presumably the similar eavesdrip gully belonging to Building II had done so, but this southern extent of the drain had been truncated by the construction of Building III.

Remains of this primary *via praetoria* were found to the south, composed of a make up layer (168R3*), overlain by a surface of small cobbles and crushed sandstone (158R3). Contemporary with it was a drain running down the western side of the street. This drain (162R3) was lined with sandstone blocks, which rested on a layer of small cobbles and crushed sandstone (174R3*), possibly a bedding layer or the remains of the primary street surface. The construction trench fill (169R3*) consisted of sandy soil, small stones and crushed sandstone. Any trace of a matching drain on the east side would have been destroyed by the re-organisation of the drains and the construction of Building IV (see Part 8).

Finds

Dating evidence – pottery

From the drain on the western side of the *via praetoria* (174R3* (80CT), 169R3* (80CM)) there were two body sherds of BB2 and Hadrianic or Antonine samian.

LATE THIRD CENTURY OR LATER

***Via praetoria* 2 and drains (fig. 8.5)**

Contemporary with the construction of Buildings III and IV and the provision of new drains between Buildings I and III was a remetalling of the *via praetoria*, and a re-alignment of its drains. The earlier north/south running drain along the east side of the *via praetoria* (680) was infilled (681*). The new drain (638) was constructed of medium to large sandstone blocks and survived as a channel c. 0.30m in width and c. 6m in length. The blocks forming the east side of the channel appeared to be re-used blocks from the west edge of the earlier drain (680).

The *via praetoria* was remetalled (637); this surface had been robbed, leaving only a narrow strip beside the drain.

Evidence of the same modification to the drainage system was found further south. The drain running down the east side of the *via praetoria* was of a later construction than the primary metalling (158R3) and the western drain (162R3). The eastern drain (165R3) was on the same alignment as the drain (638) to the north, and so is likely to be a continuation of it. The lining of stone blocks (165R3), rested on a layer of crushed sandstone and small cobbles (175R3*). The fill (172R3*) of the construction trench was crushed sandstone and small cobbles. The insertion of this drain had cut the earlier street surface (158R3) and the disturbance was covered by strip of new metalling (157R3*) running down the east side of the street. A layer of rubble (159R3*) may have been construction trench fill for the drain, or possibly robber trench fill after the late robbing of the lining stones, since the rubble was said to be contaminated by cemetery deposits.

Finds

Dating evidence – pottery

From the drain at eastern side of *via praetoria* 2 the pottery group included East Gaulish samian of the late second century or first half of the third, and BB2 (contexts 165R3 (80CQ), 172R3* (80CW), 159R3 (80CL)).

End of *via praetoria* 2 – disuse of drains (fig. 8.5)

A pit (657) cutting the western *via praetoria* drain (638) may have been the result of robbing drain lining stones.

The portion of the western drain to the south was filled with rubble and dark soil (153R3*); this had been contaminated by later robbing or cemetery activity, as it contained human bone. The eastern drain also became silted (170R3*) and covered with rubble and soil (161R3*); a possible robber trench (160R3) cut the drain and street metalling. A circular pit (167R3*) of unknown function was dug in the centre of the

street. The fill consisted of stones and sandy soil (184R3*) covered by a layer of rubble (164R3). These layers of fill nevertheless subsided, and were overlain by another patch of metalling (156R3*). Subsidence continued to create a hollow requiring further patching in later periods, as described below.

Finds

Dating evidence – pottery

See discussion in Part 15, pp. 171–2.

Other finds

Fill of drain down western side of *via praetoria* 2
Bone: fig. 18.5, no. 78, knife handle, 153R3*

FOURTH CENTURY – REMETALLING OF THE *VIA PRAETORIA* (figs. 8.6 and 9.1)

Via praetoria 3/4

At the northern end of the excavated *via praetoria* in Area D were two deposits (625* and 643*) for which no details are recorded. They were overlain by a resurfacing (557) of the street consisting of a cobbled surface with large sandstone slabs at irregular intervals. This overlay the silted roadside drains and also extended into the street between Buildings I and III, implying that they were still standing when the metalling was laid. There was heavy wear on the large slabs and the surface was cut by a pit (570).

