

10. The Northern Defences and Extra-Mural Area

THE DEFENCES

Introduction (*fig. 10.1*)

The northern defences of the Roman site had been heavily disturbed by the construction of the medieval castle defences and by modern structures, but remains were found surviving on two small upstands, separated from each other and from the fort interior by medieval and later intrusions. The Roman ground surface here was at an average height of 26.5m OD, about 0.50m lower than that in the interior of the fort. The remains of the defences comprised two short lengths of fort wall (*fig. 10.1*), which were not aligned east/west like all the Roman structures so far excavated within the fort, but ran west-north-west by east-south-east, parallel with the edge of the promontory.

One sector of the fort wall was excavated in 1986; only foundations survived, but to their full width. Another sector was discovered to the east of it in 1992, in a trench originally begun in 1987. Here the full width survived, and at the southern edge some of the inset first course was *in situ*; assuming the foundation to be offset by the same amount on each side, this allows the width of the wall to be estimated at 1.70m. To the south of each of these sectors were small upstands where Roman deposits survived to a significant depth. There had been no rampart, but a widespread clay levelling layer overlay the fort wall foundations, and formed the bedding for a well-constructed street. If there had been a defensive ditch, then it would have lain immediately beyond the fort wall, its width extending no more than 4m to the north (*cf. fig. 10.1*).

Coin evidence suggests the primary street remained in use until at least the late third century, although at some stage a drain was inserted into the metalling immediately behind the most westerly sector of fort wall and parallel to it. A patch of new metalling was associated with this. The drain was heightened and a third

phase of metalling was laid, which contained coins of the 320s, and a sherd of pottery dating to 360 or later.

After the end of the Roman occupation, this part of the fort wall was demolished and paved over. The defences in the post-Roman or Anglo-Saxon period are discussed in Part 12.

Pre-Fort features

Weathered subsoil was found in this area. Pre-dating the western sector of fort wall there was a north/south gully (2512*, fill 2511*). Minor features were a patch of burning on the subsoil (2518*) and a cut (2512B*, fill 2516*).

Finds

Dating evidence – pottery

The group from the fill (2511* (86CH)) of the gully pre-dating the fort wall consisted of local grey wares and Exeter Fabric 440 flagon.

Construction of primary fort defences (*fig. 10.1*)

Fort wall and Street 1

Wall, west end. The wall (2498) had foundations 2.10m in width. There was a single surviving course of facing stones still *in situ* on the south side, showing that the foundations were offset. The north face did not survive, but if the offset had been the same on that side, the width of the wall would have been 1.70m. It is this width which identifies it as part of the fort wall, rather than that of an internal structure. Construction debris was represented by a gritty layer (2504*) and a burnt deposit (2519*). There were minor post holes, pits and grooves (2502*, 2517* and 2513*). A levelling layer of mixed clays (2501*) lapped over the wall foundations and abutted the wall face. It was overlain by a gravel surface (2496), Street 1.

The single find from Street 1, an illegible coin of the third or fourth century, shows how long this street remained in use, although there was a minor modification and patching, as described below.

Fort wall, east end

The wall and a narrow area behind it were excavated in 1992. A small upstand of material, c. 3.50m to the south had already been excavated in 1987. Only the foundations on the southern side of the wall (3625) survived. Minor features beside the wall were hollows in the subsoil and their fills (3698*, 3699*, 3700*), decomposed sandstone (3730*) and two pits (3746*, fill 3731* and 3744*, fill 3729*).

A clay layer (3691*/3720*) overlying the wall foundations was presumably the equivalent of the levelling layer found further west. A surface was found which consisted of a clay layer (3627*) overlain by crushed sandstone (3624), probably a continuation of Street 1. A further patch of crushed sandstone (3696*) was also found. Minor features adjacent to this surface were a linear stony area (3623*), stakeholes (3717*, fill 3712*, 3718*, fill 3715* and 3692*, fills 3628*, 3688*), and an area of trample (3726*). On the isolated upstand to the south was a layer of gravelly soil (2685), also probably equivalent to Street 1.

