

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS IN THE CITY OF LONDON, 1961

Communicated by the Staff of the Guildhall Museum

## I. ROMAN

### *London Wall*

About 45 feet of the length of the core of the Roman city wall was exposed during demolition of buildings immediately west of Moorgate, in London Wall.

### *Coopers Row*

Demolition of warehouses immediately south of the Fenchurch Street Railway viaduct in Coopers Row has revealed a considerable length of the Roman city wall which was formerly inside the premises of Messrs. J. Barber and Co.

### *Nos. 13-14 George Street*

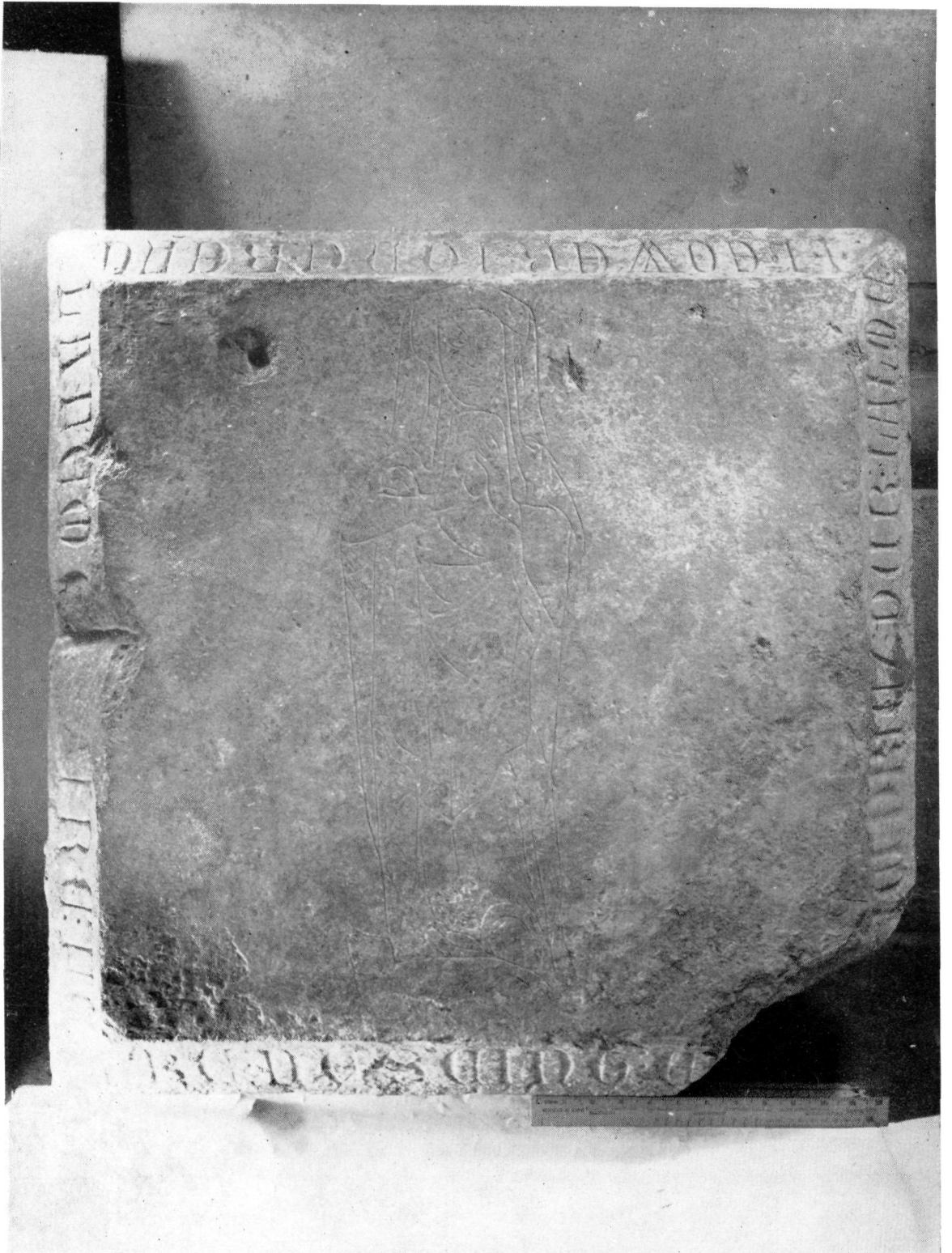
In the northern part of this site just east of the Mansion House, deposits of gravel were found overlying the natural brick-earth and gravel. These were clearly artificial, for a thin spread of gravel from one of the deposits extended to the south over a pit which contained pottery of the first century. Since the main Roman east-west road, which skirted the southern face of the forum and crossed the Walbrook near Bucklersbury, should pass across the northern edge of the site, it seems likely that this gravel either formed part of the body of the road or had been spilled from its southern edge during road-making or repair. The thin layer over the pit, which was about 20 ft. to the south of the northern edge of No. 13, was presumably a spill of this kind and therefore lay to the south of the road.