Further south there was patching (154R3*) over the hollow in the street caused by subsidence into the earlier pit mentioned above. This was overlain by a metalling (147R3) of large slabs and cobbles (fig. 9.1) similar to the metalling (557) to the north, also covering the roadside drains. Plans (fig. 8.6) and photographs (fig. 9.1) suggest that re-used Roman facing stones and larger dressed blocks were incorporated. Compacted brown soil (148R3*) filled hollows in the metalling. This metalling



Fig. 9.1 Remetalling of the *via praetoria* in the second half of the fourth century incorporating heavy blocks and re-used stones. Viewed from the south.

closely resembles in character the latest metalling of the '*via principalis*', in that both incorporate many large slabs and both ignore and overlie the roadside drains of previous periods (see Part 5). The metalling of the *via praetoria* similarly overlay the patching of a hollow (154R3*) which contained Local Traditional Ware, while the latest metalling of the '*via principalis*' (290C) also contained Local Traditional Ware.

This area does, however, differ from the area of the '*via principalis*', the southern end of the *via praetoria*, and streets in other parts of the fort in that only three remetalings were recorded rather than four. It may be that the pottery filling the disused drains mentioned above genuinely dates the deposition of a third metalling of this part of the *via praetoria*, which remained in use until the end of the fourth century. Alternatively, the layers for which no details were recorded (625* and 643*) may represent a third metalling, and the surface with large slabs (557) represents the fourth.

Finds

Dating evidence – pottery

See discussion in Part 15, pp. 171–2.

Coins

Layers pre-dating remetalling of northernmost part of *via praetoria*:

- 625* (82FR) No.5, Hadrian, 119–22, W/W
 643* (82FV) No.69, Victorinus/Tetricus I, 268–73, SW/C

Patching over hollow pre-dating remetalling of *via praetoria* to south:

- 154R3*(80CE) No.36, early mid C3rd counterfeit, c. 235–49, C/C
 No.288, Hse of Constantine, 330–35, C/C
 No.266, 'Constantius II'?, 353+?, C/C

Remetalling of northernmost part of *via praetoria* 3/4:

- 557 (82EJ) No.41, Gallienus, 260–8, ?SW/C
 No.43, Gallienus, 260–8, ?SW/C
 No.87, radiate?, 260–73 + (?), C/C
 No.49, Claudius II, 268–70, SW/C
 No.65, Victorinus/Tetricus I, 268–73, C/?SW
 No.72, Tetricus I, 270–3, ?W/W
 No.73, Tetricus I, 270–3, C/SW
 No.82, 'Tetricus II, Caesar', 273 +, SW/C
 No.104, Carausius, 286–90, SW/SW
 No.108, Carausius, 286–93, SW/SW
 No.382, illegible C3rd/4th, C/C
 No.122, Constantine I, 317–8, UW/UW
 No.174, Crispus, 321–2, ?W/W
 No.125, Constantine I, 323–4, SW/SW
 No.126, Constantine I, 326, SW/SW
 No.127, Constantine I, 326, C/SW
 No.136, Constantine I, 330–35, ?SW/SW
 No.143, Constantine I, 330–31, ?W/W
 No.149, Constantine I, 330–35, ?SW/SW
 No.152, Constantine I, 330–35, C/?SW
 No.155, Constantine I, 333–34, UW/UW
 No.157, Constantine I, 330–35, SW/SW
 No.178, Constantine II, Caesar, 335–7, UW/UW
 No.186, Constans, Caesar, 335–7, UW/UW
 No.298, Hse of Constantine, 335–41, C/C
 No.299, Hse of Constantine, 335–41, C/SW
 No.306, Hse of Constantine, 337–41, SW/C
 No.187, Helena, 337–40, UW/SW
 No.190, Theodora, 337–40, SW/SW
 No.191, Theodora, 337–40, SW/SW
 No.219, Constantius II, 337–40, SW/SW
 No.220, Constantius II, 337–40, UW/UW
 No.221, Constantius II, 337–41, SW/SW
 No.229, 'Constantius II', 341–6, SW/SW
 No.164, 'Constantine I', 341–6, SW/SW
 No.312, 'Hse of Constantine', 341–6, C/C
 No.320, 'Hse of Constantine', 341–6, SW/SW
 No.321, 'Hse of Constantine', 341–6, SW/SW
 No.323, 'Hse of Constantine', 341–6, C/C
 No.325, 'Hse of Constantine', 341–6, SW/SW
 No.212, Constans, 346–8, SW/SW
 No.226, Constantius II, 346–8, UW/UW
 No.276, Constantius II/Constans, 346–8, SW/SW
 No.277, Constantius II/Constans, 346–8, C/SW
 No.279, Constantius II/Constans, 346–8, SW/SW
 No.217, Constans, 348–50, SW/SW
 No.332, 'Magnentius', 350 +, SW/SW
 No.245, 'Constantius II', 353 +, C/SW
 No.246, 'Constantius II', 353 +, C/SW
 No.249, 'Constantius II', 353 +, C/C
 No.250, 'Constantius II', 353 +, C/C
 No.251, 'Constantius II', 353 +, C/SW
 No.252, 'Constantius II', 353 +, SW/SW
 No.253, 'Constantius II', 353 +, UW/UW
 No.254, 'Constantius II', 353 +, C/C
 No.256, 'Constantius II', 353 +, C/C
 No.257, 'Constantius II', 353 +, SW/SW
 No.258, 'Constantius II', 353 +, SW/SW

No.259, 'Constantius II', 353 +,
SW/SW

No.260, 'Constantius II', 353 +,
C/C

No.261, 'Constantius II', 353 +,
SW/SW

557 (82EJ) No.262, 'Constantius II', 353 +,
UW/C

No.267, 'Constantius II'?, 353 +,
UW/C

No.268, 'Constantius II'(?), 353 +,
C/C

No.269, 'Constantius II'?, 353 +,
C/C

No.270, 'Constantius II'(?), 353 +,
C/C

No.339, Valentinian I, 364–75,
UW/UW

No.340, Valentinian I, 364–75,
SW/SW

No.398, illegible AR, C/C

Remetalling of *via praetoria* 3/4 to south:

147R3(80BK) No.59, Victorinus/Tetricus I,
268–73, C/?SW

No.78, Tetricus II, Caesar, 270–73,
?SW/C

No. 89, radiate, 273 +, C/C

No. 91, radiate, 273 +, C/C

No.238, 'Constantius II' 353 +,
SW/C

No.244, 'Constantius II' 353 +,
UW/SW

Pit cutting northernmost part of *via praetoria* 3/4:

570 (82EQ) No.85, radiate, 260–73, C/SW
No.107, Carausius, 286–93,

SW/SW

No.117, Tetrarchy, c. 297–305,
C/?SW

No.301, Hse of Constantine,
335–41, UW/UW

Other finds

Layers pre-dating remetalling of northernmost
part of *via praetoria* 3/4:

Shale: fig. 18.8, no. 125, armlet fragment, 625*

Remetalling of northernmost part of
via praetoria 3/4:

Copper alloy: Not illustrated, no. 30, conical terminal; not illustrated, no. 33, boss fragment, both 557. [This part of the street also produced a large number of unidentifiable copper alloy fragments].
Stone: Not illustrated, no. 146, whetstone end, 557

Pit cutting northernmost part of *via praetoria* 3/4:

Copper alloy: Not illustrated, no. 41, stud, 570