Finds

Dating evidence – pottery

The levelling layers for Street 1 (2501* (86BV), 3691*, 3720*) contained locally produced grey wares and unidentified grey ware types and a sherd from a local mortarium dated to 120–60. The stake holes south of the fort wall (3628*, 3688*) contained a few sherds of BB2 and local grey ware.

Coins

Street 1:

2496 No. 363, illegible C3rd/4th copy, 273–353+, C/C

Other finds

Levelling for Street 1:

Lead: waste, 2501*

Stone: fig. 18.8, no. 139, bowl fragment, 2501*

Modifications of the third century

Addition of drain behind the fort wall and Street 2 (fig. 10.1)

Fort wall (west), drain and Street 2. A drain (2484A) was inserted in Street 1, running parallel with the fort wall and at a distance of 0.8m from it. A layer of rubble (2503*), possibly associated with the drain, contained pottery of the third century. Rubble (2500*) filling the drain construction trench contained residual second-century pottery. A patch of cobbled surface (2493*), Street 2, was associated with the insertion of the drain.

On the isolated upstand to the south of the eastern portion of wall, the gravel of Street 1 was overlain by stones (2682*) and some burnt, flat paving (2683*). The drain was not found beside the eastern portion of fort wall, and there is no record of a robbing trench there. Possibly the drain turned south-east to run down the street behind Building I (fig. 1.3). This appears to be an important factor in setting the possible limit of the building.