### *Nos. 143-147 Cannon Street*

Ragstone foundations, presumably Roman, were found on this site. One of these was 1 ft. 9 in. thick and cut into a burnt level containing Flavian pottery. Under the Cannon Street frontage a deposit of gravel, over a foot thick, overlay the natural brick-earth. This gravel extended about 6 feet north of the old frontage, and seems to have been the northern edge of the Roman road running along Cannon Street—or possibly a spread of material immediately to the north of this road.<sup>1</sup>

### *Goldsmith House, Goldsmith Street (Fig. 1)*

On the west side of this site the natural brick-earth had been removed and then re-dumped, for below the dumped brick-earth was found a small pit containing Neronian sherds. A rubbish pit containing pottery of the period Nero-Vespasian had been cut through the dumped brick-earth. Overlying the latter in the western half of the site was the debris of a building destroyed by fire, in which was found pottery of the late 1st-early 2nd century. The base of this building was constructed of large bricks of mud and straw lying on sleeper beams. Gravel deposits were found concentrated at the western



Incised slab of Purbeck Marble from St. Swithin's Church, Cannon Street

# GOLDSMITH HOUSE.

SCALE 10 5 0 10 20 30 FEET.

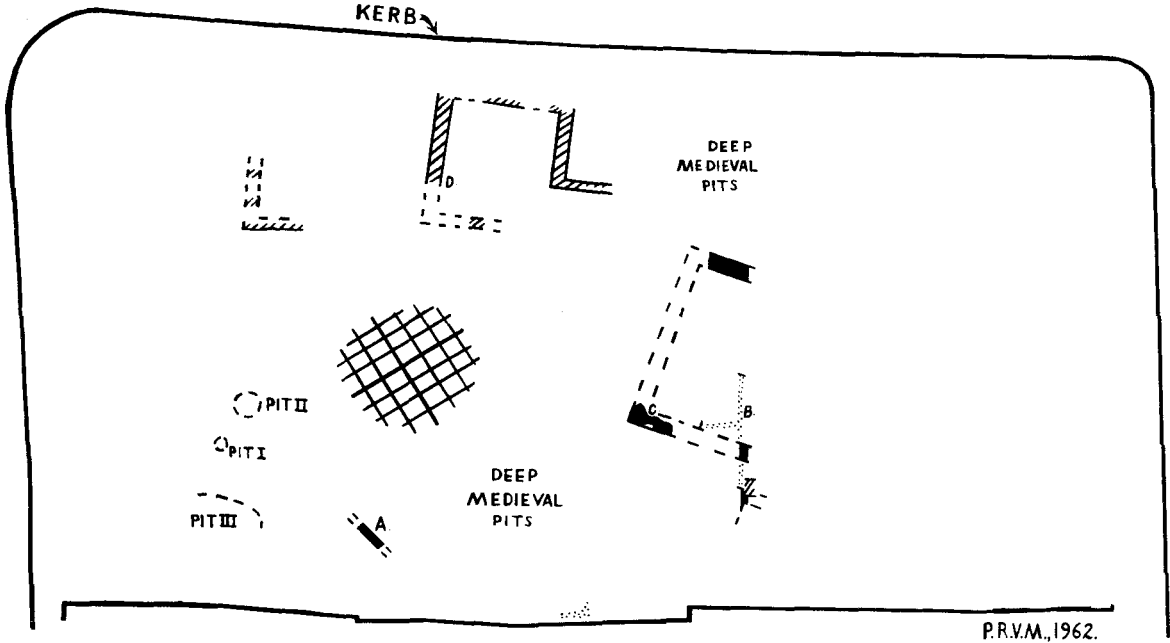


GOLDSMITH STREET

KERB

GUTTER LANE

WOOD STREET



## KEY

- ROMAN PIT
- ▬ ROMAN WALL.
- ▨ MEDIEVAL WALL.
- ⋯ ROMAN CEMENT FLOOR.
- ▧ SITE OF ROMAN DAUB-BRICK BUILDING

Fig. 1

end of the site, and it seems possible that these were a spread from a Roman road which probably ran from Cheapside to the south gate of the Cripplegate fort. In the central area, part of a room with ragstone walls and an *opus signinum* floor was found sunk into undisturbed brick-earth (B). On the floor were a number of late 1st century sherds. Overlying this were the ragstone and chalk foundations of an undated second building (C), which may well have been Roman, as it seems to have approximately the same alignment as the Roman fort and the Roman east-west road to the south which was replaced by the mediaeval Cheapside.

#### *Crooked Lane*

In several places, along the line of Crooked Lane, gravel deposits containing Roman pottery were found overlying the natural gravel. These probably indicate the presence of a Roman road, the southern continuation of the north-south road bounding the western side of the basilica and forum, traces of which were seen east of Birchin Lane in 1935.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Bush Lane (Fig. 2)*

