

NORTHGATE EXCAVATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Site Location

The site was located in the Castlefield district of Manchester and was bounded by Bridgewater Street to the north, Collier Street to the east, Beaufort Street to the south and Wellington Mills to the west (fig 4.1). The site had remained largely vacant since the 1960s after the demolition of 19th century slum dwellings.

Excavation Organisation

During May 1979, excavations directed by Professor G D B Jones commenced. The initial aim of the excavation was to relocate the position of the Northgate of the Roman fort, previously observed by Petch (1951).

Excavations continued sporadically throughout 1980 and from the autumn of that year the work was directed by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit. The twenty strong team, sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission, was led by M Morris. P Reynolds and S Bryant also helped to supervise the excavations. The programme of work carried out during the following months was designed to further elucidate the chronology of the fort, its ditches and associated civilian settlement (vicus). The excavated area was expanded into 1981 to the north in the vicus (Area C) and later to the south after the demolition of a building in that corner of the site gave access for the first time to the east pier of the gateway (Area A).

Modern Deposits

As had been expected from the results of previous work in the vicinity (Jones & Grealey 1974, 49), the archaeological deposits were found not far below the modern surface, at a depth of between 0.25m and 0.5m. In Area A, (fig 4.2) levelling down associated with the 19th century building activity had substantially damaged the remains of the fort, gateway and rampart. In addition two

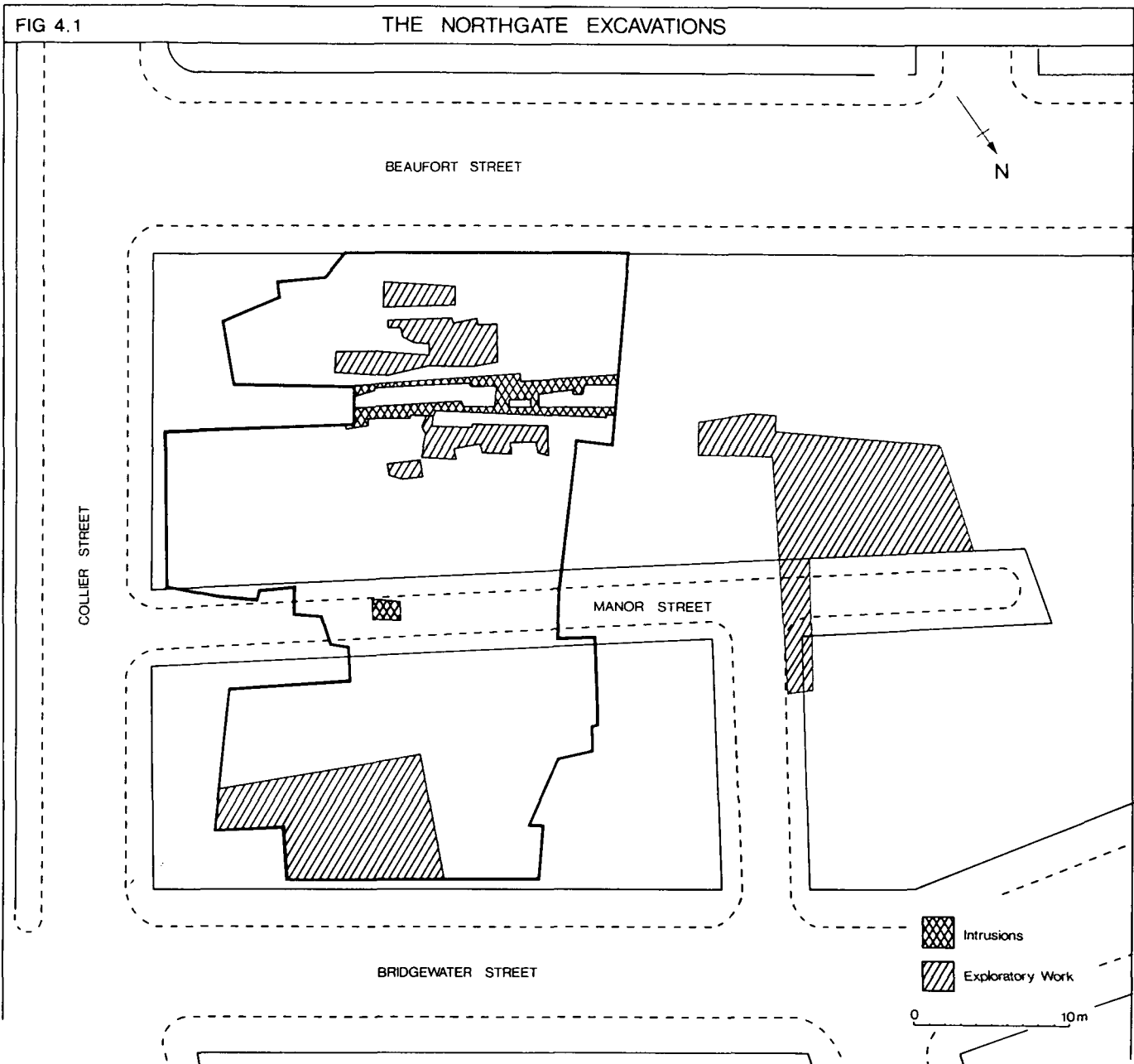
drain trenches lay across the area, cutting through the archaeological deposits and into the natural gravel and sand-subsoil. Together with the earlier archaeological trenches and sondages (Petch 1951; 1954; 1956) these had removed many stratigraphic relationships especially in the vicinity of the gateway. As a result of all this post-Medieval damage, the turf rampart only survived to a height of 0.9m, and no more than two facing stones from the stone revetment survived in situ, although substantial foundations were present. Similarly only the foundations of the stone gateway were recovered and the remains of the earlier timber gateways were heavily damaged by both the insertion of the stone gateway and modern activity.

In contrast, the defensive ditch complex and associated features in front of the gateway (Area B) were relatively undisturbed by modern activity. The major factor affecting the recovery of the ditch sequence was the destruction wrought by subsequent recuts and alterations that took place in the Roman period.

The area to the north of the defences was substantially damaged by 19th century cellars. These intrusions limited the area of the vicus (civil settlement) available for excavation (Area C). Here the archaeological deposits lay immediately below the modern surface, and the interface between the Roman and Georgian levels suggested that modern disturbance in this area had not been significant.

Excavation and Recording Techniques

The site was excavated in stratigraphic sequence in open areas, with baulks being left in relevant positions for the removal of spoil. The modern overburden, consisting mainly of car park metalling and demolition rubble was removed by machining and the areas were cleaned by trowelling. Where drain trenches and 1950s excavations were encountered they were emptied and the exposed sections examined and recorded. In several instances these formed the only surviving



evidence for particular relationships and features.

For practical reasons, several features were not fully excavated, and the ditches, spread across 20m and reaching a depth of 2.5m below modern ground level, represented too large an exercise to fully empty in the time available.

Translucent drawing film was used for all drawings; plans were made at a scale of 1:20 and sections at 1:10. The normal photographic record was supplemented in the later stages of excavation by the use of vertical photography. A light alloy tripod was used to suspend a 35mm camera above selected areas and photographs were taken in colour as well as black and white. The core of the written record was the pre-printed feature sheet. Each discrete feature eg layer, pit, filling, was given a unique site number, and important aspects of the feature were recorded in detail. The site

note book was used for recording day to day activities and ideas about overall interpretation. Pottery was recorded by feature and small finds by three dimensional co-ordinates.

Post-excavation and Publication

J Walker

Post-excavation work was undertaken by a team of six, including two of the excavation supervisors. The site archive is held by the Museum of Manchester. It consists of magnetic tapes holding records of contexts, small finds, pottery and faunal remains; the original site drawings; records; and all the finds. For the purpose of this report, the site has been divided into three areas (fig 4.2). Area A covers the gateway of the fort; Area B, its ditch system; and Area C the vicus. The particular problems of Area B perhaps need further comment at this stage.

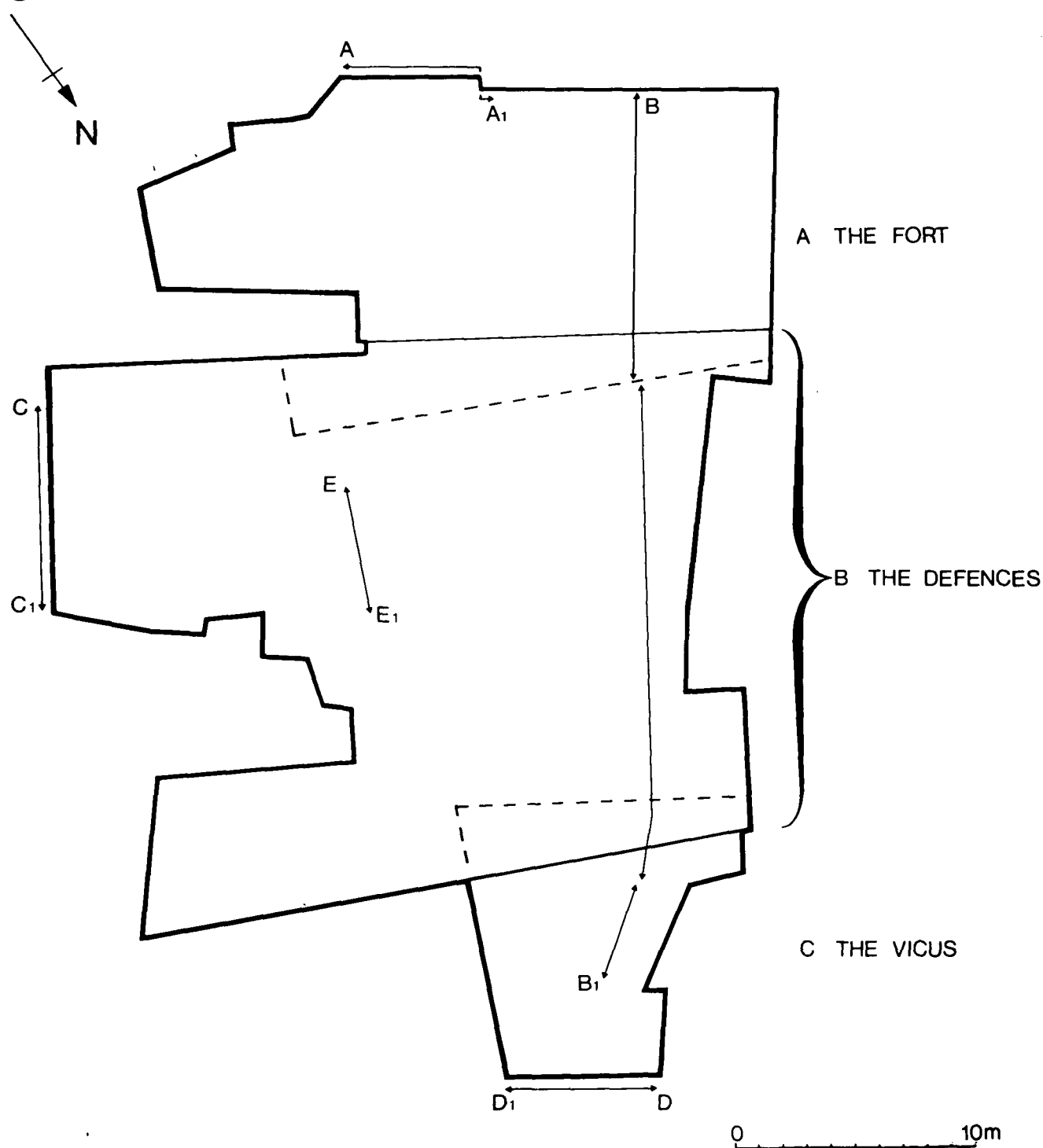
The development of the ditch system was found to be very complex, but the interpretation presented below is probably sequentially correct. However, the relationship between the ditches and other elements of the fort can in several instances only be inferred. It is also recognised that the system may have undergone changes which were not archaeologically discernable. Therefore the inclusion of a ditch in a particular period or sub-period in the text does not preclude the possibility that it may have been constructed earlier or later than appears likely.

The site plans are orientated in an unusual way. This is for two reasons: firstly any other orientation would obscure details in the related reconstruction drawings; secondly the drawings are orientated in this new way to reflect the natural approach route to the fort.

The excavation text below is organised in such a way as to make clear the major changes of use, or phases, that affected the north gate. These phases are in turn subdivided to reflect less extensive variations in site function or use. Those seeking

Fig 4.2

PLAN OF AREAS AND SECTIONS



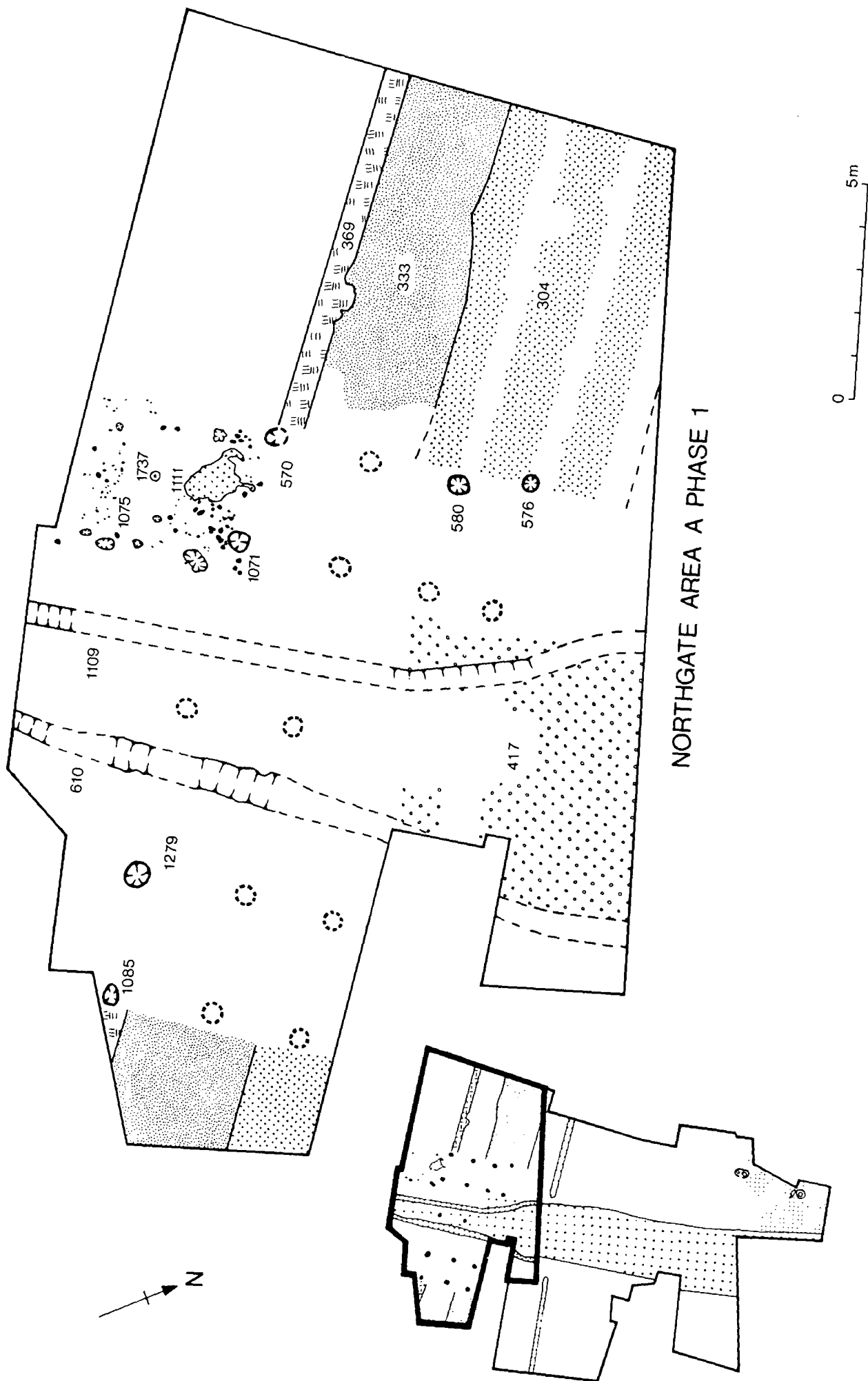


Fig 4-3

a broad review of activities taking place on the site should read the discussions only, as the descriptions are provided to aid reinterpretation.

PHASE I AREA A (fig 4.3)

S Bryant

Description

The Northgate

The amount of disturbance caused to the Phase 1 and 2 deposits by the insertion of the Phase 3 stone gateway foundations, the previous archaeological trenches (Petch 1951; 1954; 1956) and the services for the houses which stood on the site, meant that the successive timber structures of the Phase 1 and 2 Northgates were only represented by a fragmentary series of post holes. As an added difficulty there was little or no clear stratigraphic distinction between the original Phase 1 post holes and their Phase 2 replacements. For the sake of convenience, as well as the fact that it is inherently more likely that the initial Phase 1 gateway was constructed on a regular grid, the more regularly spaced post holes have been assigned to the Phase 1 gateway, and their replacements to the Phase 2 gateway.

The West Tower

This was represented by the bottom of four post settings or holes which varied in depth between 0.2m and 0.4m. The profile of all of the Phase 1 and 2 Northgate post holes was, however, heavily truncated by later disturbances, making it impossible to determine the original dimensions of the holes. The reconstructed gateway plans on Plan A and Plan B are therefore based on the surviving post hole dimensions, and the proposed additional post holes on an average of the surviving holes. The post holes contained a filling of grey sandy silt loam, which probably represented either the rapid silting of the post holes after removal of the posts, or deliberate backfilling.

Post hole F1071 was situated at the back of the gateway, adjacent to the gateway passage, and in line with the rampart F369. Post holes F570, F580 and F576 formed a north-south line 2.6m to the west and adjacent to the east end of the rampart. The short distance of 1.6m between F576 and F580

suggests that the west tower may have been formed on a grid pattern of eight posts, and this arrangement has been adopted in Plan A and Plan B.

Immediately to the rear of the west tower post holes (F1071 and F570) a number of small post and stake holes were observed, which formed a rectangular structure, F1075, 2.8m by 3.2m. Several of these structural features also appear to have been replacements or additions to the original structure.

A hearth consisting of a burnt pink clay layer 0.1m thick, F1111, which was probably used for cooking, was located within the internal area of the structure F1075. Also within it was a group of stake holes, several of which formed a small circle adjacent to the hearth, and a buried upright, almost complete, globular amphora F1737 which contained the remains of small mammals, amphibians and fish, in its primary silt. All of the structural features associated with F1075 and F1111, behind the east tower, were cut into natural sand and were filled with charcoal or burnt clay mixed with charcoal.

The East Tower

Only two post holes F1279 and F1085, belonging to this tower survived from Phase 1. Both lay in a line with the rear of the rampart turf stack, F369, and were of a similar depth to and contained the same filling as the post holes of the west tower.