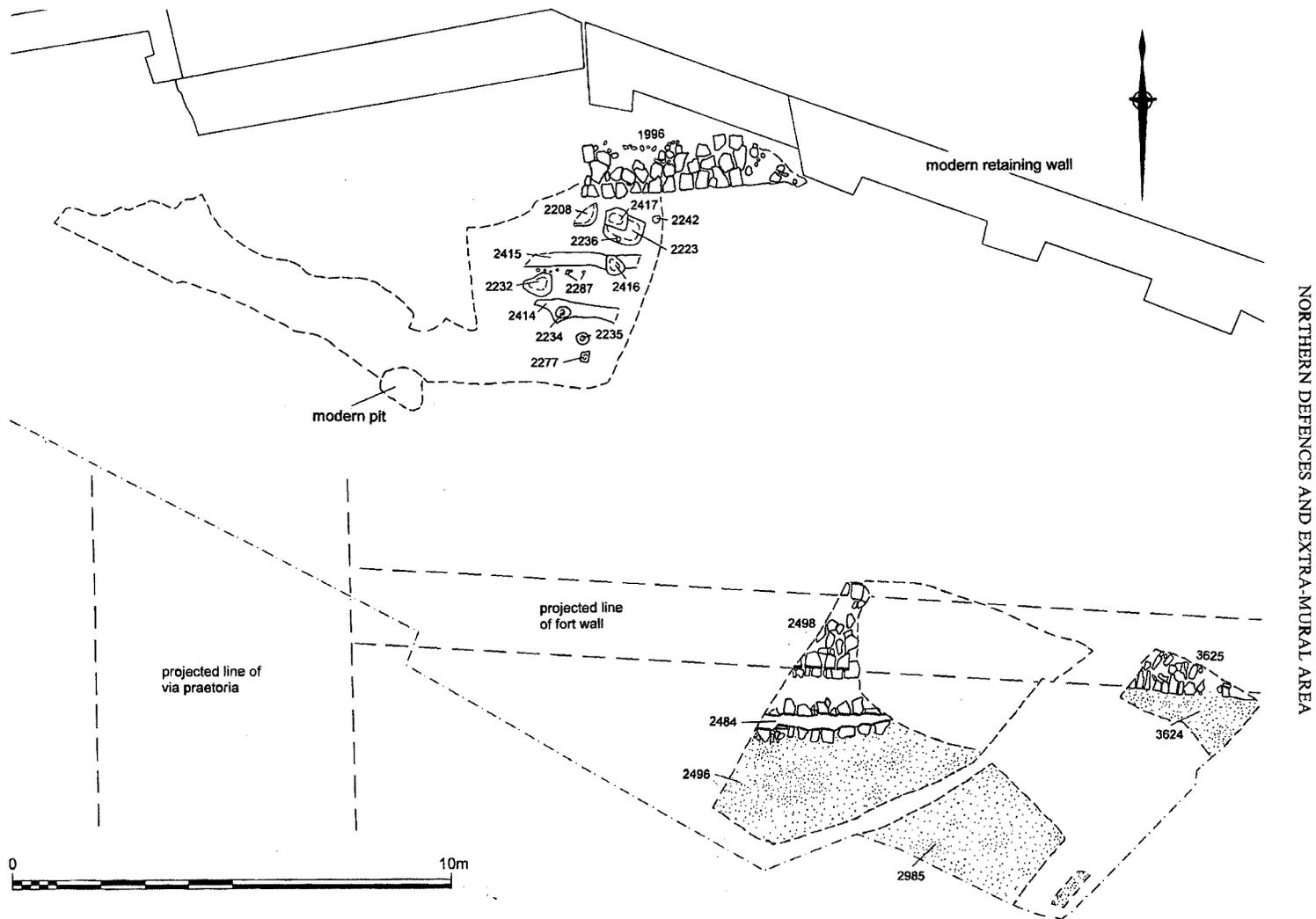
Finds

Dating evidence – pottery

Rubble (2503* (86CD)) possibly associated with the construction of the drain produced a small group containing BB2, SENK and a base sherd of Nene Valley ware.

Modifications of the second quarter of the fourth century – Street 3

Fort wall, west. The drain was heightened using dressed blocks (2484B*). A new cobble surface (2486*/2492*), Street 3, was laid in association with this.



NORTHERN DEFENCES AND EXTRA-MURAL AREA

Fig. 10.1 Plan of the northern defences, showing surviving portions of the fort wall and primary intervallum street, also a drain inserted in the third century. Visible in the extra-mural area is a fragment of stone wall foundation; metalworking hearths and timber features beside it went out of use in the mid- to late third century. Scale 1:150.

Finds***Dating evidence – pottery***

The pottery associated with the heightening of the drain (2484B* (86BP)) included BB2 and SENK, as well as a body sherd of Nene Valley ware. The pottery from Street 3 (2486* (86BU), 2492* (86BY)) included a body sherd of Lower Nene Valley mortarium (third or fourth century), Dales ware type and calcite gritted ware. There was an East Yorkshire grey ware vessel, dated to 370 or later. This may have been deposited on the metalling, indicating how long the street remained in use, or may be the result of disturbance by a pit dug in the mid-fourth century or later (see below).

Coins**Street 3:**

- 2486*/2492* No. 96, radiate copy, 273 +, C/C
 No. 386, illegible C3rd/4th, C/C
 No. 177, Constantine II, Caesar,
 324–5, UW/UW
 2492* (86BY) No. 86, radiate?, 260–73, C/C
 No. 285, Hse of Constantine,
 318–20, SW/SW

Other finds**Heightening of drain:**

Stone: Not illustrated, no. 148, whetstone fragment, 2484

Street 3:

Stone: Not illustrated, no. 151, whetstone, 2486
 Lead: waste, 2492*

Disuse of the drain – mid-fourth century or later (fig. 12.4). The roadside drain was filled with soil, charcoal and animal bone (2491*) and sandstone fragments (2490*). The infilled drain was later disturbed by a large pit or post hole (2495*), which was then covered by flags (2482*) and crushed sandstone (2478*). Also possibly belonging to this period was a post hole (2480, fill 2481*) to the south of the fort wall and disused drain (fig. 10.2) and a small post hole (2471*, fill 2514*).

Finds***Dating evidence – pottery***

The rubble filling the drain (2491* (86BQ)) contained East Yorkshire grey ware and calcite gritted ware, including a body sherd with grooves which are normally associated with Huntcliff type rims. The pit disturbing the drain (2495* (86BZ), 2482* (86BM)) contained East Yorkshire grey ware and calcite gritted Huntcliff type rims. The post hole (2480) to the south of the fort wall contained Local Traditional Ware in the fill (2481*).