Two Roman building periods were revealed on a small site between Bush Lane and Cannon Street Station. At the north end of the site, the structure of Period I consisted of part of a large room with a cement floor and brick walls on ragstone foundations 9 ft. wide and 8–10 ft. in depth below the floor (B). A ragstone foundation 6 ft. thick ran eastwards under Bush Lane. Both the east and south walls of the large room had an exterior offset of 1 ft. The cement floor of the room overlay a Flavian rubbish pit. At the south end of the site two parallel east-west walls of ragstone with double courses of bonding tiles were found. These were 3 ft. thick, and on the north side of the southern wall there seems to have been a recess 2 ft. deep and at least 7 ft. wide. Between the walls there was a ragstone and flint concrete platform 7 ft. thick (A). On the north side of the northern east-west wall was a semi-circular apse of ragstone with courses of bonding tiles, enclosing a cement floor in the middle of which stood a brick structure 5 ft. 6 in. thick, which did not extend right across the apse. It was seen in section only, and may have been the base of a pier or pedestal. Late 1st century pottery was found in a destruction layer overlying the thick ragstone platform. Traces of a second period building containing at least two hypocausts were found overlying the ruins of the first period building in the northern half of the site.

#### *Barclays Bank, Lombard Street (Fig. 3)*

It was hoped that this site might throw further light on the dating of the forum, the cement floor of which has been provisionally identified on neighbouring sites. It soon became apparent, however, that these levels had for the most part been removed in previous building excavations. Instead, evidence was found of a sequence of stone buildings apparently earlier than the construction of the forum.

The earliest feature on the site was a U-shaped ditch running approximately north-north-east, containing pottery of the Claudian period. It was evidently filled in after a very short time, for a refuse pit containing Claudian pottery and glass had been cut into the filling. The glass included fragments of the painted Locarno ware that is characteristic of this period.