The Gateway Portal

No evidence was found for the portal having been metalled during Phase 1, although the primary exit road (F417) extended for approximately 1.5m into the gateway. Within the portal were two drainage ditches F610 and F1109 (fig 4.4) which were filled with clay and charcoal that were probably derived from the demolition of the later Phase 2a fort; there was no evidence of primary silting. The terminal ends of both F610 and F1109 were removed by later disturbance; however, it is highly likely that they would have discharged into the inner defensive ditch F252, as happened with the east gate at Usk (Manning 1981, 72) and Fendoch (Richmond and McIntyre 1939).

There was also no clear trace of a metalled road

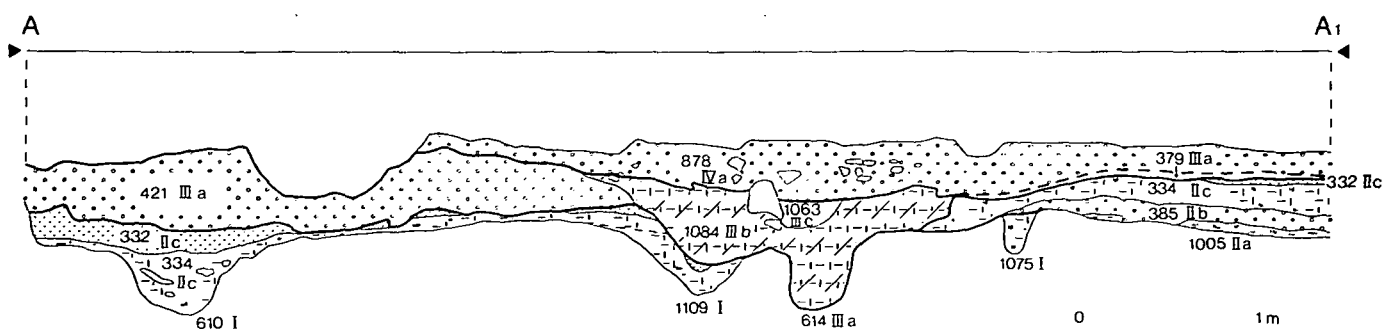


FIG 4.4

NORTHGATE

SECTION A

behind the rampart.

The Rampart

A total length of 13m of the north rampart was observed in Area A. This had been levelled down to an average height of 0.8m during the construction of terraced housing on the site c1830. In addition, the front of the Phase 1 rampart was removed by the Phase 2 stone wall and by the drains of the houses. A tranverse section (fig 4.4) was cut across the rampart, and from this it was possible to identify the construction sequence.

There was no evidence of a pre-bank turf line, and it is probable that the turf which existed prior to the construction of the rampart was removed to build the turf revetment of the rampart.

The rampart foundations were then laid directly upon the natural yellow sand subsoil. They consisted of a toe of river cobble set in clay F341, and a corduroy of narrow timber planks laid transversely to form the base of the rampart, F341. These timbers, with an average diameter of 0.15m, were preserved by iron panning. Above the foundations was a cheek of grey clay F304 which covered the cobble toe and half of the timber

corduroy. Abutting to the cheek was a core of loose sand F333, derived from the local sub-soil, which contained occasional blocks of grey clay. The core was reveted by a single, vertical stack of turfs, F369, which was placed over the timber foundation.

Discussion (fig 4.5)

The closest parallels to the Phase 1 rampart are the pre-Flavian rampart at Chester (McPeake 1978) and the Flavian rampart at Strageath (Frere 1974a). The rampart at Stageath had turf stack revetments at front and rear, a timber corduroy foundation and a mixed sand and turf core with layers of timber strapping. At Chester the turf revetment at the rear was vertical up to 1m and the front cheek rested at an angle. It too had timber foundations and a loose core that was given extra stability by the use of timber strapping. Although no strapping was observed in the Phase 1 rampart at Manchester, it is possible that it may have existed at a higher level than that discovered, and it is difficult to envisage the narrow turf stack F369 surviving to any height without an additional means of support.

The other major difference between the Phase 1 rampart at Manchester and the examples from

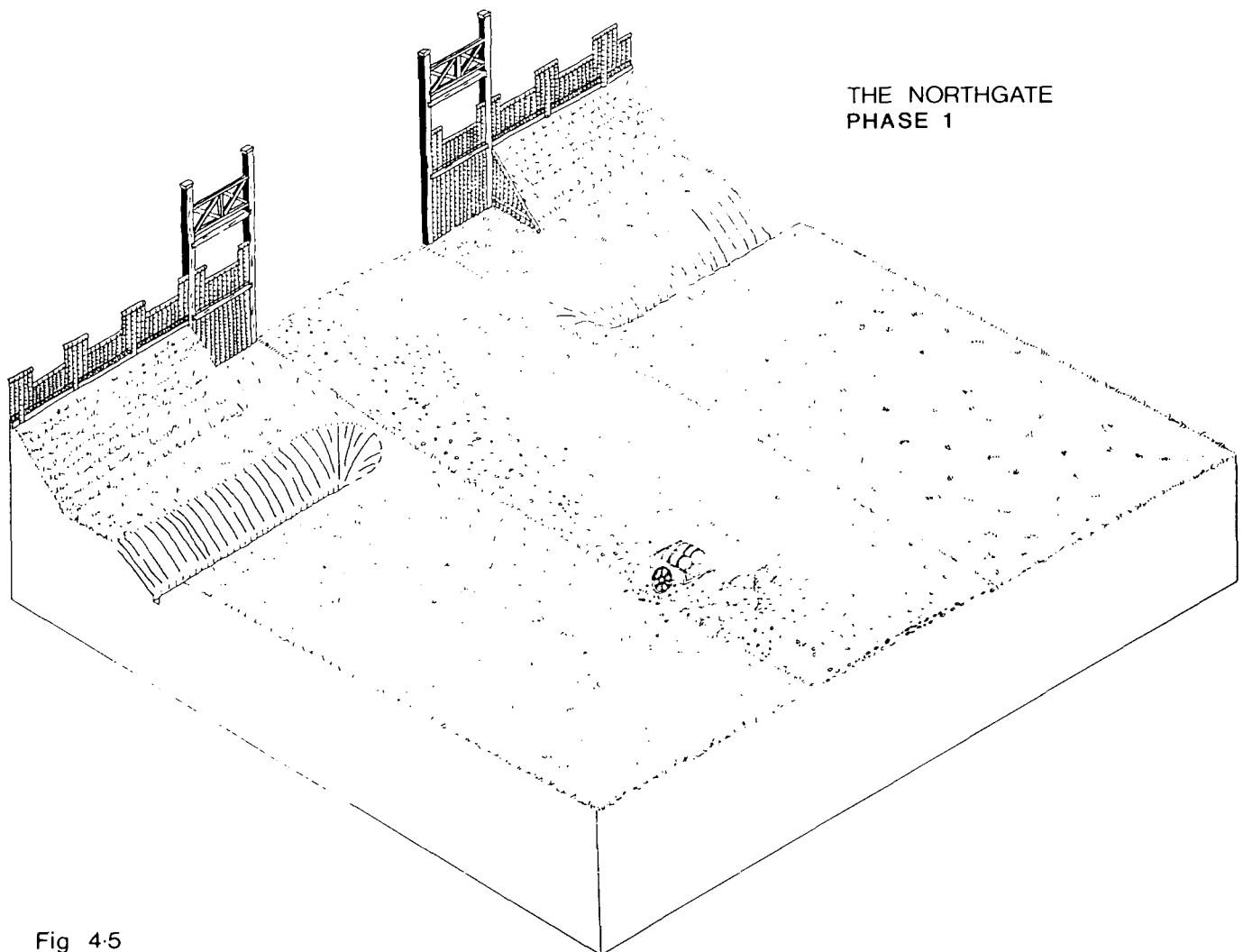


Fig 4.5

Chester and Strageath, is the contrast in size of the clay cheek; at Manchester it accounted for over half the total width of the rampart. The extra width of the cheek may have been due to a need to stabilize yet further the loose redeposited natural sand core.

Any reconstruction of the Phase I rampart can only be approximate because of the absence of the front of the rampart. Nevertheless, it is clear that the width of the rampart is likely to have been somewhere between 6m and 8m wide and dependent upon the size of the berm in Phase I and the original size and profile of the Phase I inner ditch F252. This range compares well with a width of 6.1m for Chester and 5.18m for Strageath, and falls within the broad average of rampart widths prior to AD 117 as calculated by MJ Jones (1975).

The examples at Chester and the turf section of Hadrian's Wall, as well as the modern reconstructions at Strageath, the Lunt (Hobley 1982), and at Vindolanda (Birley 1977), suggest that the turf and timber ramparts usually had a steeply sloping front face of 65 to 75 degrees and a vertical or near vertical back for the first 1m to 2m which then changed its angle of slope to about 45 degrees until it met the rampart walkway. If, as seems likely, the Phase I rampart at Manchester was constructed to this standard method, the rampart walkway, assuming a width of between 2m and 2.5m, would have been between 3m and 4m above ground level.

The cross section of the rampart would therefore have been between 16 sqm and 28 sqm, of which between 6 sqm and 9sqm are likely to have been made up of sand derived from the underlying local sub-soil, which was probably quarried from the inner defensive ditch F252.

The lack of structural evidence for the Phase I Northgate makes any attempt at reconstruction difficult; nevertheless there are several assumptions which can be made about its size and plan with a reasonable degree of certainty, as there are only a limited number of gate forms, given what was found, that are structurally feasible.

The siting of the rear posts of the east and west towers F570, F1071, F1085 and F1279 suggests that the gate was 8m deep; and the distance between the butt ends of the rampart indicates that it was 14m wide. The positioning of the surviving post holes together with the relatively large distance between the rampart ends, suggests that the gateway was composed of two separate gate towers, linked by a walkway. The gap between the two towers proposed on Plan A is 4m, which is too far for a single span, and suggests that additional post holes are likely to have existed between the east and west towers. If this were the case, the post holes would either have been placed centrally, thereby dividing the portal in two, or spaced at regular intervals between the towers, to produce a narrow portal flanked by L shaped towers.

Of the two possibilities, the former is most likely, since if there were two or three more

pairs of post holes, they almost certainly would have been discovered during the excavation. In addition, the small size of the Manchester Phase I gateway (14m) compared with the fortress gates where this form usually occurs, argues against its presence at Manchester.

The reconstructed plan on (fig 4.) shows the Manning and Scott (1979) type 4b gateway with double portal and twin flanking towers, although as mentioned above at Manchester the towers appear to have been set on an eight post rather than a six post grid, as at the Hod Hill east gate (Richmond 1968, 70) and the Great Casterton south-east gate (Todd 1969, 31). However, the available evidence suggests that the posts were also smaller than those used in those examples, which have post pits ranging between 1m and 2m in diameter. Therefore the eight post grid and the use of small timbers suggests that there was a local shortage of the large timbers necessary for a six post grid.

Both of the drainage ditches F610 and F1109 would have been covered, probably with timber planks, otherwise wheeled traffic would have been unable to enter the fort. The most likely function of the timber structure F1075, located behind the west tower, was a guard chamber. The presence of the hearth F1111 and a probable water butt inside the structure, would tend to support this interpretation; however, no comparable structures have been found in any other Roman gateways excavated in Britain (Manning and Scott 1979).

PHASE I AREA B (fig 4.6)

Description

The Ditches

As with Area A, extensive disturbance by later Roman and post-Medieval intrusions meant that the surviving evidence of the ditches belonging to this phase was fragmentary. This was particularly true of the Phase I ditch F252 which survived on both sides of the exit road F417 as a sump 0.25m deep and between 0.3m and 0.4m wide. Where it was not completely removed by previous archaeological trenches (see intrusions plan) the rest of the ditch profile was cut by the Phase 2 ditch F283 (fig 4.), although no definite relationship was discernable in section B (fig 4.7) to the west of the exit road. Because of the complexity of the inner defensive ditch system in Phases 1 and 2 and the lack of surviving evidence of the ditch sizes, only the sumps for the inner ditches have been projected in Plan B. Plans of the original full ditch sizes have only been used where the surviving profile was reasonably intact and the ditch was not affected by recutting during Phase 2.

The Exit Road

The earliest exit road F417 leads from the Northgate and runs in a north-westerly direction. It was 6.5m wide, and it consisted of deposits of 0.3m thick yellow gravel, probably derived from the local subsoil, which later disturbances had removed in most of Area B. These disturbances had

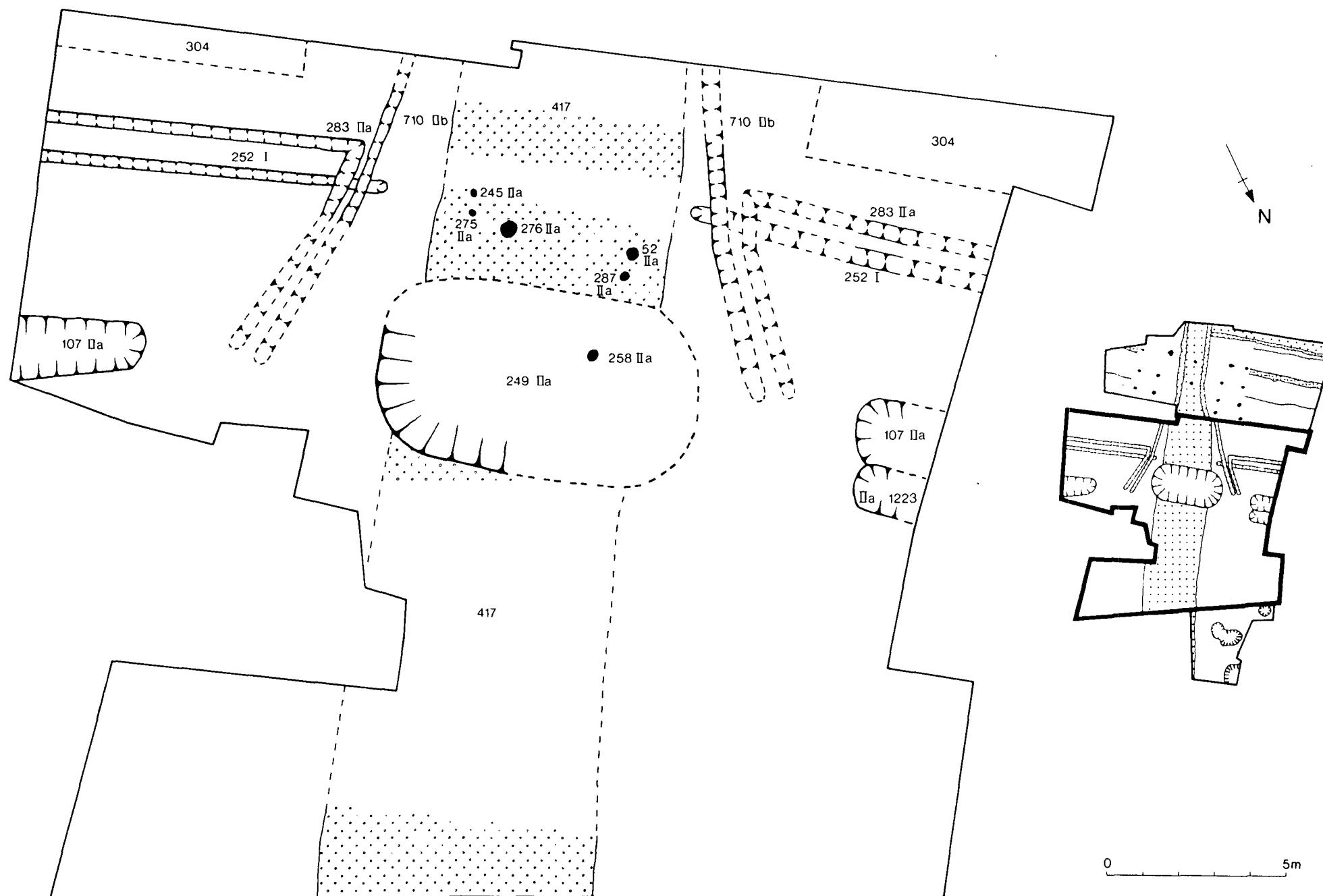
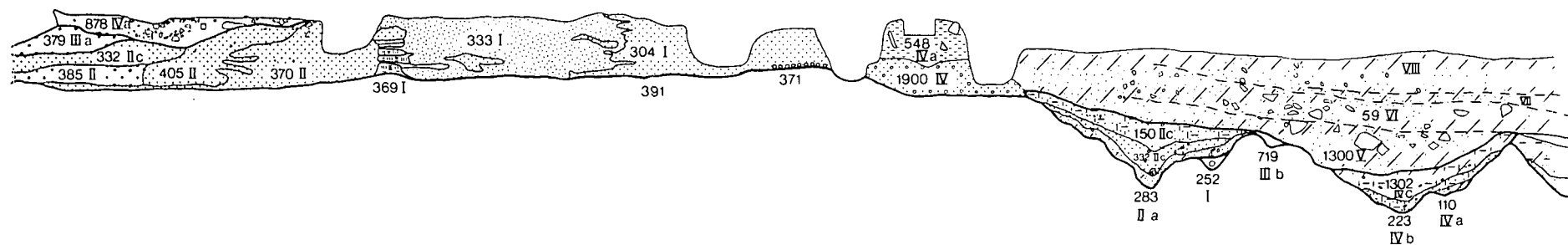


Fig 4-6

NORTHGATE AREA B PHASES 1, 2A AND 2B

B



B₁

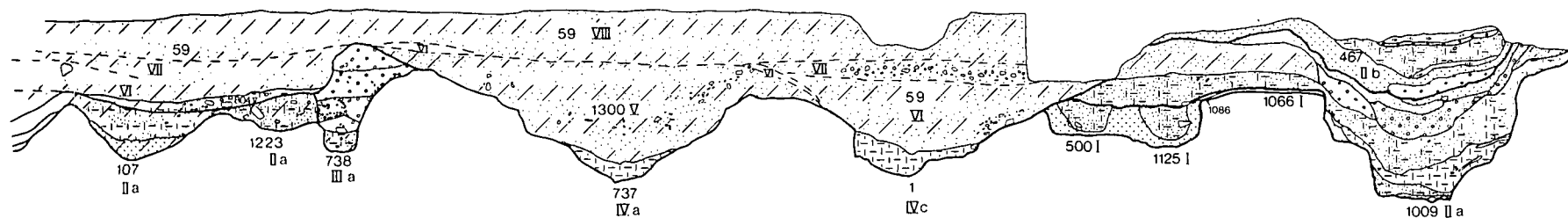


Fig 4.7 NORTHGATE SECTION B

0 1 2 3m



Fig 4.8

NORTHGATE AREA C PHASE 1

also removed any evidence of drainage ditches for the road in Phase 1.

Discussion (fig 4.5)

The Ditches

The silting of F252 between 3m and 4m from the likely front position of the Phase 1 rampart, suggests that it had a similar L shaped profile to the later Phase 2 ditch F283. Given the complexity inherent in this system, it is highly probable that an additional outer ditch would have been provided during Phase 1, but traces of it would have been removed by later recutting.