Coins**Pit disturbing drain:**

- 2482* (86BM) No. 290, Hse of Constantine,
 330–35, C/C
 No. 130, Constantine I, 330–31,
 SW/SW

Other finds**Fill of drain:**

Stone: fig. 18.8, no. 137, palette fragment, 2490*

Pit disturbing drain

Lead: waste, 2495*
 Stone: Not illustrated, no. 149, whetstone fragment, 2495*

In the post-Roman period this part of the fort wall was demolished and paved over, as described in Part 12.

THE EXTRA-MURAL AREA

Introduction

The extra-mural area immediately to the north of the fort was excavated in 1985; Roman features survived in one small upstand of material. At the northern extent of the surviving remains, close to the present edge of the promontory, was a length of stone wall, the southern edge of which was overlain by a clay

levelling layer. This was cut by post trenches, post holes and metalworking hearths. Pottery evidence shows that the timber structures were demolished in the third century. The area was covered in a layer of ash in the mid-third century or later.

Above this was a rough paved surface of two phases. Although the pottery from the earlier surface dated to the late third century and that from the second dated to the mid-fourth, it is likely both surfaces were contemporary with the two layers of post-Roman paving overlying the demolished fort wall. These layers and other features are described in Part 12.

Early Features (*figs. 10.1 and 12.7A*)

No weathered subsoil was found; presumably this area had been terraced. The surviving upstand of material consisted of a level, roughly triangular area, *c.* 4m by 4m by 5.50m, and a strip, a maximum of 2m in width, beginning at the southern end of the triangle for a distance of *c.* 9m, and running north-west/south-east (*fig. 10.1*). There was a drop in height of 0.85m between the strip and the subsoil at the north-eastern end of the upstand, which was probably the result of a landslip in the post-Roman period, as described in Part 12. The stratigraphy between the triangular upstand and the strip had been interrupted by a modern pit, making interpretation difficult. Cutting the subsoil of the strip were a scatter of post holes, pits and minor gullies (details in the archive report) and a clay patch (2249*). At the eastern end of the strip were minor erosion channels (2316*, 2339*) and layers of silt, sandstone or coal, two of these (2299, 2300) are shown on *fig. 12.7A*.

Finds

Dating evidence – pottery

The widespread silty layer (2299 (85LE)) produced two sherds of Central Gaulish samian, a Dr 37, mid-to late Antonine, and a Dr 38, Antonine. There were also two sherds of BB2.

Not closely dated – construction of stone wall (*figs. 10.1, 12.4 and 12.7A*)

A short length of stone wall (1996) was found at the northern edge of the triangular upstand; it lay *c.* 8m north of the fort wall. Pre-construction levelling for the wall (1996) was represented by a broad, shallow cut (2290), which was overlain by silt (2288*), clay (2289), clay and stones (2284*), a hearth (2282*) and sandy clay (2283*).

The remains of the wall (1996) lay *c.* 1m north of the southern edge of the cut, and parallel to it. Plans and photographs show foundations consisting of layers of cobbles in clay overlain by roughly dressed blocks. To the south was a spread of clay (2205/2327*), probably a levelling layer, which overlain the southern edge of these blocks. The section (*fig. 12.7A*) shows this layer ending in a vertical cut which may represent the robber trench for the south face of the wall, assuming it had stood on an offset foundation.

The wall was built before the mid-third century. Its proximity to the fort wall appears to rule out the possibility of its being the wall of an annexe, which would have been unfeasibly small. Hadrian's Wall ran north of the fort, but this stretch of wall can hardly be part of it. The bottom course is quite unlike that of the Broad Wall between Newcastle and the River North Tyne, which almost always consists of large blocks with faces at least 0.30m square; the Broad Wall foundations are also always of flat slabs rather than cobbles. If it had been the Wall, the fort would surely have been brought up to it and would not have had a separate north wall only 8m to the south. Lastly, if the Wall had run on this line, to reach the riverside it would have descended the precipitous and unstable slope in the vicinity of Dog Leap Stairs; a much more credible line is the bottom of the small valley now occupied by The Side (see Paper II, p. 261). There is a strong possibility that this length of wall could have been a retaining wall at the edge of the promontory. There is ample evidence of the need for a retaining wall in this position: evidence of a landslip in the early post-Roman

period is cited below, and the later curtain wall of the medieval castle clearly suffered cracking severe enough to require repair on several occasions. Immediately to the north of all these remains is the modern retaining wall at the edge of the steep drop into The Side.