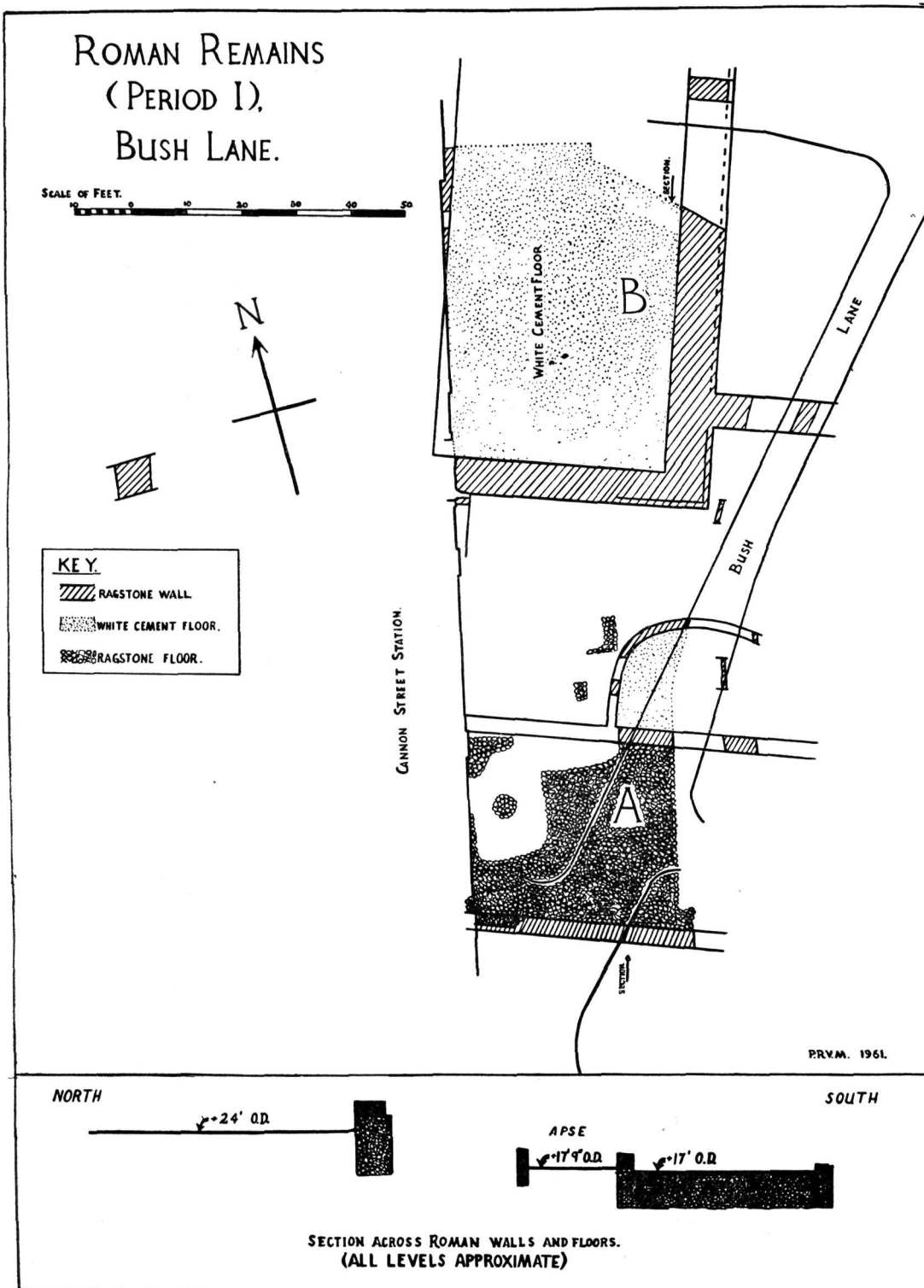


Fig. 2

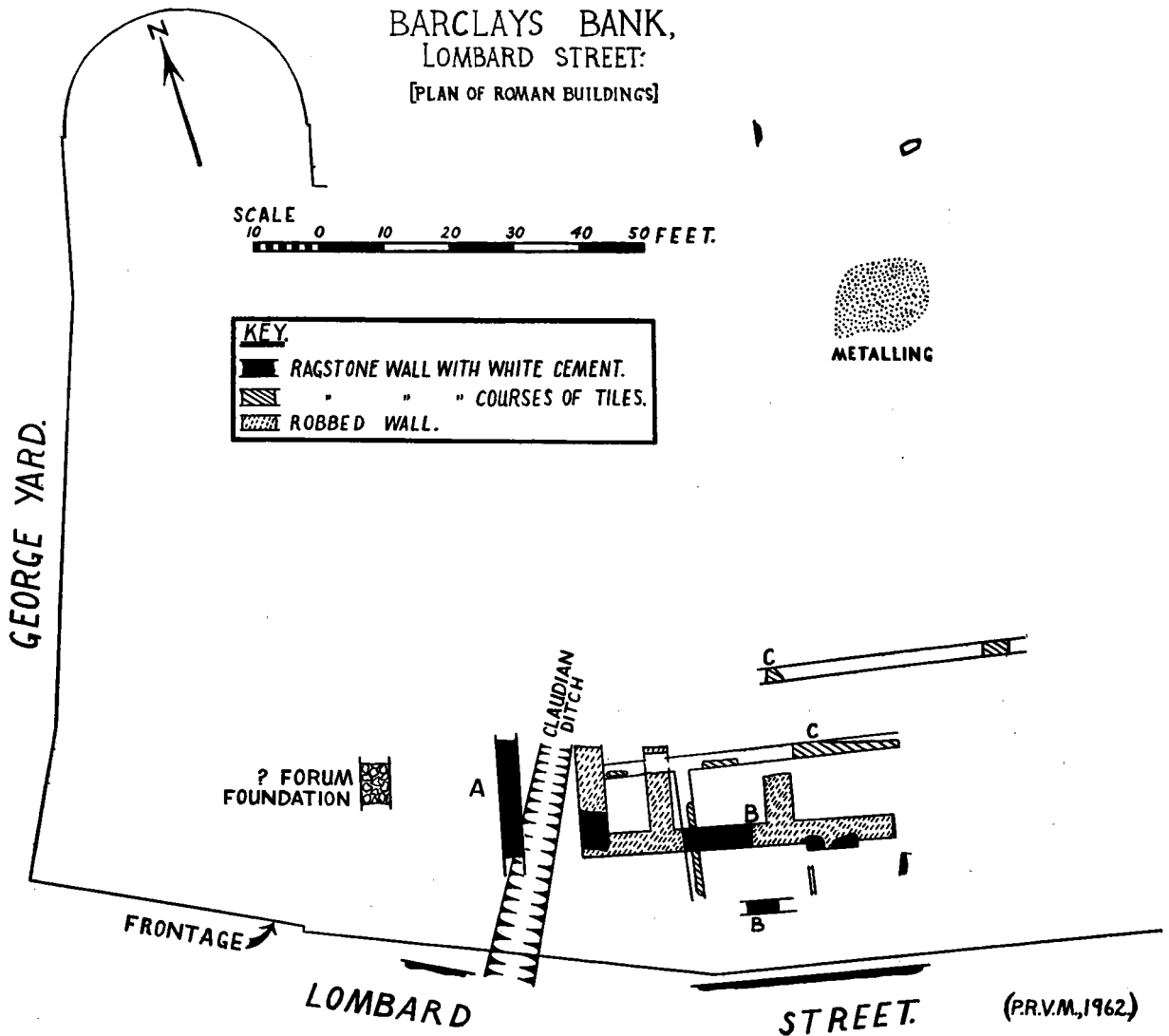


Fig. 3

Overlying the ditch was a ragstone wall with white mortar (A), against which a layer of refuse of the period Claudius-Nero and a burnt layer, possibly Boudiccan, had accumulated. Immediately to the east of the ditch were walls of exactly similar character (B); unfortunately not stratigraphically related to the first, and these had been extensively robbed in the 13th century. Within this building the floor level seems to have been represented only by a layer of gravelly earth, which may of course have been covered originally with wooden boards. Above it was a layer of occupation debris containing pottery of the period about A.D. 60-80, piled against the wall, and this in turn was buried beneath layers of dumped brick-earth, which survived to a thickness of 3 ft. and contained sherds

of about the end of the 1st century. Similar deposits of brick-earth, sand, building debris and other dumped material were found beneath a Roman cement floor and overlying earlier Roman buildings on the sites of 17–19 Gracechurch Street in 1935, and of All Hallows Church in 1939.<sup>3</sup> It seems likely that these represent make-up to level the site before the laying of the forum floor, and that the buildings beneath antedate the forum and were demolished when it was built. Unfortunately the fate of the ragstone building with white mortar is not clear, as the layer overlying its walls and the brick-earth make-up was a disturbed one which, though containing pottery