The Exit Road

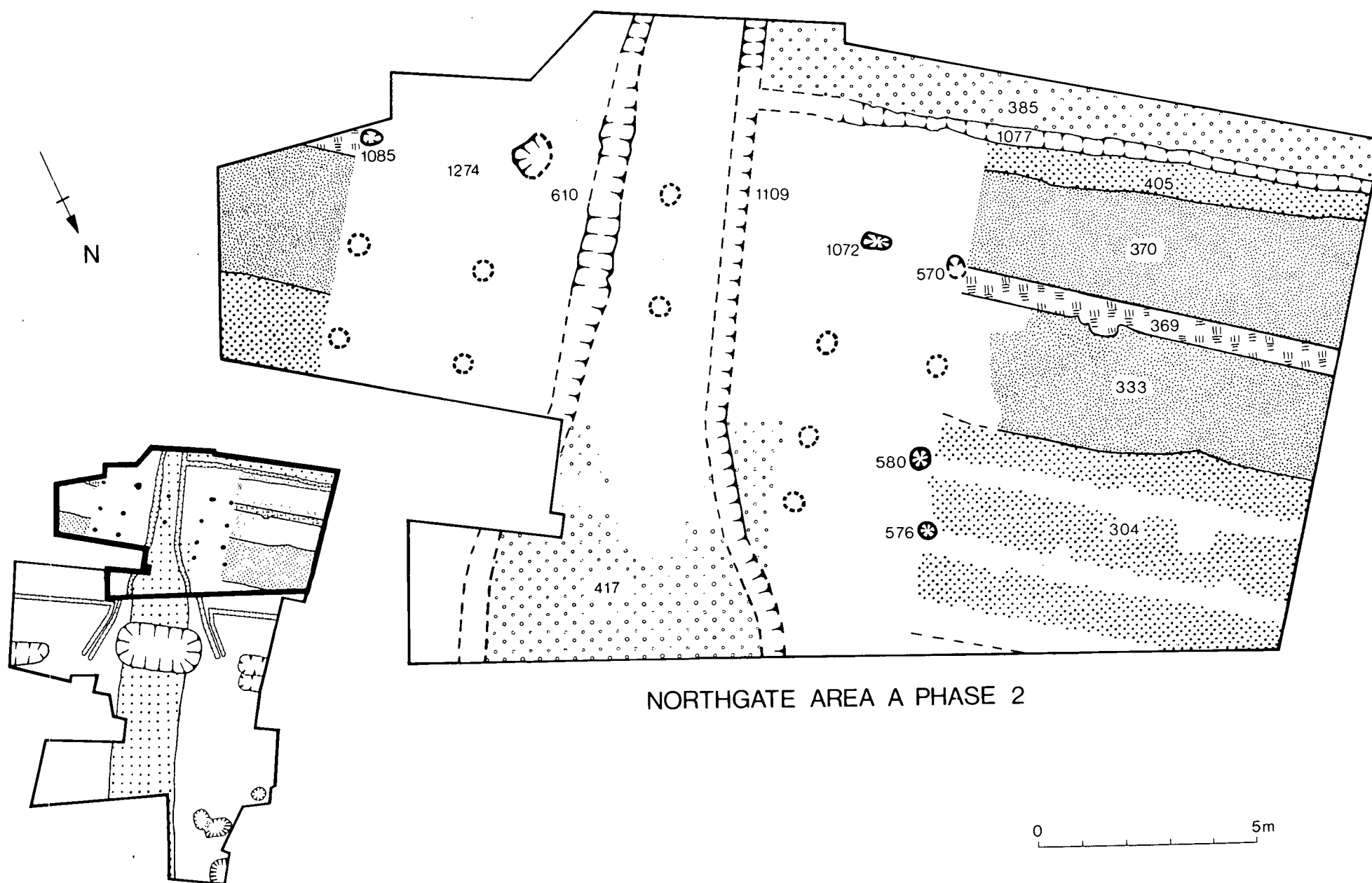
The same road was observed during the excavations of the northern vicus in 1972 (Jones and Grealey 1974) and 1978 (Jones and Reynolds 1978), and it is highly likely that it formed part of a highway that eventually led to the fort at Ribchester, or joined it near Preston.

PHASE 1a AREA C (fig 4.8)

Description

Although destruction caused by post-Medieval intrusions was less in Area C than Areas A and B, the features from Phase 1 were cut by the large pits dug during Phase 2a and by the Phase 4c ditch F1.

The earliest feature identified in Area C was a single layer of uniform, rounded and semi-angular cobble F1066, which lay directly upon the natural sand sub-soil. There was no evidence of a pre-Roman turf line or any associated structural features. The uniformity of the cobble surface suggests that it was deliberately laid, and the apparent absence of any structural evidence might indicate that it was an external surface; possibly a yard or assembly area. F1066 was overlain by a deposit of sterile silty clay F1086, which was probably either formed by rapid natural weathering, or was deliberately laid as a result



NORTHGATE AREA A PHASE 2

Fig 4-9

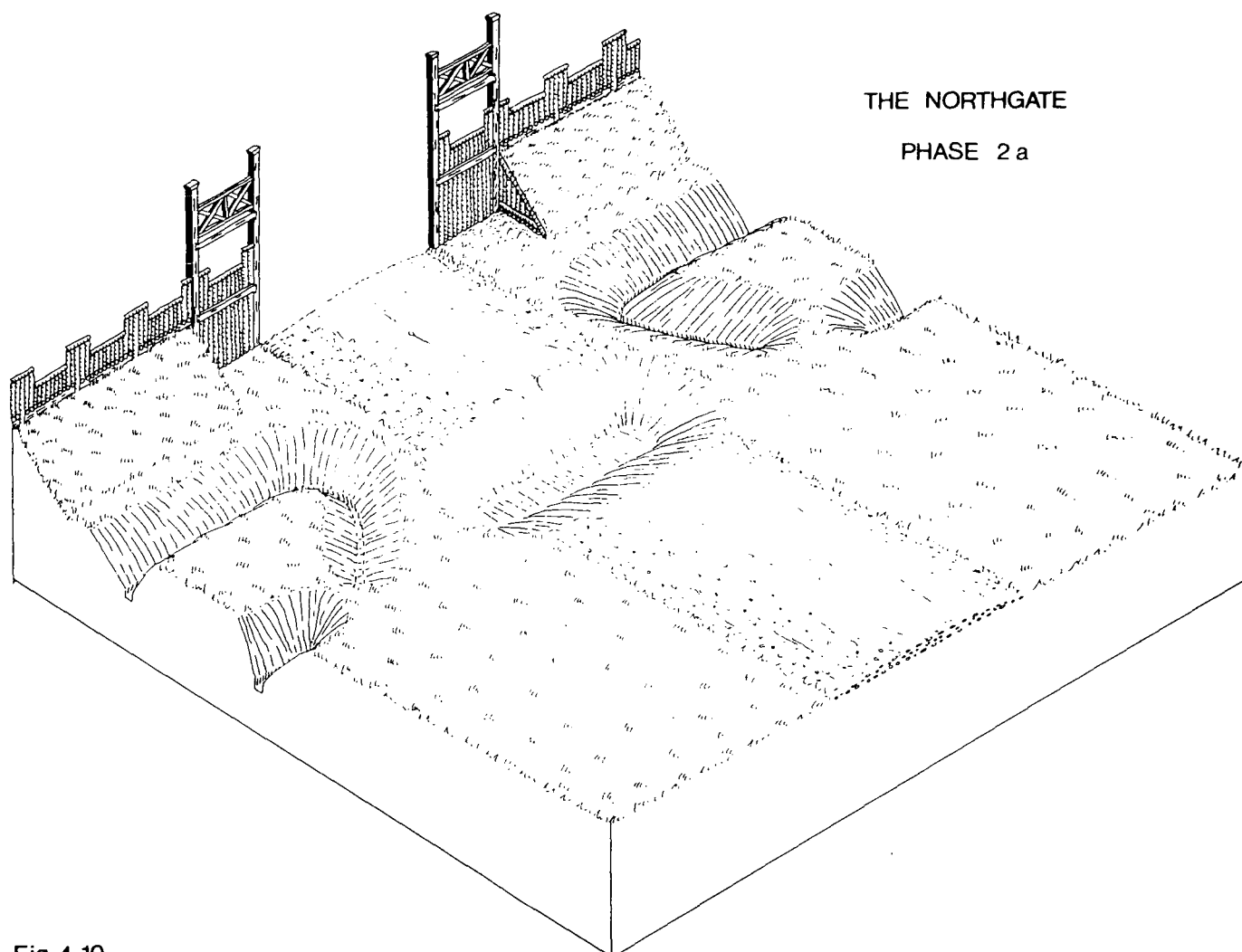


Fig 4-10

of the clearing of a nearby ditch.

Above F1086 was a deposit of compacted sandy clay F1043, cut into which were seven burnt stakes (F1064) driven into the ground to a depth of 0.05m; and a series of incisions 0.05m deep containing fillings of brown silty loam and which formed a lattice-like network. The full extent of the clay, F1043, could not be determined because of later disturbance, but it is possible that it was part of a working floor associated with the industrial features F939, F500 and F1125. The function of the stakes and incisions could not be determined from the small area observed, although it is possible that the incisions may have formed part of a framework for a wooden floor.

Three small industrial features were also observed in Area C. F939 lay near the north-west corner of

the area, and was cut to the north by the Phase 2a pit F830. It survived to a depth of 1.2m and its original diameter is likely to have been 0.25m. It was lined with a stiff grey clay to form a bowl which was overlain with a mixed deposit of charcoal and burnt clay which was, in turn, capped by a deposit of silty clay. Both these deposits filled the bowl created by the clay lining and probably represent the waste deposits which were dumped into the bowl after it went out of use. The sandy sub-soil around F939 was discoloured by heat to a depth of 0.15m. The other two industrial features F1125 and F500 were both located at the south corner of Area C, and were contained within a single pit which was lined with hard packed burnt clay. The bowls of F1125 and F500 were both filled with a deposit of sandy silt with charcoal inclusions, which was similar to the deposit which filled F939. A single row of stake holes,

surviving to a depth of 0.12m were located around the periphery of F500.

Discussion

It is likely that the Phase I deposits in Area C represent part of some form of extra mural settlement which was contemporary with Phase I of the fort defences in Areas A and B. In 1972 Professor Jones (Jones & Grealey, 1974, 41-8) discovered during excavations in the vicus, evidence of an early defensive system that was probably contemporary with these deposits. The finds from Area C, particularly the industrial features, although fairly meagre and inconclusive, suggest that the extramural settlement may have been a military annexe. The three industrial features are probably the remains of small hearths that may have been used in conjunction with a mould (1981, 1329 & 3098) discovered in this area, possibly to produce metal horse trappings.

Dr Cleland (University of Cambridge) comments that the reddish colour of the clay, which lined these features, shows that the hearths were fired under oxidising conditions, and that their purpose was the production of heat rather than the conditions required for the reduction of ore. This opinion is supported by both the absence of any slag on the lining of the hearths, or in their immediate vicinity. The colour of the fired clay of the linings would suggest that the hearths were not taken to a very high temperature and it is possible that they were used for the remelting of an easily handled non-ferrous metal/alloy, such as lead.

PHASE 2a AREA A (fig 4.9)

S Bryant

Description

The Northgate

The Phase I post hole, F1071, at the back of the

west tower was replaced by F1072, and its opposite number F1279 was replaced by F1274. Both the replacement post holes were of similar dimensions and contained a similar filling to their predecessors. F1075, the structural feature behind the west tower, was burnt down and the charred remains of its post and stakes were overlain by a layer F1005 formed from the burnt remains of the building. As with Phase I there was no evidence for the gateway passage being metalled.

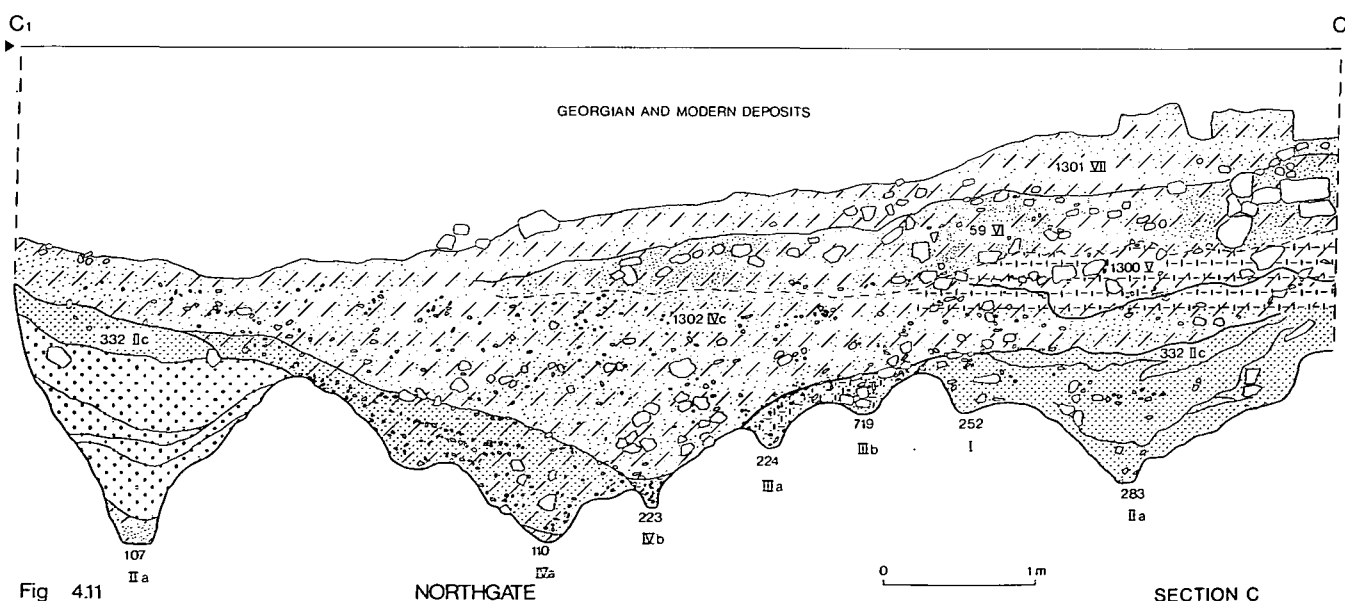
The Rampart and Intervallum Road

The Phase I rampart was extended by nearly 3m with a deposit of yellow sand, F370, which was similar to the Phase I sand core F333. This was revetted by a timberless heel of grey clay F405 which sloped at an angle of 25 degrees and overlaid F1005, the layer of burning. The full width of the new intervallum road F385 could not be established as it continued beyond the edge of the excavated area. A drainage gully (F1077) which was 0.2m deep, separated the road (F385) from the rampart heel (F405). This ditch contained a filling of grey clay derived from the demolition of the Phase 2 rampart and was only observed in plan as it merged with the rampart heel F405 in Section B.

Discussion (fig 4.10)

The low angle of the rest of the clay heel F405, and the fact that the extension was not given any foundations or timber strapping, suggests that the purpose of the extension was probably to decrease the overall angle of rest and so help stabilise the sand core (F333) rather than to increase the height of the rampart.

The series of alterations to the Northgate at the beginning of Phase 2 probably meant, at least, a remodelling of the fort. The replacement of gate posts F1279 and F1071 was probably due to excessive wear associated with supporting the door leaves. The provision of an intervallum road and the alterations to the rampart appear to be logical improvements to the existing Phase I arrangements and may indicate that the



refurbishment was part of a shift towards the establishment of a permanent fort.

PHASE 2a AREA B (fig 4.6)

S Bryant

Description

The Defensive Ditch System

The Phase 1 inner ditch (F252) was recut 1m further towards the north rampart. The Phase 2 recut (F283), which survived better than F252, had a depth of 0.8m and width of 3m. In Section B the ditch bottom was filled with a natural silt of sandy loam derived from weathering of the sand sub-soil of the ditch sides. Above this was a deposit of grey clay representing a deliberate backfilling of F283 with rampart material at the end of Phase 2. In section C (fig 4.11) there was no primary silt, and F283 was filled completely with the same deposit of grey clay. To the east side of the exit road, F417, the ditch (F283) was observed to turn at an angle of 120 degrees from its original direction and run for 2.4m before being cut by the Phase 3b ditch F719. Only the 0.2m deep sump of this ditch survived in the flanking element and it contained a primary silt of silty clay. Evidence for a corresponding flanking element on the west side of the exit road F417 was destroyed by intrusions, but a conjectural line has been included in figure 4.6.

An outer ditch, F107, lay 6m north of F283, and terminated 6m from the west side of the exit road. The most representative profile of this outer ditch, F107, was in Section C (fig 4.11), where it survived to a depth of 1.4m and a width of 1.8m, with a sharply V shaped profile cut into the sandstone bedrock. It contained a primary filling of red sandy loam formed from the natural weathering of the rock, above which were four layers of yellow gravel that were virtually identical in composition and probably resulted from a deliberate backfilling of F107. A deposit of grey clay overlaid the gravel, and probably formed part of the same Phase 2 demolition deposit which filled F283.

A second outer ditch, F1223, was observed 1.9m to the north of F107 in Section B. It contained a natural primary filling of sandy silt-loam, which was also overlain by a sandy loam. There was no clear relationship between F107 and F1223, but they probably formed a contemporary double ditch arrangement. F1223 was not observed to the east of the exit road in Section C because of the size of the excavated area.

Traces of a central ditch, F249, were observed 8m north of the Northgate. Later intrusions from the Phase 5 sunken features, F229 and F290, and the Phase 3 ditch, F176, had destroyed virtually all trace of its extent and internal morphology. It was marked, however, by series of isolated sloping depressions which were filled by the deposit (F150) associated with the end of the

Phase 2 fort. The plan of F249 on Figure 4.1 gives its likely maximum extent. Six post holes were located within and to the south of F249. Five of them (F245, F275, F276, F52 and F287) were cut through the exit road F417. They all contained a filling of dark brown sandy loam. The largest was F276 at 0.6m; the others were between 0.3m and 0.4m deep. F258, contained a filling of dark brown sandy loam, lay within the ditch F249, and was partially cut by the Phase 3b ditch F176.

Discussion (fig 4.10)

Although there was insufficient evidence to determine the exact position of the terminal ends of the flanking elements to F283, due to the fact that they did not directly link up with the outer ditch F107, it has been assumed that they terminated between F107 and the central ditch F249. As with most of the ditch phases in Area B, the amount of later ditch recutting makes it difficult to stratigraphically link contemporary separate elements of a ditch system together. The fact that F283, F107 and F249 were all sealed by deposits from the end of the Phase 2 fort and their spatial relationship to one another, suggests that they were all part of a unitary system. When observed together in figures 4.6 and 4.9, the various elements of the arrangement make a logical, if unusual, system.

The closest parallel is with that of the Claudian fort of Hod Hill (Richmond 1968) where the defences consisted of two inner ditches, 1m apart, and linked at the entrances with a layout similar to that of F283 and F107 above, although they are not directly linked together. Hod Hill also had *tutuli* at the south gate and the east gate which were designed to prevent a direct assault. F249 probably acted as a *tutulus* in much the same way as those at Hod Hill, with the two flanking elements of F283 funneling the diverted attackers into two narrow passageways either side of the Northgate entrance. There was no evidence of an additional outer ditch at Manchester, although one may have been removed by the Phase 4c outer ditch F1. Broadly similar ditch systems to those found have been discovered at several Flavian forts, that is forts with date ranges similar to those of this phase, at Crawford, Lanark (RCAHM 1978 no 255) and Cardean, Angus (Robertson 1971), but excavated examples of *tutuli* in Britain are unknown from this period.