Finds

Levelling layer:

Copper alloy: fig. 18.3, no. 36, bell-shaped stud, 2327*

Extra-mural activity in the third century (fig. 10.1)

To the south of the stone wall were hearths representing industrial activity, post trenches, and a scatter of post holes. A post trench (2414) was parallel to the wall and 2.40m from it. It contained stone packing and a post hole (2234). Parallel to it and only 1.40m from the wall was another trench (2415), also containing a post hole (2416, fill 2233*). The fill of this trench contained clay (2243*) and ash (2210*), and was probably a flue. A line of six stakeholes (2287) lay parallel to its southern edge.

Three hearths were found near the wall. One (2223/2417) had an ashy fill (2222*) which contained fourteen fragments of clay moulds (see below); where impressions survived they showed that the moulds had been for the manufacture of openwork mounts with peltate or triskele motifs (see p. 217). This fill also contained pottery, lead waste as well as other finds listed below. A stakehole (2236) cut the edge of this hearth. There were other hearths (2232, fill 2276*) and (2208/2418*, fill 2202* of charcoal). There was a post hole further away from the wall (2277, fill 2278*) and a scatter of post holes are also recorded in the archive as being in the area, but were not planned.

Finds

Dating evidence- pottery

Most of the pottery from the fill (2222* (85JT)) of the metalworking hearth (2223/2417) was BB2 and SENK. A sherd of East Gaulish samian, Dr 37, of

the late second or first half of the third century joins a sherd in the fill (2202*) of another hearth (2208/2418*). This latter contained a large part of a Dr 37, as well as a Rhineland mortarium dated to 140–300 and some BB2 sherds. The trench fill (2210* (85JK)) contained samian, BB1 and BB2. All the pottery from the post holes near the stone wall (2278* (85KS), 2242 (85KC), 2275* (85KQ)) was BB2, apart from a scrap of samian.

Other finds

Fill of metalworking hearth 2223/2417:

Copper alloy: Not illustrated, no. 8, bracelet fragments, 2222*

Lead: waste, 2222*

Bone: fig. 18.6, no. 92, disc counter, 2222*

Clay: Not illustrated, nos. 156–8, mould fragments, 2222*

Late third century – disuse of hearths and timber structures (figs. 10.1 and 12.7A)

A widespread layer of dark soil and charcoal (2204) filled the post holes and overlay all the above features (fig. 12.7A).

An almost complete jar in East Yorkshire grey ware was found inverted, broken and flattened in a small stone-lined pit in this area. The vessel was found during the excavation of a layer of rough paving, described in Part 12, however, it seems likely to have belonged to the phase of abandonment of the hearths and timber features. The metalworking hearth (2223/2417) shown on fig. 10.1 was recorded as two cuts, the later of the two being the smaller. Comparison of the field plans shows that the location of this jar coincides with the later cut (2417). Perhaps the pot was discarded in a pit cut into the hearth when metalworking ceased; it may have been flattened much later when the paving was laid over it. Certainly it seems likely to have been discarded rather than used for any ritual or funereal purpose. Its inverted position does not correspond with the deliberately buried pots found for example at South Shields, Wallsend, and the excavation trenches at the Bridge Hotel (see Part 11); nor is there any record of any cremated bones being found in it.

Finds***Dating evidence – pottery***

The dark soil and charcoal overlying the post holes (2204 (85JH)) contained residual pottery, as well as an incomplete Cantley reeded hammerhead rim

mortarium, dated to 240–400. The almost complete East Yorkshire grey ware jar (85IP) is shown on fig. 15.6, no. 40.

The extra-mural area in the post-Roman or Anglo-Saxon periods is discussed in Part 12.