of the late 2nd century, is possibly of a much later period. The robbing of these walls in the 13th century does not of course necessarily mean that the structure survived the building of the forum, and it seems very unlikely that it did. The date of its construction is equally obscure. It seems to have been occupied during the Flavian period, but if the wall of similar structure and alignment overlying the Claudian ditch is part of the same building, the evidence suggests that it might be a survivor of the Boudiccan destruction. It is, however, difficult to accept such an early date, for traces of an even earlier building of a different construction (C), consisting of ragstone, *brown* mortar and courses of bonding tiles, underlay its walls on a different alignment. Even more surprisingly, from this earlier wall came a squared stone block and probably also a fragment of a stone slab resembling a paving-stone. In this context these pieces should perhaps be described as ‘diverted from their original purpose’ rather than ‘re-used’, but even so they are unexpected finds in a building that should belong to a very early phase of Roman London.

It is interesting to note that on the adjoining site of All Hallows Church, Lombard Street, excavated in 1939, there was similar evidence of two phases of Roman building in stone, both antedating the cement floor and piers which should belong to the forum.

#### *Knightrider Street*

Excavations on a large site in Queen Victoria Street have revealed a great length of the long ragstone wall which runs for the most part under the northern edge of Knight-rider Street. The wall is about 4 ft. wide with a foundation about 5 ft. deep, above which there are traces of bonding tiles. The foundation has in places been built between horizontal planking, the impressions of which have been preserved in the cement. The wall extends in a straight line for more than 400 ft., and it is probable that the curved wall found west of Friday Street in 1906<sup>4</sup> was a continuation of it, giving a total length of nearly 600 ft. No offset walls to the north or south have ever been observed. On the present site traces of a second wall 4 ft. 4 in. thick, with a foundation constructed in a similar manner and with courses of tiles above, have been found about 32 ft. south of the long wall and seemingly running almost parallel with it.

#### *Paternoster Development Site, Newgate Street*

On this large site between Newgate Street and St. Paul’s Churchyard the earliest traces of general occupation found during the builder’s excavation were of the late 1st century. A stream-bed passed from north to south across the western part of the site, almost exactly coinciding with the Ward boundary.<sup>5</sup> It was evidently a continuation of the two streams found on the site of Christ’s Hospital in 1908–9. These joined near the north-west corner of the present site and the stream-bed then continued south almost parallel with Warwick Lane. On the east bank in the northern half of the site was found a building with ragstone walls with courses of bonding tiles. Inside the building were a