The apparent random distribution of the post holes associated with F249 is due to the amount of disturbance from later ditches and previous archaeological trenches in the surrounding area. They may have been either supports for a bridge across F249, part of an additional defence of sharpened stakes, or part of a double palisade running between F249 and the Northgate. Of these three possibilities, one of the latter two is most likely, as the provision of a bridge across F249 would not make any tactical sense to the Phase 2 defensive system, although such bridge systems appear to have been common in Germany.

PHASE 2a AREA C (fig 4.12)

S Bryant

Description

Four large oval pits were discovered in Area C. F830, located in the north-west corner, was cut by the north and west baulks. It was 1.2m deep with a U shaped profile and a flat bottom, which was cut into the natural sand sub-soil. The bottom filling of F830 was a yellow sand derived from weathering of the pit sides. Above this were three similar layers of grey silty loam, which were probably formed by deliberate backfilling. Two of the layers were also spread across the northern part of Area C, sealing the Phase I deposits.

F1009 and F1021 were both situated in the centre of Area C, and were separated by a baulk 0.1m wide; both had a U shaped profile with a flat bottom cut into the natural sub-soil in a way similar to F830. The filling of F1009 and F1021 was also similar to that of F830, although there was no primary fill of sand and the backfilling was of sandy silt rather than of silty loam. This

deposit, along with several other layers of sand and gravel, was also spread around F1009 and F1021, but it was not possible to determine the precise sequence of backfilling of the two pits because of disturbance caused by the Phase 2b industrial feature, F467.

F1136 was located at the south-west corner of Area C. It was similar in form to the other three pits with a U shaped profile and a flat bottom, and its filling was the same as F1009 and F1021. It was truncated by the Phase 4c ditch F1, However, which had cut away all evidence of its possible reuse as an industrial feature in Phase 2b.

The Phase 2a exit road (F273) was also located in Area C. It consisted of 0.4m of yellow gravel which ran over the Phase I deposits, a fact which may suggest that an earlier road existed to the east of F273 during Phase I. As no road survived from the Northgate in Area A to the edge of the site in Area C, it was not possible to answer this question.

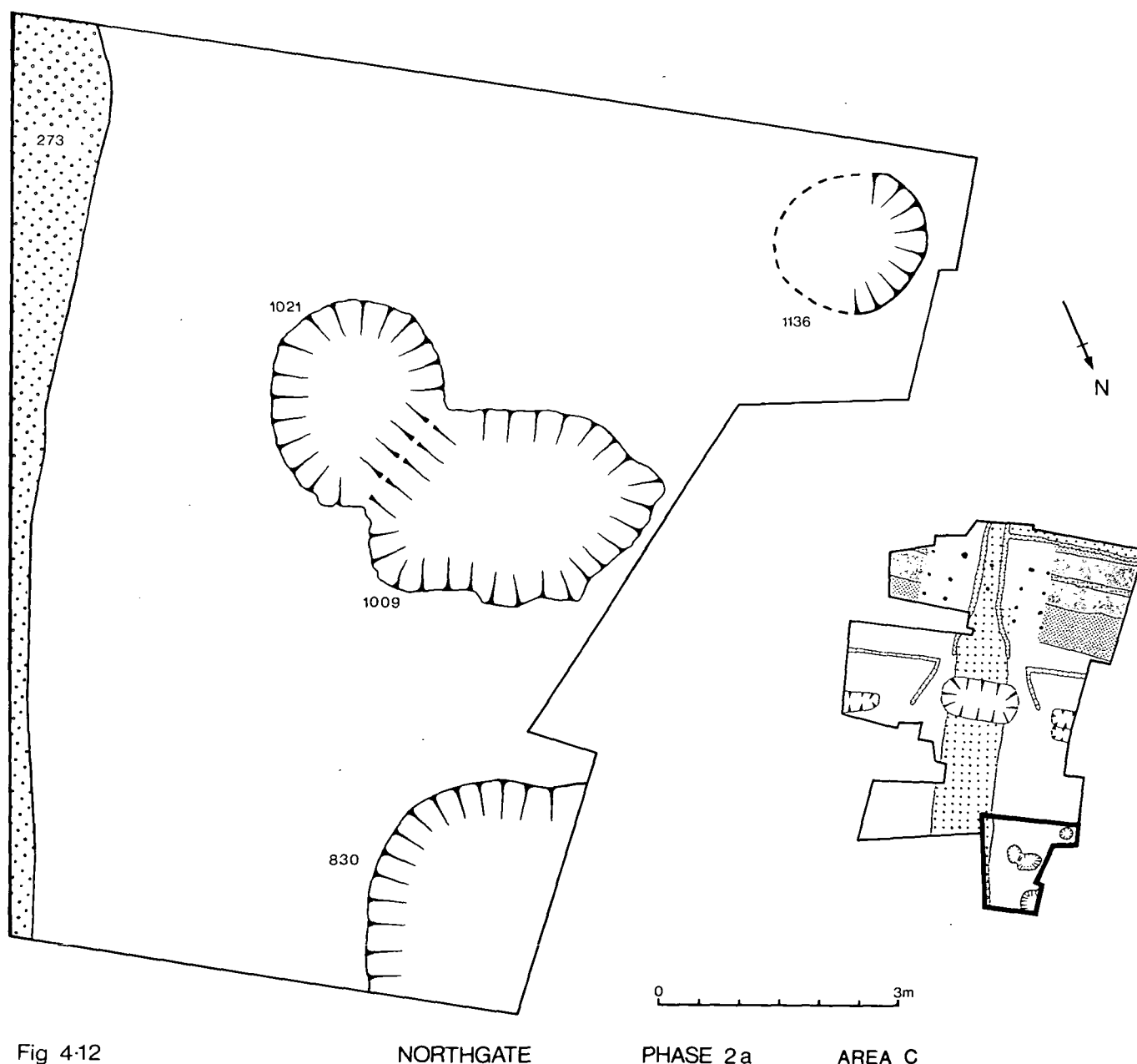


Fig 4-12

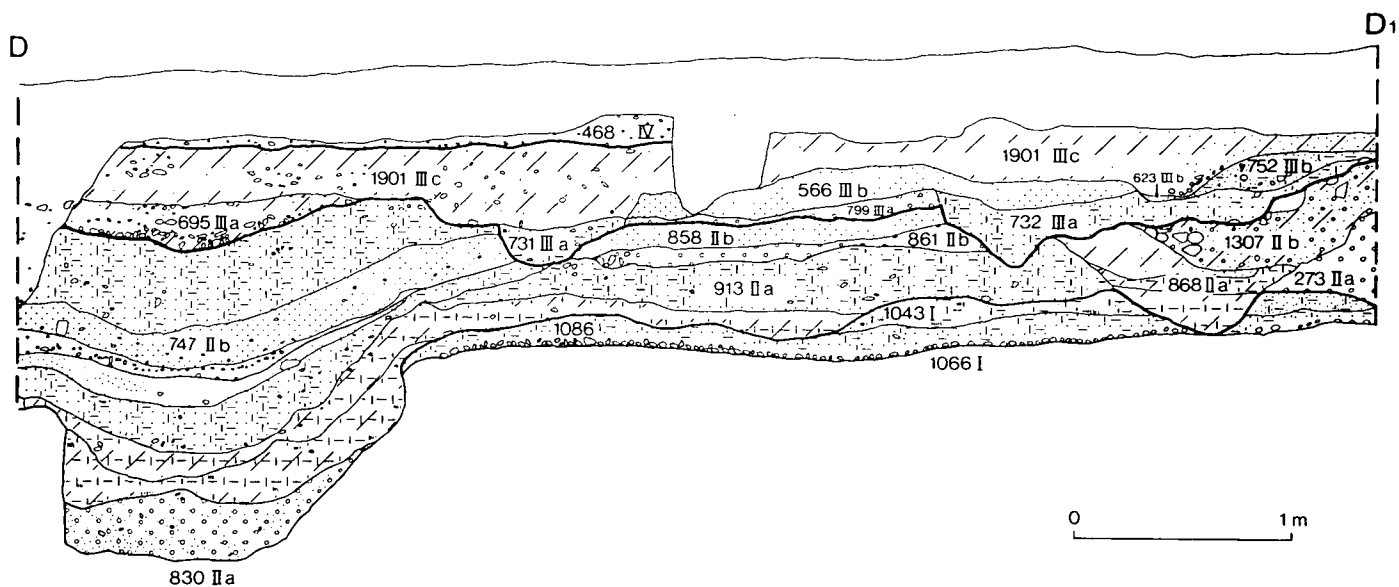


Fig 4.13

NORTHGATE

SECTION D

Discussion

The four large pits were probably the result of gravel extraction activities, as gravel was needed for the exit road (F273) and perhaps in the industrial processes connected with the Phase 2a industrial features. The deposits which were used to backfill the pits and spread over Area C were

probably derived from the industrial activities. A comparison between the road in section D (fig 4.13) to a section drawn 15m further north (Jones & Grealey 1974, fig 7, section A-A), suggests that F273 is probably equivalent to the latest road level in Section A and although larger than F868, it is probably contemporary with it. In addition

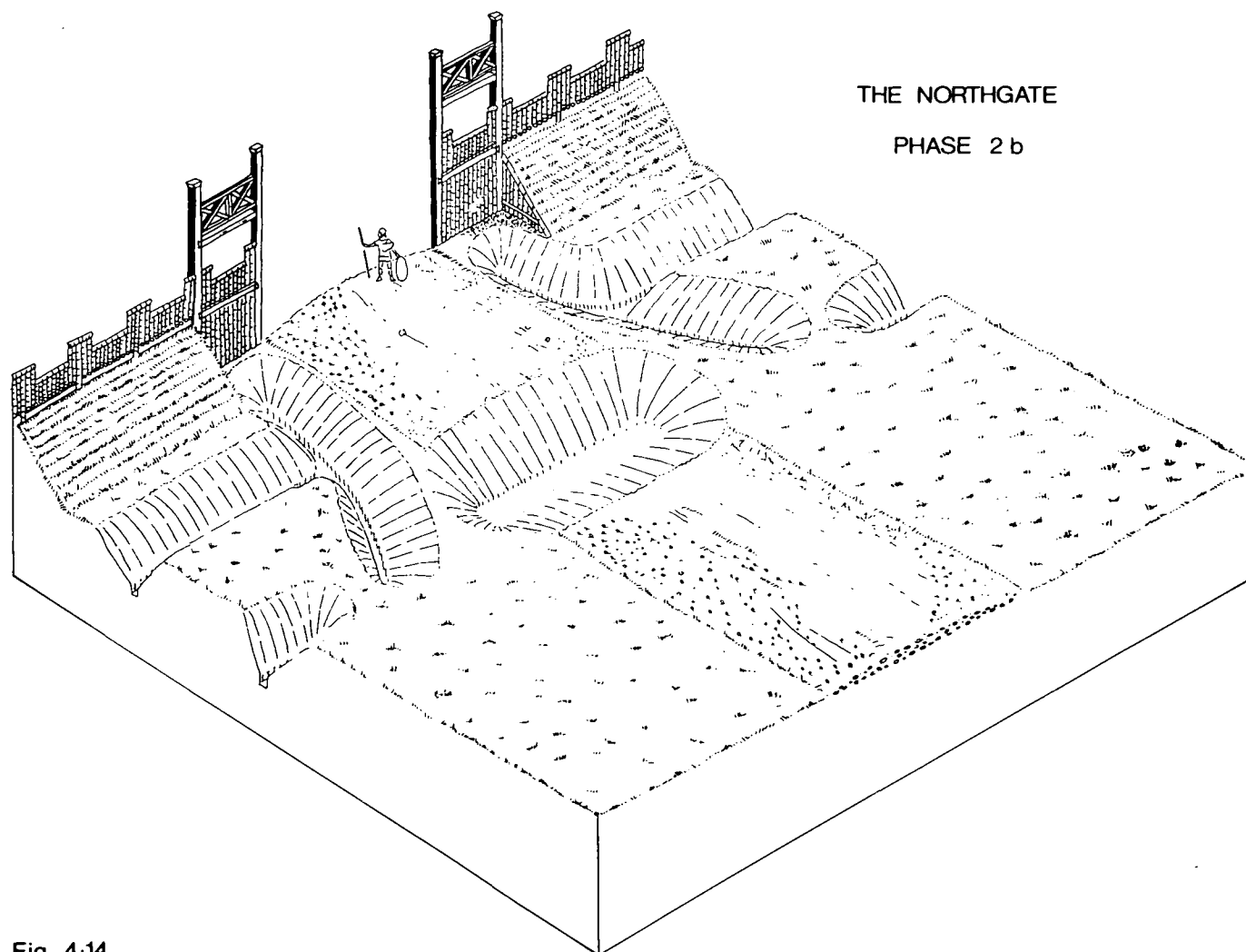


Fig 4.14

it is possible that the two resurfacings of the road in section A-A, 42 and 44, which extended into the side ditch 48a, are contemporary with the Phase 2b resurfacing F1307 and the Phase 3 resurfacing F752 in Section D.

PHASE 2b AREA A (fig 4.9)

S Bryant

Description

Overlying F1005 was a thin patchy gravel surface F385.

Discussion (fig 4.14)

F385 clearly represents the resurfacing of the road that ran around the inside of the fort.

PHASE 2b AREA B (fig 4.6)

S Bryant

Description

The phase commenced with the cutting of the Phase 2a inner defensive ditch F710, which followed the same line as the earlier ditch F283 but lay 0.65m closer to the exit road and extended 3m further towards the rampart. F710 had a V shaped profile and, where it had not been cut away by later features, was 0.4m deep and filled with a grey clay derived from the demolition of the Phase 2 rampart.

Discussion

The preceding defensive ditch system appears to have remained largely unchanged and, on the evidence of this recut, maintained.

PHASE 2b AREA C (fig 4.15)

S Bryant

Description

The western side drainage ditch, F868, to the Phase 2 road was V shaped, 1.2m wide and survived to a depth of 0.55m. It cut through the Phase 1 and Phase 2a deposits associated with the large pits and the primary filling of F868. This filling was overlain by a deposit of brown sandy loam, also formed by natural erosion that led to a gradual accumulation of soil. The effect of this primary and secondary accumulation was to raise the level of the ditch bottom by 0.3m and move it 0.3m to the east, resulting in a shallower U shaped profile.

Although there was no evidence that Phase 2b in Area C was contemporary with the Phase 2b ditch resurfacing (F710) in Area B, it had been included with the latter because it antedates Phase 3a in Areas A and B.

Two industrial features, along with their associated structures and working surfaces, were discovered. Part of the deliberate backfilling of F830 was removed and the resulting U shaped

shallow pit (F747) was lined with a gravel deposit which was in turn overlain by a grey clay deposit. To the south and west of F747 were ten stake holes which had been burnt in situ. They were cut into the grey clay to a depth of 0.2m. It is possible that more of them may have existed to the east of F747, but the edge of the feature was cut by the construction trench F731 for the Phase 3a building F727. The second industrial feature F467 was located 2m south of F747 and, like F747, it had cut through the backfilling of the Phase 2a pits, in this case F1009 and F1021. It had a lining of yellow gravel, which was overlain by a deposit of grey clay.

This clay deposit covered a slightly concave area 5m by 3m, above which was a thin layer of burnt material overlain by a silty sand deposit, which was in turn overlain by a thin layer of gravel, and finally another layer of burnt material. These deposits probably represented at least two successive firings of the industrial feature, with an intermediate dumping of refuse, and a relining with gravel.

A spread of compacted gravel (F861), 0.2m thick, was discovered in the northern half of Area C. It was cut to the east and west by the Phase 3a building construction trenches, F731 and F732. F861 was probably an internal or external working surface associated with F747 and F467. No structural features were found associated with F861, but a layer of burnt clay and daub above F861 may represent the demolition of some sort of building.

The exit road was extended with a deposit of yellow sand and gravel, F1307, over the drainage ditch F868 in Phase 2b.

Discussion (fig 4.14)

In broad morphology and in type of filling, these features are very similar to others discovered elsewhere in the vicus (Jones and Grealey 1974, 148-53) which have been interpreted as iron furnaces.

PHASE 2c AREAS A and B (fig 4.7)

S Bryant

Description

A series of three types of deposit appear to have resulted from the demolition of the Phase 2 fort: firstly, those representing the burnt remains of the fort's timber structures; secondly, a spread of clay derived from the slighting or flattening of the rampart; and thirdly, a deposit of occupation refuse. Together, these formed a distinct layer over much of Areas A and B.

Most of the Northgate area was covered with a spread of charcoal and burnt daub (F334). Several traces of burnt timber, 2.5m long and with a diameter of 0.12m to 0.15m, were discovered as part of the deposit in the east drainage gully F610. Also within F610 was a deposit of charred grain. The charcoal spread (F334) was almost certainly derived from the burnt timber structure

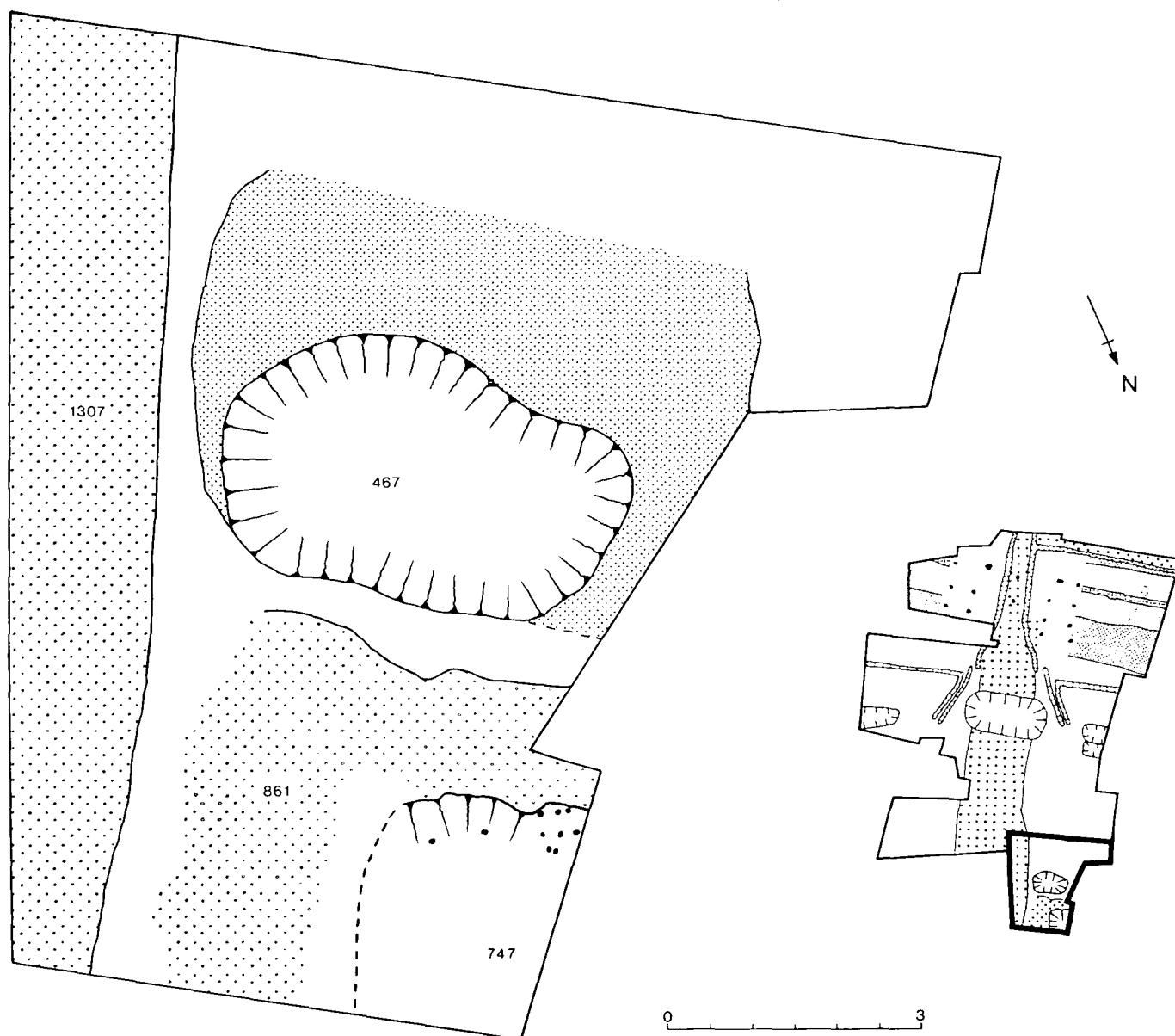


Fig 4.15

NORTHGATE AREA C PHASE 2b

of the Northgate, and the presence of the grain suggests that a granary probably stood near to the gateway prior to its destruction.