cement floor, a tiled floor through which ran an open tiled drain, and a herringbone pavement. Several feet south of the building was a small drain containing a few late 1st century sherds. A double stoke-hole, containing late 1st century pottery, with flues radiating upwards and outwards indicated the former existence of a hypocaust. On the opposite bank of the stream were found a brick-built drain and the flint wall of a building. A careful watch was kept for the main east-west Roman road to Newgate, which should have been seen on the northern edge of the site. Considerable quantities of dumped gravel were seen all along the northern part of the site, and in several places near the old building frontage this seemed to be rammed hard like road-metalling. No trace of a drainage ditch or definite road edge could be seen, however, and it is possible that the edge of the raised roadway was here represented only by a sloping spill of gravel, extending in places for a considerable distance. It is likely that the main part of the Roman road lies under the modern street. Traces of two probable north-south roads were seen—one immediately east of the stream, and the other in the eastern part of the site, possibly heading in the direction of Aldersgate. Pottery sherds of the late 1st century were found in the gravel metalling of the former road, and in the filling of what appeared to be a drainage ditch immediately to the east of it.

Near the eastern end of the site, under Paternoster Row, a portion of a pavement of coarse red tesserae set in white cement was seen.

#### *67–69 Watling Street*

Excavations in the basement at the north end of this building revealed part of a coarse red tessellated pavement.

#### *Lambeth Hill*

Excavations on both sides of Lambeth Hill have revealed two chalk platforms resting on piles. Roman walls have been observed resting on the lower platform, and it seems at this stage of the excavation that the Romans had terraced the steep slope down to the river's edge. There are also traces of earlier Roman walls underlying the lower platform. It is hoped that further details will be obtained as the excavation proceeds.

### NOTES

- 1 The northern edge of this road was uncovered on the site of St. Swithin, London Stone. (*J.R.S.*, 1961, p. 185). If it continued on the same line, the edge should lie immediately beneath the old building frontage on the site of 143–7 Cannon Street.
- 2 MS. notes by Mr. F. Cottrell in Guildhall Museum.
- 3 MS. notes by Mr. F. Cottrell and Mr. A. Oswald in Guildhall Museum.
- 4 *Archaeologia*, Vol. LX, p. 219.
- 5 The boundary between Castle Baynard Ward and Farringdon Ward Within. The eastern boundary of the northern extension of Castle Baynard Ward approximately follows the line of the stream.

## II. POST-ROMAN

#### *Paternoster Development Site, Newgate Street*

Many chalk walls, presumably mediaeval, were found, including two undercrofts, one near the middle of the eastern half of the site, and the other at the south-east corner. The latter was investigated by Professor W. F. Grimes on behalf of the Roman and Mediaeval London Excavations Council.



*Site of St. Swithin's Church, Cannon Street* (Pl. 1)

An incised slab of Purbeck Marble, 2 ft. 7 in. square, was found re-used as building material in the foundations of the church. It has an incised drawing of a lady holding a heart in her hands, and the following inscription in Lombardic lettering round the bevel of the edge:—

+ LE QWER : IONE : REFU (?)  
LA FEM[ME : DE] SIRE : FU  
LKE : DE : SEINT : E[DMOND :  
GIT] : ICI : PRIEZ : PUR : LALME :

The missing portion, indicated in the square brackets, can be restored with some confidence, for Fulke de St. Edmond, who was Sheriff of the City of London in 1289–90, left money to provide a chantry in the Church of St. Swithin London Stone for his own soul and the souls of his two wives who predeceased him. One of these was named Joanna, and it was clearly her heart that was buried beneath this stone.

*Goldsmith House, Goldsmith Street* (Fig. 1)

In the northern half of the site the remains of a mediaeval building were found. It had ragstone walls which were covered on the inside with white-painted plaster (D).

*St. Mary Axe House*

On this site between St. Mary Axe and Goring Street, the modern basement extended below the level of the foundations of the City wall, but traces of a black silt-filled ditch, presumably the City Ditch, containing pottery of the 16th-17th centuries, still remained to the north of the line of the wall.