A deposit of grey clay (F332) formed by the demolition of the Phase 2 rampart was spread over the Northgate area, overlying F334 and sealing all of the Phase 2 features which were not sealed by F334. This clay also spread into the inner defensive ditch F283 and F710, as far as the outer defensive ditch F107, to the east of the exit road F417, and sealed the gravel backfilling of F107, which had presumably taken place immediately prior to the clay dumping.

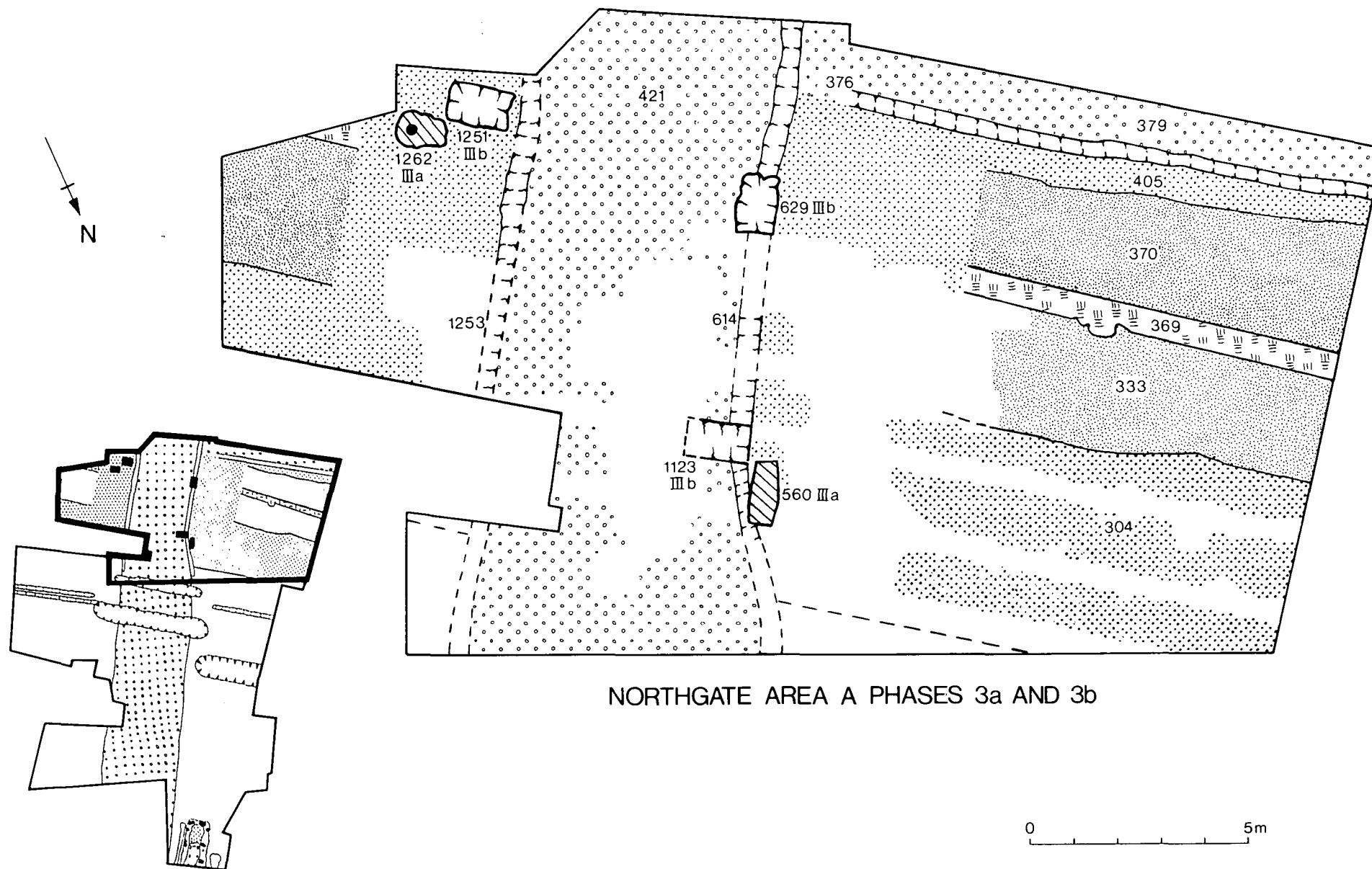
A mixed deposit of grey silty clay F150 and charcoal F253, which contained moderate amounts of bone and pottery, was dumped in front of the entrance to the Phase 2 Northgate, sealing the clay F332 in the inner ditch F283 and filling the central ditch F249.

Discussion

The extent and nature of the demolition deposits makes it clear that the fort was systematically reduced. It is well known that the Roman army deliberately destroyed abandoned forts in order to deprive the enemy of a useful and prepared site.

A sequence of burning followed by extensive clay dumping was also observed during the 1975 Duke Place excavations at the north-west corner of the fort (see above), and by Petch (1954, 29-30). The Duke Place excavations also produced evidence of an extension to the fort westwards in Phase 3 which, together with the demolition, suggests a phase of abandonment between Phases 2 and 3 before a new larger garrison was installed in Phase 3.

A similar group of deposits was also observed at the nearby Peak fort of Brough-on-Noe (Jones and Wild 1969); this was thought by the excavators to have arisen as a result of the deliberate demolition of the fort, which was abandoned at much the same time as Manchester may have been.



NORTHGATE AREA A PHASES 3a AND 3b

Fig 4-16

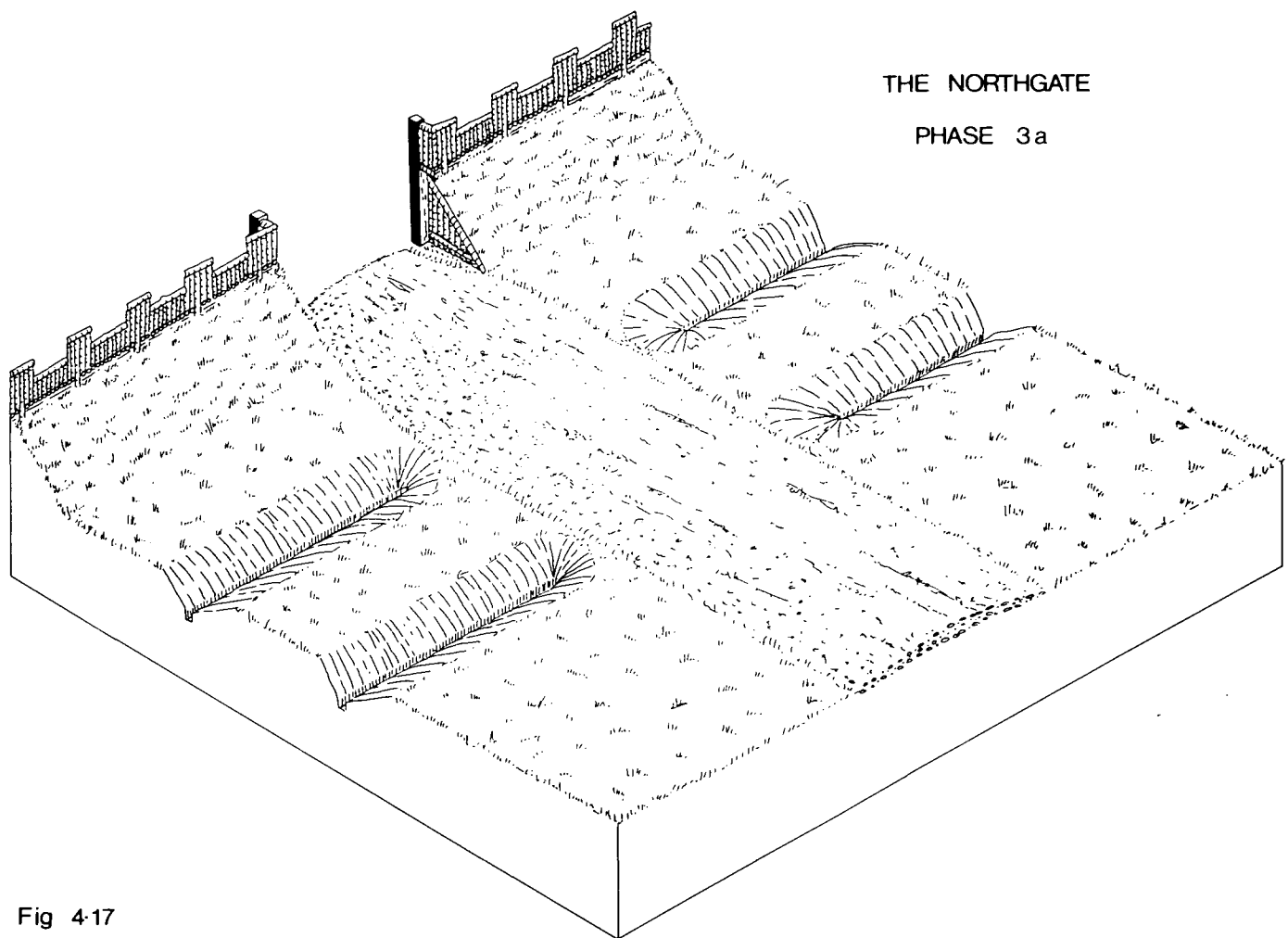


Fig 4-17

PHASE 2c AREA C (fig 4.15)

S Bryant

Description

Filling the top of the earlier pit (F747) was a silty clay containing isolated pebbles and some charcoal.

Discussion

The filling of this pit may be a mixture of the clay and charcoal demolition debris found in areas A and B.

PHASE 3a AREA A

S Bryant

Description (fig 4.16)

The Northgate

The surviving post holes of the Phase 3 gateways represent two separate phases of the same gate type. Two post holes, F560 and F1262, belong to the Phase 3a gateway. A third probably existed adjacent to the Phase 3b post pit (F629) but was destroyed by the Phase 4 stone foundations, and a fourth probably existed opposite and outside the excavated area. F560 was located at the front of the entrance on the west side. It survived to a depth of 0.5m and contained a uniform filling of sandy loam. There was no sign of a post pipe and

it is therefore likely that the filling represents either rapid silting or deliberate backfilling, once the post had been removed at the end of Phase 3a. F1262 was located at the back of the entrance on the east side of the passage way. It was 0.56m deep and contained a post pipe 0.27m in diameter and a filling of clay loam with silty clay inclusions. This suggests that the post was probably sawn off, or had rotted away by the end of Phase 3a.

In Phase 3a the gravel exit road (F421) was extended into the fort. In the gateway passage it was 5.2m wide, and consisted of a uniform deposit of yellow gravel with a maximum thickness of 0.4m.

Two new drainage ditches were also dug. F1253 was 0.5m deep and contained a filling of stiff pink clay and red sandstone fragments deposited during the construction of the Phase 4 gateway foundations. The other ditch, F614, survived to a depth of 0.6m. In Section A, F614 has a dual profile but as this was only present close to the section it was not possible to determine what it represented. In general F614 contained a uniform filling of grey silty loam, which probably was formed by deliberate backfilling at the beginning of Phase 4 or by rapid silting; however, the depth of the deposit makes the former seem more likely.

The Rampart and Intervallum

In Phase 3a the rampart was extended by 4m on either side of the entrance, with a deposit of grey clay, the same as F304 and F405, to meet up

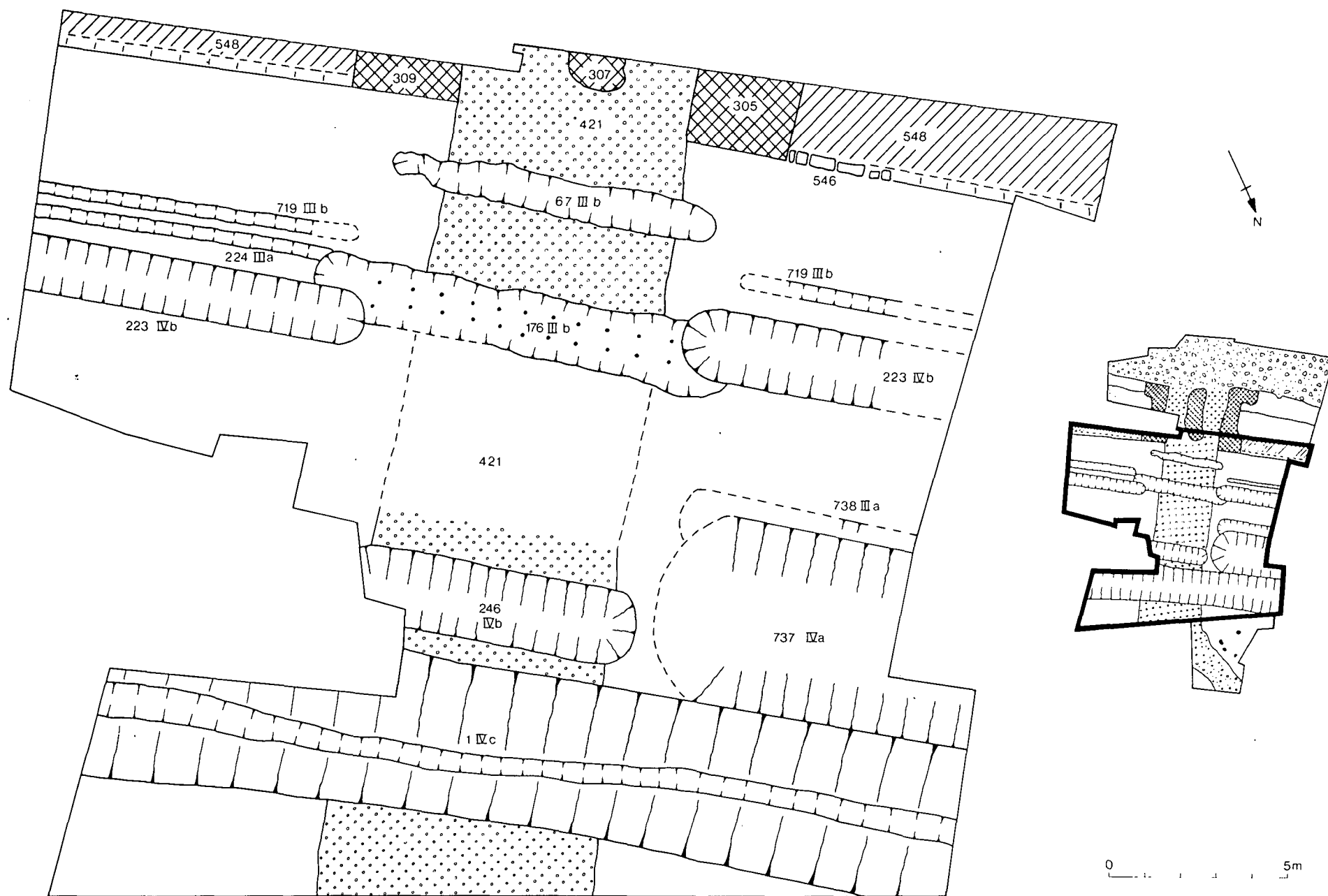


Fig 4.18

NORTHGATE AREA B PHASES 3 AND 4

with the Phase 3a gateway revetment represented by the post holes F560 and F1262. The rest of the new rampart incorporated the foundations of the earlier Phase 2 rampart, as is suggested by the position of the Phase 3a intervallum road (F379), which was the same as the road in Phase 2. This road (F379) was of the same material, that is locally derived gravel, as the Phase 2 road F385. It overlaid the demolition deposit (F332) from Phase 2 and had a maximum thickness of 0.4m. A small drainage gully (F376) was situated between the intervallum road and the rear of the Phase 3a rampart. As with the Phase 2 rampart drain, it was not visible in Section A because it had been cut by the Phase 4 intervallum road F878.

Discussion (fig 4.17)

As with the Phase 1 and 2 gateway plans, the amount of disturbance caused by later intrusions, particularly the Phase 4 foundations which cut through the centre of the Phase 3 passageway, makes a precise interpretation of the Phase 3a plan difficult. However, given the position and

number of posts on either side of the passageway, there are two possible layouts to the gate.

The gateway was either a four post single portal structure, without towers and with a gate at the front of the entrance, Manning and Scott type 1A (Manning and Scott 1979, 19) or a double portal gateway without towers but with additional posts dividing the passageway into two, Manning and Scott type 1B (op cit, ibid). Of these two arrangements the latter, type 1B, is unlikely, as at least one of the additional postholes would have been found during the excavations. The type 1A arrangement has therefore been adopted for figure 4.17, although the width of the Phase 3 passageway at 6m is larger than the average of between 4m and 4.6m for excavated examples of type 1A gateways (Manning and Scott 1979, 31-4).

This change to a similar type of gateway in Phase 3a is in keeping with the trend towards less elaboration in gateway form during the 2nd century noted by Manning and Scott (op cit, 29).

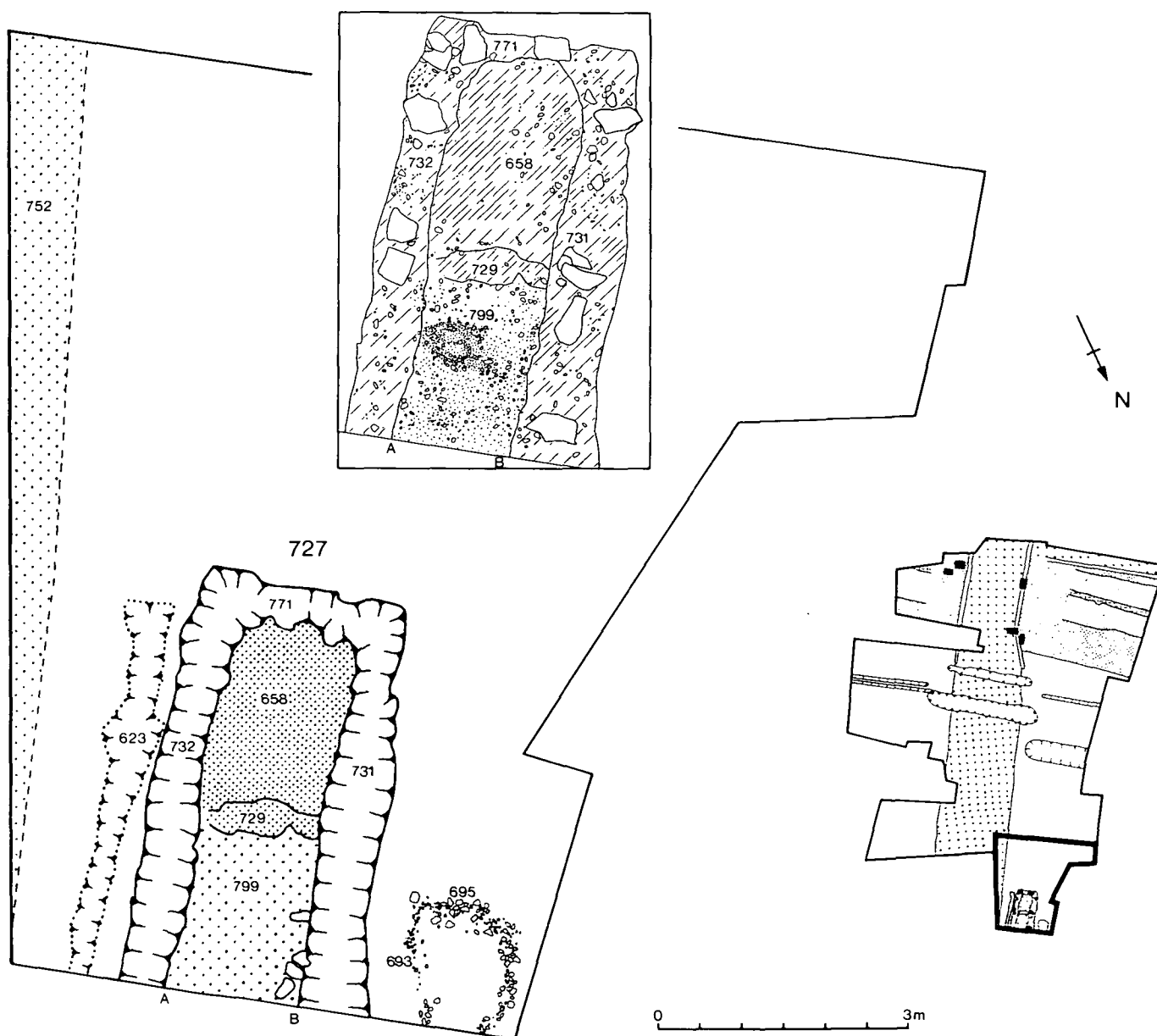


Fig 4.19

NORTHGATE AREA C PHASES 3a AND 3b

The reinstatement of the Northgate, the rampart, and the intervallum road in the same positions as in Phase 2, suggests that most of the ground plan of the Phase 2 fort had survived the deliberate destruction of its superstructure, so that the fort was still sited in such a position as to dominate the river crossing and the road junction. This new fort, as is proved by the Duke Place excavations, was about 2 acres (0.9ha) larger than the earlier forts. This expansion is probably due to a change in garrison from one of 480 infantry to a mixed unit of 608 men which contained around 128 cavalry (Breeze and Dobson 1978, table 12). Its larger and more substantial gateway and rampart indicate a further move towards more defensive thinking in fort design, and towards a greater permanence.

PHASE 3a AREA B (fig 4.18)

S Bryant

Description

A new inner ditch F224 was dug 2.2m north of the Phase 2 inner ditch F283. Only a sump 0.2m deep survived on the east side of the exit road F421, and on the west side it was completely removed by the Phase 4b ditch F223. No relationship was observable in Section C (fig 4.11) between F224 and the Phase 3b ditch sump F719. However, the fact that F224 was cut by the Phase 3b ditch F176 (fig 4.18), suggests that they may have formed a contemporary double ditch arrangement that antedated F719.

The sump of F224 contained a grey clayey silt. An outer ditch (F738) was observed 10m north of the fort rampart, west of the exit road (F421). It cut the secondary filling of F1223, and was cut in turn by the Phase 4a ditch (F737) to the north and by the Phase 5 sunken feature F804 to the south. The extent of the disturbance to F738 by these two features severely truncated its profile, but enough survived to determine its shape and approximate dimensions. The profile was U shaped and survived to a depth of 1.3m with a flat bottom 0.4m wide. The original width of F738 is therefore likely to have been between 3m and 4m. The primary filling of F738 consisted of a sandy silt loam derived from natural weathering of the ditch sides; above this were four separate layers of varying textures, which all appeared to be formed by a deliberate backfilling which probably took place at the end of Phase 3b. F738 was not located east of the exit road (F421) because of the limitations of the excavated area.

A new exit road (F421) was constructed over the refuse deposit (F150). It consisted of locally derived yellow gravel with a maximum thickness of 0.5m, and only survived for a total length of 5m in Area B.

Discussion (fig 4.17)

The surviving evidence suggests that a straight forward double ditch system, with uninterrupted access to the Northgate via the exit road (F421) existed during Phase 3a.

PHASE 3a AREA C (fig 4.19)

S Bryant

Description

Part of the foundations of a small building (F727) were located in the northern half of Area C. Three construction trenches (F731, F732 and F771) were identified as belonging to F727. They all contained a filling of grey silty clay, together with sandstone fragments and pebbles. The filling of F732 extended to the east, covering most of the Phase 2c road extension (F1307). A floor of compacted yellow gravel (F799) was observed inside the building, together with the foundations of an internal partition wall, F729, to the south of which lay another floor (F658) of compacted yellow clay 0.05m deep. The foundation trenches were topped in places by blocks of sandstone rubble. To the west of the building the hollow left by the Phase 2b feature F747 was filled with a spread of cobble F693 and F695.

Discussion

The presence of the sandstone blocks on the filling of the construction trenches for F727, suggests that the initial Phase 3a building was probably either of stone construction or had a timber frame supported by stone dwarf walls. However, the fact that the timber beam slot (F623) replaced the construction trench (F732) seems to indicate that the second alternative is the most likely.

Taking into account the size of the two small rooms in F727 in Phase 3a, its original length is likely to have been about 6m, and its width 3m, giving it a width to length ratio of 1:2.

PHASE 3b AREA A (fig 4.20)

S Bryant

Description

The two Phase 3a post holes (F1262 and F560) were both replaced at the beginning of Phase 3b, by F1251 and F1123 respectively. A third post hole (F629) was also dug on the same side as F1123 but 5.3m further to the south. F1123 survived to a maximum depth of 1.3m, and contained a uniform filling of grey silty loam which probably represents a deliberate backfilling, once the post was removed. F629 was 1.6m deep and also contained what appeared to be a deliberate backfilling of grey silty loam. F1251 was 1.8m deep and contained a bottom filling of brown sandy loam 1.2m deep which was overlain by a mixture of red sandstone fragments. The earlier ditch (F614) was filled with a brown silty loam (F1084) semi angular river cobble and stiff pink clay.

Discussion

The lower layer is probably the result of deliberate backfilling, whilst the upper layer was probably formed, like the similar filling of the nearby drain F1253, during the construction of the Phase 4 stone gateway.

THE NORTHGATE

PHASE 3b

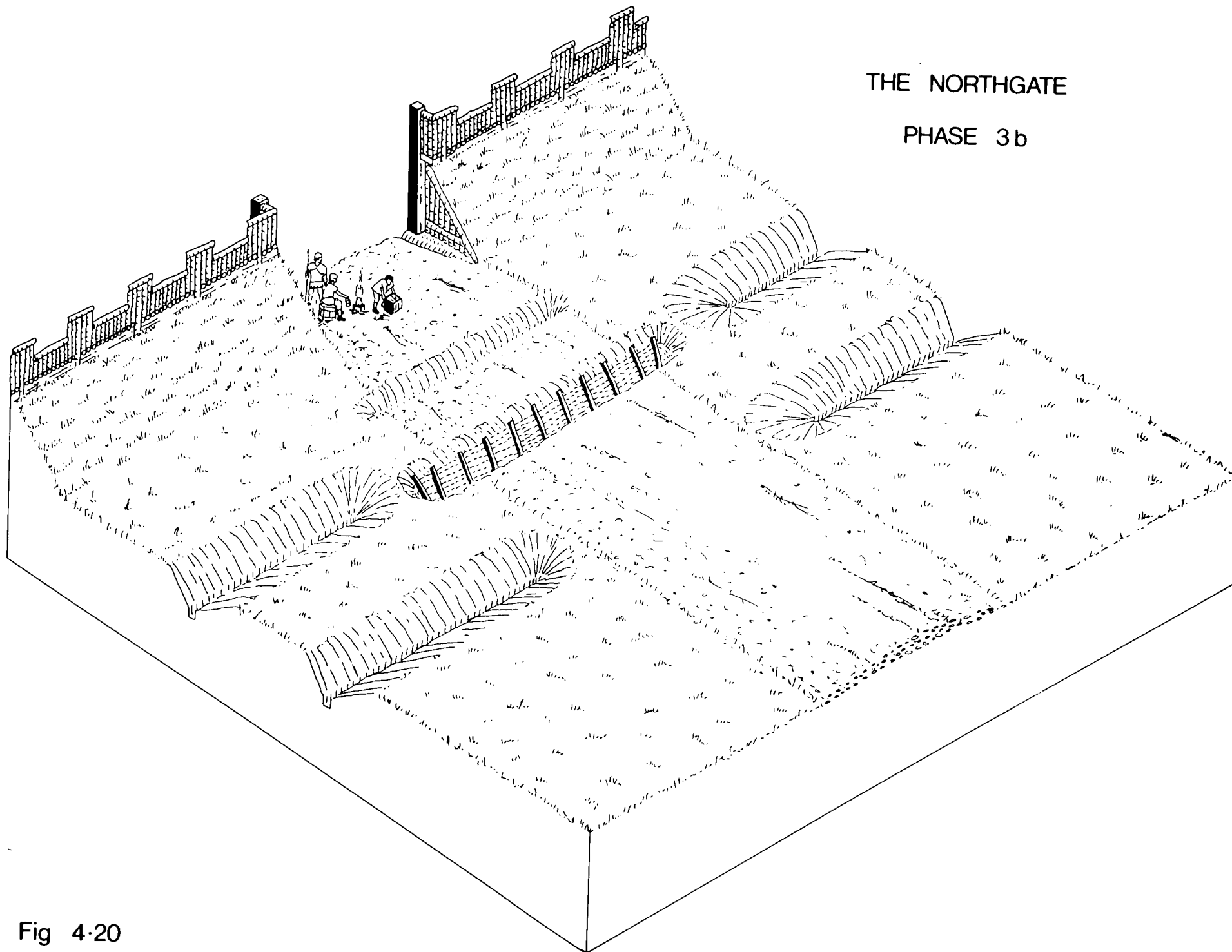
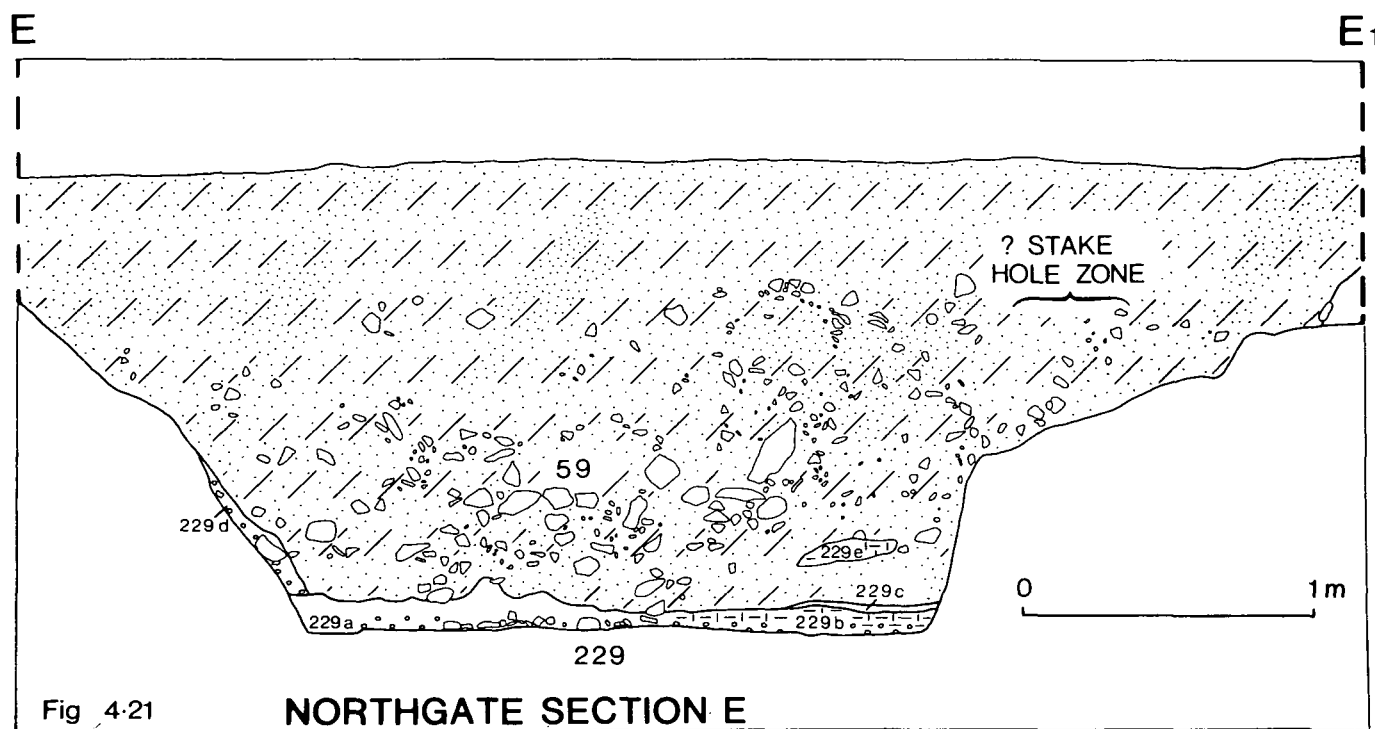


Fig 4-20



PHASE 3b AREA B (fig 4.18)

S Bryant

Description

A recut (F719), to the west of the exit road of the Phase 2a inner ditch F224, was observed 0.5m to the south, and, as with F224, only the sump survived. In Section B (fig 4.7) it was cut by the Phase 4b ditch F223, and its sump contained a natural filling of grey silt. In Section C (fig 4.11) the filling of F719 was very similar to F224, and it was not possible to define any relationship between the two ditches (see below). There was no evidence that the Phase 3a outer ditch F738 was recut during Phase 3b, although this may have been obscured by the Phase 4a ditch F737 to the north of F738. Two ditches (F67 and F176) were dug across the Phase 3a exit road F421. F67 had a V shaped profile 0.8m deep, and contained a bottom filling of sand and gravel formed by the weathering of the ditch sides; overlying this was a grey silty clay formed by the weathering of the Phase 2 refuse deposit (F150) which F67 cut through.

Above the silty clay was a deliberate backfilling of clean sand and gravel, which formed a base for a layer of large stones and boulders mixed with gravel. The latter deposit almost certainly represents a reinstatement of the exit road (F421) across F67, at the beginning of Phase 4a. As would be expected, some subsidence of this layer was noticeable and an attempt had been made to level it up with a further deposit of gravel. F176 had a U shaped profile with straight sides and a flat bottom 1.5m deep by 1.6m wide. It was cut by the Phase 4b ditch (F223) and the Phase 5 sunken feature, F229 (fig 4.21). The primary bottom filling of F176 was similar to that of F67. A number of wooden stakes were preserved in place in the primary filling of F176. They were arranged in pairs 0.8m apart, angled in a V and were parallel

with the ditch sides, and driven between 0.2m and 0.3m into the base of the ditch. Above the primary filling of F176 was a deposit of sand and gravel, which was overlain by a layer of large stones and cobbles similar to the upper filling of F67. This represents a reinstatement of the exit road (F421) contemporary with the backfilling of F67. However, this layer petered out towards the edge of the exit road (F421). Here the primary filling is overlain by deposits from Phases 5 and 6; it is therefore certain that parts of F176 which were largely backfilled in Phase 4a, were allowed to silt up naturally.

The fact that the stakes were not visible in the secondary filling of F176, suggests that they may have been sawn off prior to the reinstatement of the exit road.

Discussion

The most likely function of the stakes in F176 is as a revetment, to prevent the steep sides of loose gravel from collapsing. A similar arrangement has been observed at Melandra, Derbyshire (Webster 1971).

F67 was obviously too small to fulfil any defensive function, and was likely to have been designed merely as a means of preventing access to the Northgate. F176, on the other hand, is more substantial and would have formed an effective defensive barrier. The digging of F67 may therefore have been an unsuccessful intermediate measure.

The closing of the Northgate during Phase 3b suggests that it was superfluous to the requirements of the fort commander, or that he wanted to limit communications between the fort and the extra mural settlement to the north. The eventual digging of F176 indicates that the defensive factor was borne in mind but is unlikely to have been the original motive for closing the

entrance, given the insubstantial nature of F67. As the main gate to the fort was on the eastern side, the closing of the Northgate does not mean, in itself, that the fort was abandoned.

PHASE 3b AREA C (fig 4.19)

S Bryant

Description

Building F727 was extended to the east, and its eastern wall replaced by a beam slot (F623) cut into a spread of road material (F752). This slot was filled with a sandy loam, little different from the layers above, and it contained in places a black silty loam 0.02m thick, that probably represents part of the original beam. A new sandy floor (F566) was laid, which ran across the line of the original western wall (F731).

Discussion

Most vicus buildings have their axis at right angles to the road (Salway 1980, 10) but where the axis is parallel to the street their size is usually much larger than F727 (Richardson 1936). This building is also considerably smaller than the vicus buildings found during the Manchester 1972 excavations (Jones and Grealey 1974) and the 1977-8 excavations (Jones and Reynolds 1978), which were interpreted by the excavators as domestic living quarters and industrial working sheds. The maximum internal ground floor area of F727 is 18 sq m, and even if there were additional storeys it would have been barely sufficient as domestic living quarters or for industrial working processes. The most likely use for building F727 therefore, considering its size, orientation, and position, is as a small shop even though no clear confirmatory evidence has come from the artefacts found within or in the vicinity of the building.

PHASE 3c AREA A

S Bryant

Description

Cut into F1084 was a small gully, F1063, filled with silty loam. This gully only appeared in Section A, (fig 4.4).

Discussion

The gradually silted up ditch was replaced by a gully, which itself silted up before the beginning of Phase 4.

PHASE 3c AREA C

S Bryant

Description and Discussion

The Phase 3b building was overrun by a demolition deposit (F1901) of sandy silt, containing charcoal and flecks of daub. This deposit also overran the edge of the earlier main northern road.

The building had clearly been demolished, possibly to make way for the Phase 4c roadway.

PHASE 4a AREA A (fig 4.22)

J Walker

Description

The Northgate

The construction of the Phase 4 Northgate was preceded by the systematic demolition of the Phase 3b timber gate. The posts were removed and the post pits backfilled (see fig 4.16). There was no evidence to suggest a phase of abandonment between Phases 3 and 4.

The Phase 4 Northgate was represented by the foundations of a twin-arched stone tower, and these consisted of three separate elements. The west pier (F309) was 7m long and between 1.6m and 1.8m wide, with end projections which increased its width to 2.8m. Its foundation was 2.0m deep and consisted of layers of soft sandstone (F1900) derived from the local bedrock and courses of stiff pink clay mixed with larger river cobble. The east pier (F305) was 7.3m long by 1.8m wide with a protection at the rear which increased the width to 3.6m. Its foundations were identical to those of F309. The central spine (F307) was 6.2m long by 2.2m wide, and was recessed 0.5m behind the front of the gateway. Its foundation were the same as F305 and F309, but at 2.5m were 0.5m deeper. Very little survived of the Phase 4 road levels inside the gateway, because the latest Roman levels in this area had been destroyed by the construction of the Hanoverian terraced houses on the site, but it is likely that they were of a similar construction to the Phase 4 via principalis (F878) which survived intact behind the gateway. This road consisted of angular and sub-angular slabs of sandstone set in a mixture of yellow gravel, which may have been obtained from the construction trenches for the gate foundations (F305, F307 and F309).

The Phase 4 intervallum road, which was extended towards the rampart, was also constructed of the same materials as the via principalis, and was linked to it. No drainage ditches were observed for the Phase 4 gateway or the intervallum road and rampart, although the road ran over the backfilled Phase 3 drainage ditches.

Rampart and Intervallum

The foundations (F548), part of the core and a few facing stones (F546) for a stone wall were observed at the front of the fort rampart. This wall had cut away the front of the Phase 3 clay and sand rampart, and its foundations (F548) were bonded onto the gateway foundations (F305 and F309). The wall foundations were between 0.5m and 1m deep and were similar to those of the gateway foundations. On top of these foundations was the core (F306) of the wall, which survived to between 0.5m and 0.8m high, and was made up of large angular fragments of sandstone between 0.1m and 0.6m long, set in a yellow, sandy mortar.

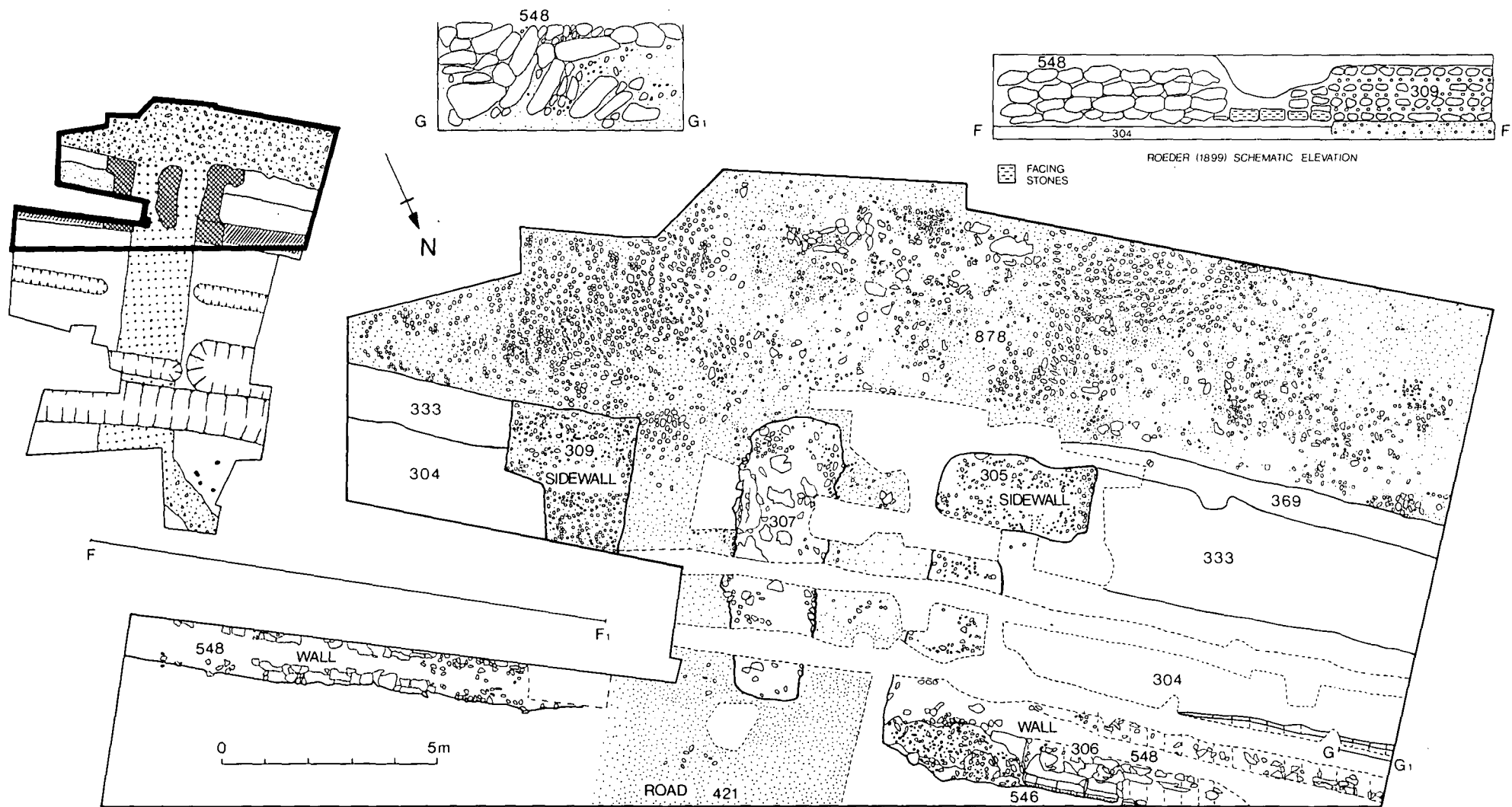
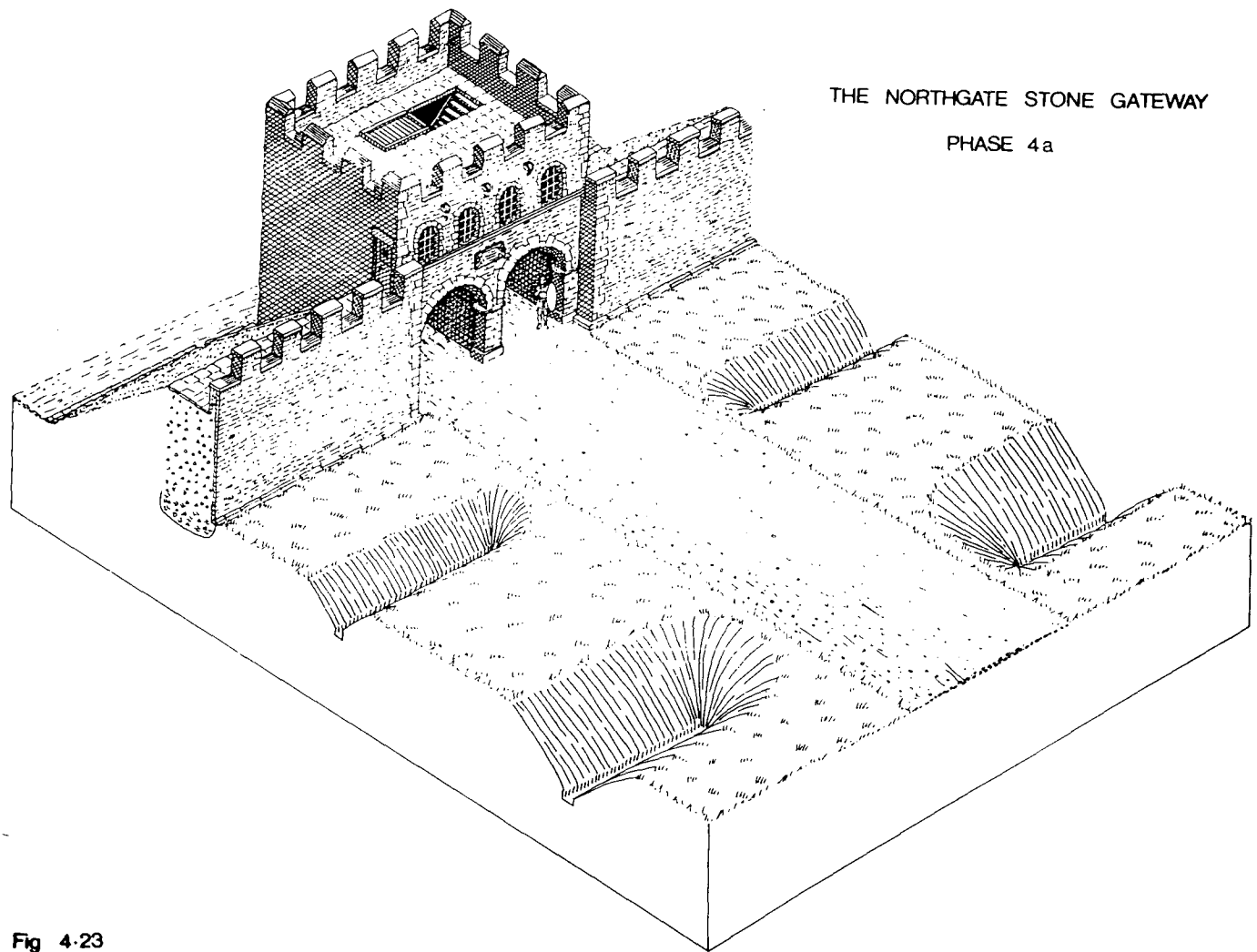


Fig 4.22

NORTHGATE AREA A PHASE 4

PLAN OF GATEWAY, RAMPART AND ROADS



THE NORTHGATE STONE GATEWAY

PHASE 4a

Fig 4.23

At the front of the wall, immediately to the west of the foundation (F305) several dressed, chamfered blocks of sandstone were discovered. They were first observed by Petch (1951, 1954 and 1956) during his excavations of the fort defences in 1950s and were left in place by him. They were consequently rediscovered in 1981 when his previous archaeological trenches along the line of the wall were re-excavated.

The bank of clay and sand at the rear of the Phase 3 rampart was retained during Phase 4, although its width was reduced by the new intervallum road (F878).

Discussion (fig 4.23)

In 1956 Petch discussed at length the probable form of the stone gateway and took as his model the Severan gateway at Bewcastle and the arguments presented by Richmond and Childe (1942). Walker (1983, 17-22) reviewed the evidence in the light of the excavations reported in this volume. The contention of both authors was that the gate was a twin-portal structure with an overlying guardroom. Both Petch and Walker argued that only this kind of structure would fit the foundations and that the inner spurs of the flanking foundations, not needed for the chamber, were foundations of stairways to the rampart level. Walker (1983)

broadened the argument by suggesting that the form of the gateway was a devolved example of Augustan city gates which Richmond and Childe saw as the model for many Roman military gateways.

The date of the gateway is not clear, but the coarseware (see below) suggests a late 2nd, early 3rd century date. The foundations are very similar to those which surrounded the civilian enclosure at Whitchurch, dated to cAD 170 (Jones, GDB pers comm). The plinth (Chapter 5,g) and the construction technique are similar to those of the surviving legionary north wall at Chester, for which a date cAD 200 has been suggested in the light of recent research (Strickland 1982). The plinth and the foundations are also similar to those of the landward wall of Roman London built between cAD 175 and cAD 225 (Maloney 1983). The use of stone is of little chronological significance, as widespread use of sandstone in the vicus area to the north occurs from the mid-2nd century onwards.

Two inscribed stones from Manchester may be some help in dating the construction. RIB 576 is a red sandstone altar recording that,

"the commander of the detachment of Raetians (probably III Legion Italica) and Noricans (probably II Legion Italica), gladly,

willingly, and deservedly fulfilled his vow".

This was found in May 1831 (Bruton 1909, 23) on the site of the fort. The most reasonable position for such an altar would be within the headquarters building, and if we assume that a commander was unlikely to set up such an altar in a fort which was not his own, or, as commander, to be away from his garrison, then this altar indirectly records a Manchester garrison which had access to red sandstone, and the ability to work it to a high standard. Birley (1974) thought that the altar commemorated a legionary detachment that was probably sent to Britain in AD 197, to help with the reconstruction of the province under the Emperor Severus and his sons Caracalla and Geta. Also from Manchester is RIB 581, a fragment from a well-cut monumental inscription found within the fort in 1832 that records:

"the Emperor.....Antoninus Augustus..... and Geta Caesar".

This inscription probably dates from between AD 198 and AD 209 when Geta was Caesar. In addition to this, there is a series of Severan building inscriptions from the North West (see Chapter 2).

This inscription and where it was discovered clearly indicate that between AD 198 and AD 209 major building works had been undertaken within the area of the fort, possibly, by virtue of RIB 576, by a legionary vexillatio.

The similarity of the wall to dated examples from elsewhere, the inscriptions, and the relative dating of this phase, clearly suggest that the wall was built in the last quarter of the 2nd century or first quarter of the 3rd. If it is accepted that the monumental inscription actually refers to major work, and so, indirectly, to the wall, then that date range can be narrowed to between AD 198 and AD 209.

Two pieces of evidence contradict this hypothesis. Firstly, the facing stones of the wall recovered from the Area B Phase 6 deposits (see fig 4.22) and those found by Roeder (1899), Bruton (1909, plate 32), Phelps (1912), and recorded by Dryden (1844) are very small, when compared to those of the north wall at Chester that was apparently built around AD 200 in a very similar stone. This difference in stone working technique may be explained in several ways: firstly, as it was a legionary base, the construction of the wall at Chester was a matter of prestige, and larger stones were used to foster that prestige; secondly, that the greater height of the Chester wall required larger blocks; thirdly, that the stone working was done by different units, with different working practices; and fourthly, that the bedding within the quarry used for the Manchester material may have restricted block size.

Only one piece of the fort wall at Manchester survives above ground level, and this is described at length by Bruton (1909, 52-6). The foundations of this wall are, as Bruton pointed out, very similar to those discovered by himself, and are also very similar to those reported here and

elsewhere by Petch (1953, 54-6), Phelps (1912), and Roeder (1899). Bruton excavated beside this wall fragment, and recorded one layer of diagonally laid stones. This report, together with Phelps discovery of a diagonally laid core course, led Simpson (1973) to suggest that as all known diagonal coursing was from late 3rd and 4th century walls, the wall was of this date. She also interpreted some of Bruton's coin finds as indicating that the date of the wall must be after AD 217.

The chronological significance of the diagonal coursing is open to question, in that late examples do not disprove the possibility of earlier ones being found; indeed, Precht (1983, fig 25) has published photographs of diagonal coursing of a core at Xanten dated to between cAD 106 and cAD 150.

More significant is the problem posed by Bruton's discoveries, in which he found a clay zone (1909, section AA) overlying what are equivalent to this report's Phase 1 and 2 ditches and cut by the fort wall. This clay material should, therefore, be the Phase 3 rampart, built when the fort was extended. Dating evidence from this layer should give a clue both to the date of Phase 3 and to the date after which Phase 4 was begun. Simpson (1973, 74) distinguished

"Two turf ramparts not properly distinguished from the third below,... they are certainly associated with the succession of ditches below the fort wall foundation".

This clay dump may then represent ramparts of both Phases 3 and 4. The mixture of finds from it are, given the circumstances of excavation detailed by Bruton (1909, 75), of little significance. If Phelps (1912) could distinguish different layers which Bruton coalesced and Simpson differentiated, then, given Bruton's recording techniques, all that can be said is that from the Phase 3-4 clay dump came a complete 2nd century mortarium, (Bruton 1909, 75, 107, plates 66, 68; Simpson 1973, 74) and a complete, but broken, 2nd century samian bowl, thus broadly confirming the suggested date of Phase 3.

Simpson (1973, 75) analysed Bruton's discovery of a coin of Julia Domna, AD 193-217, made on January 5th 1907, and came to the conclusion that it was from the ditches below the wall. This discovery, if correct, would mean that as the coin came from what are known to be Phase 2 ditches, the Phase 3 remains are 3rd century and Phase 4, even later. There are, however, reasonable grounds for questioning whether the coin was from the ditch. Thirteen days after digging in "most inclement weather" (Bruton 1907, 62), Bruton's workmen discovered the inner eastern edge of the fort wall. Next morning, they returned to find that the trench had "run in" and in deepening it the coin was discovered. 'Deepening' in this sense may mean either re-excavating the run-in trench or taking the bottom lower. In fact it was probably a combination of both, for "by this time the accumulated soil from our deep trenches had made work almost impossible" (ibid). This was possibly not because of its height and the difficulties of

spoil disposal, but because spoil was running into the trenches. Consequently Bruton spent the next week in removing it. Given the circumstances of the discovery, the supposed location of this coin is very doubtful since it is likely to have been derived from run-in material. Over the previous week 0.846in (21.5mm) of rain had fallen, and after the heavy rainfall of the previous night the ground would have been muddy (Bracknell Weather Centre). Given the problems with the spoil, conditions scarcely aided careful excavation.

Possibly also belonging to this phase is Bruton's (1907) "red sandstone floor", found at Duke Place (see fig 3.2) which was capped with gravel (Bruton 1907, plate 36, 76). This almost certainly represents the Phase 4 intervallum road with its gravel surface. Against this argument is the fact that the Phase 4 intervallum road in Area A is of a different construction; however that road, F878, is the only intervallum road to contain sandstone found in the Northgate excavations. Bruton's road overlay earlier barrack blocks with stone footings and was a wholly new construction. On balance it seems simpler, and hence preferable, to assume that this road was laid down during the rebuilding of the fort in stone. To the west of this road he also discovered a further area of sandstone flooring (Bruton 1907, 61) which, to judge by its construction technique and depth, was built at the same time as the road, but whose function remains obscure.

From the available evidence it seems clear that the stone fort wall was built at one point in time. However, Roeder (1899) recorded the inner face of the wall to the east of the gate and his conventionalised sketch section, (see fig 4.22) which it is difficult to locate precisely, appears to show a change in walling techniques that coincides with the east pier of the Northgate. This discovery seems to argue against the view that the stone fort wall was built in one operation; however, it is likely that the wall and gate were constructed by different gangs, with the more experienced masons constructing the more difficult gateway. Evidence of this is the fact that the foundations are identical, and that Roeder found facing stones on the inner face of the wall core where it joins the gate, just as if the walling gang had finished their work and, having an excess of facing blocks, placed them in the core prior to the gateway being built.

The available evidence would suggest then that the fort walls, its roads, gates, and possibly barracks were rebuilt in the early years of the 3rd century and in one operation.

PHASE 4a AREA B (fig 4.18)

S Bryant

Description

The two ditches (F67 and F176) which were dug across the exit road (F421) during Phase 3b, were largely backfilled at the beginning of Phase 4 (see above), so restoring uninterrupted access to the Northgate. The Phase 3b inner ditch (F719) was recut 1.8m to the north. The Phase 4a recut

(F110) was most clearly represented in Section C where its sump and northern edge survived intact. It had a V shaped profile 2m deep, and an original width of about 5m. The primary filling was a red sandy loam, similar to the primary filling of F107, which was cut by F110. As with F107, the filling was formed by the natural weathering of the sandstone ditch sides. Above this was a secondary filling of clay loam, which contained several lines of pebbles and small stones, indicating a gradual accumulation of silt with occasional short stabilisation horizons.

In section B the ditch (F110) survived as a sump 0.1m deep, and contained a primary filling of natural silt of grey silty loam. In both Sections B and C, F110 was cut by the Phase 4b ditch F223.

An outer ditch (F737) was observed 7.2m north of F110 on the west side of the exit road (F421). F737 had a V shaped profile 2m deep by 4.5m wide, and was cut to the north by F1. It, in turn, cut the Phase 3a outer ditch (F738) to the south. The sump of F737 was filled with a grey silt formed by natural weathering. This was overlain by a structureless brown sandy loam containing pebbles, similar to the filling of F110, and was probably formed by gradual, natural accumulation.

Discussion (fig 4.23)

The two Phase 4a ditches (F110 and F737) represent a straightforward double ditch system, similar to that in Phase 3a. Both of the ditches were probably slightly larger than any of the preceding ditches. This may be a result of the increasing trend towards larger ditches in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. In addition, the fact that both F110 and F737 appear to have been allowed to silt up naturally, suggests that less care was taken to keep them in good working order than had previously been the case. These ditches are those reconstructed on the present site.

PHASE 4a AREA C (fig 4.24)

S Bryant

Description

A lateral road (F468) heading due north diagonally across Area C was constructed over F1901, the levelled remains of building F727. F468 was 3.5m wide, and made up of a single layer of compacted medium and small cobbles, set in a matrix of yellow gravel between 0.05m and 0.15m deep. Several wheel ruts were apparent in the surface of F468. At the junction of F468 and the main exit road (F752) the soft filling of the drainage ditch (F868) had also caused some subsidence.

Four post holes were observed to the south of the lateral road (F468). They were all cut into the filling of the Phase 2c industrial feature. F647 was 0.35m deep and contained a filling of sandy loam and was cut by a single post replacement of the same dimensions and with a similar filling. F648 was 0.4m deep and contained a filling of loam with several sandstone blocks, as did F851 and F776. The four post holes did not appear to form part of any regular structure, although this

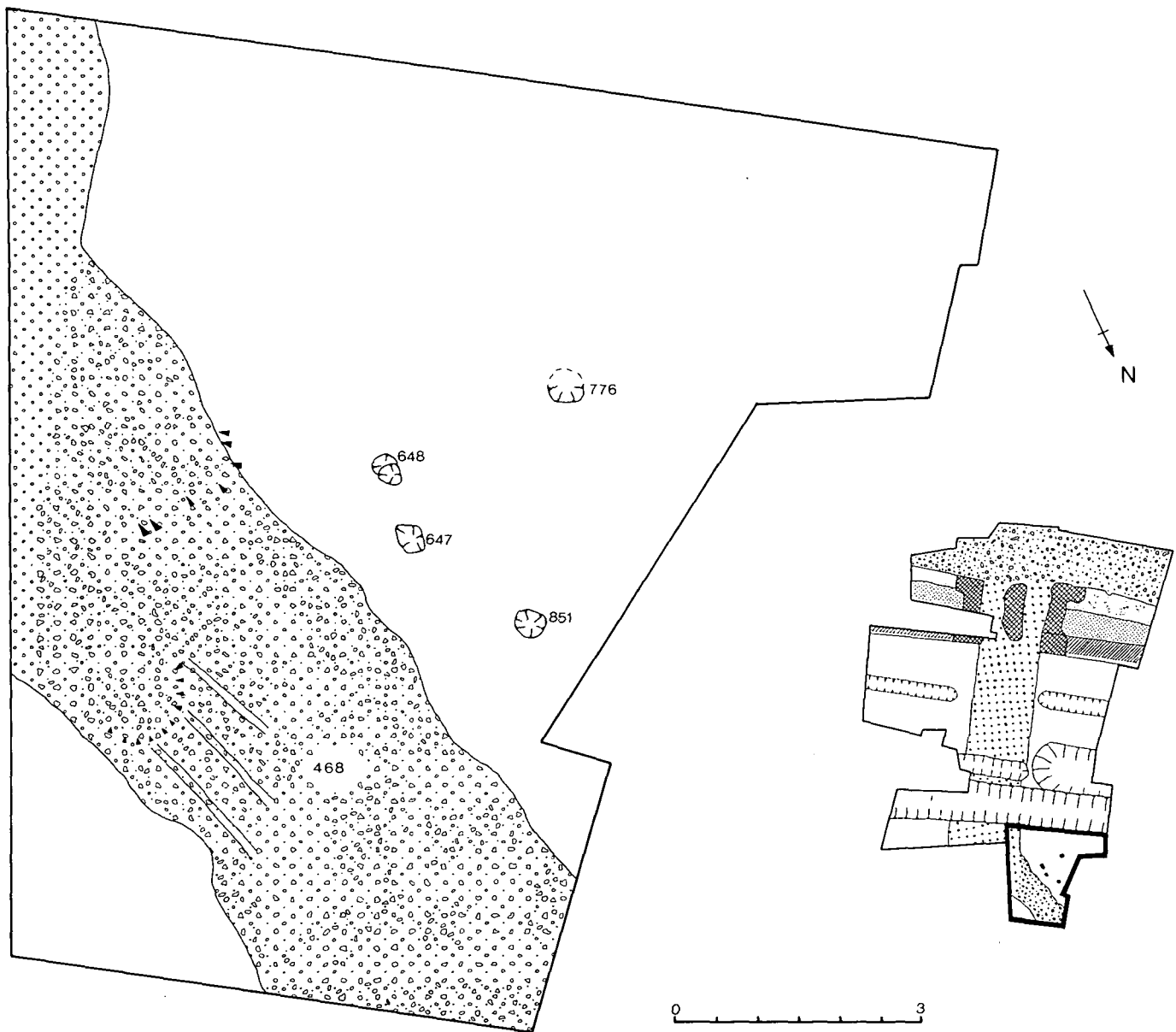


Fig 4-24

NORTHGATE AREA C PHASE 4

impression may be the result of the small size of area C, which was restricted by the Phase 4c ditch (F1) to the south and by modern disturbance to the east and west.

There was no direct relationship between the post holes and the lateral road F468. It is just possible that they might be earlier, but the fact that they do not appear either to align with the main exit road (F752) or to belong to the Phase 3 building (F727), suggests that they are more likely to be contemporary with Phase 4a.

Discussion

The evidence from Area C suggests that the main exit road surface (F752) was probably replaced in Phase 4a by F468, which headed due north towards the River Irwell, half a mile away. It may be that the new route was constructed to carry goods and supplies directly from the river to the fort, a theory which is supported by evidence of rutting in F468, and of the demise of the north vicus from the 3rd century onwards.

PHASE 4b AREA A (fig 4.22)

S Bryant

Description

The Northgate

Two post holes (F552 and F384) were observed at the back of the Northgate foundations. They were first observed by Petch (1956) and were interpreted by him as post holes for a timber gateway. They were subsequently relocated in 1981 when the previous archaeological trenches in the Northgate area were re-excavated. F552 appeared as a void, 0.4m deep, cut into the foundations (F309) for the east gate tower. F384 was near the west tower foundation (F305) and was 0.2m deep. It contained a filling of modern debris from the backfilling of the 1956 archaeological trench.

Discussion (fig 4.25)

It is not entirely clear what function F552 and F384 performed, but one possible explanation is

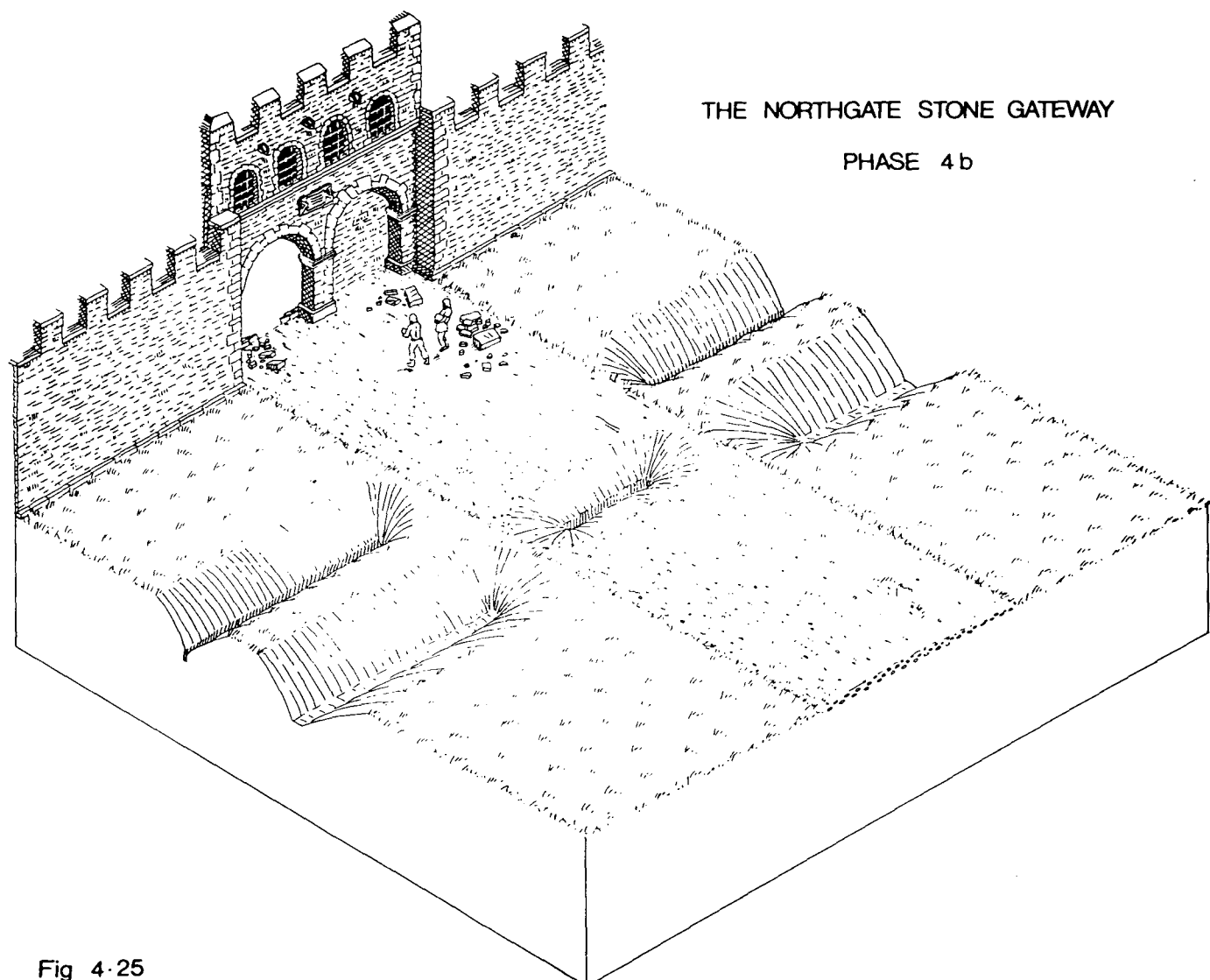


Fig 4.25

that they formed part of a timber blocking wall at the back of the gateway. The fact that F552 cut through the gate foundation suggests that it postdates them, and the digging of the ditch (F246) across the exit road (F421) in Phase 4b, would provide a reasonable context for the blocking off of the Northgate entrance. The apparent absence of similar posts at the front of the Northgate could be due to post-Medieval intrusions in that area.

PHASE 4b AREA B (fig 4.18)

S Bryant

Description

The final recut of the inner ditch system was represented by F223, the most complete profile of which was in Section C (fig 4.11), where it had a shallow V shaped profile with a sump cut into sandstone bedrock. The sump contained a filling of red sandy silt with small stones and pebbles derived from weathering of the ditch sides. This

was overlain by the secondary silt of dark brown sandy loam (F1302 Phase 4c), which contained moderate amounts of stones and small boulders. In section B the profile of F223 was slightly truncated by the Phase 5 features, and it only survived to a depth of 1m and a width of 3.2m. The bottom filling consisted of a natural primary clayey silt, which appeared to have been washed in from the north side of the ditch. This was overlain by a silty loam derived from weathering of the Phase 2 refuse deposit (F150) which occurred to the south and east of F223, and above this was a mixed gradually accumulating silt (F1302), as in Section C. Above this was a brown sandy loam representing the Phase 5 deposits (F1300) which was in turn overlain by a darker brown sandy loam (F59) containing stones from the wall. There was no evidence of a recutting of F737, the Phase 4a outer ditch, in Phase 4b.

A single ditch (F246) was dug across the exit road (F421) 13m north of the gate. It had a V shaped profile which was 2.5m wide by 0.8m deep, and an ankle-breaker type slot 0.5m wide by 0.25m deep,

in the bottom. The bottom filling of F246 consisted of a silty clay derived from the natural weathering of the ditch sides. This was overlain by a structureless brown sandy loam, similar to the secondary filling of F223, which probably represents a post-Roman soil accumulation. There was no evidence of a deliberate backfilling of F246. The complete eastern end of F246 could not be located as it terminated in an area unavailable for excavation. However, part of the terminal end to F246 was located west of the exit road (F421) and the fact that it did not appear in Section C suggests that F246 was dug for the same reason as F67 and F176, just to prevent access to the Northgate.

Discussion (fig 4.25)

The gradual accumulating secondary filling of F246 suggests that the road (F421) was not used after the digging of F246. F421, therefore, almost certainly postdates the construction of the Phase 4a Northgate and is possibly contemporary with the post holes (F552 and F384) at the back of the

gate. As with the Phase 3b ditch (F67) the relatively small size of F246 indicates that it was probably not designed as a purely defensive obstacle, and that its main purpose was to prevent access to the Northgate.

PHASE 4c AREA B (fig 4.18)

S Bryant

Description

The Phase 4a outer ditch (F737) was cut to the north by F1 which formed the latest ditch in the sequence in front of the Northgate. This was a V profile ditch 4.2m wide by 1.8m deep, and contained a primary filling of silt and secondary filling (F1302) of loam, similar to the filling of F737. F1 cut through the exit road (F421) 4m to the north of F246, and formed a much more formidable defensive obstacle than F246; as such it probably means that the Northgate had been finally closed.

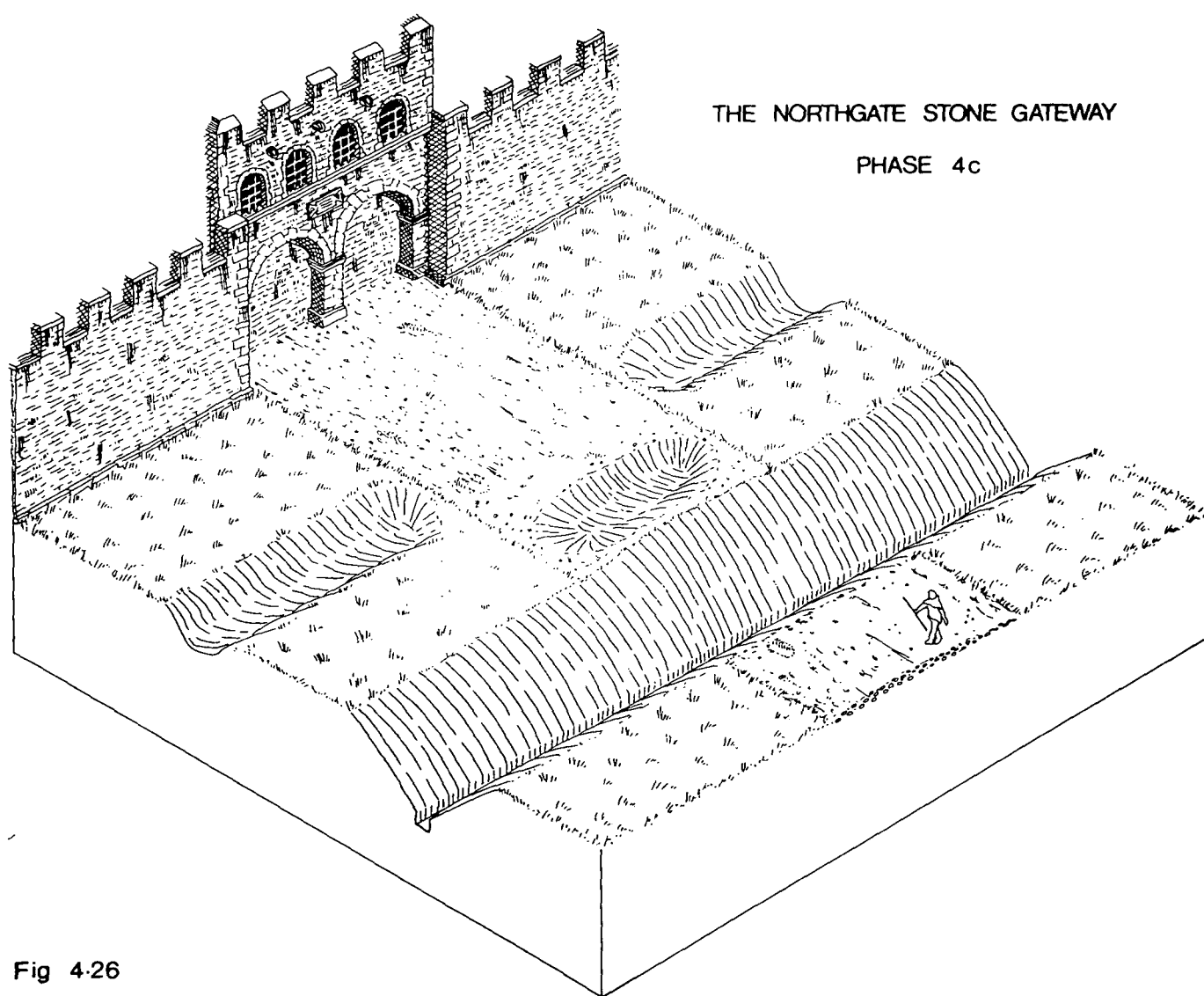


Fig 4.26

Discussion (fig 4.26)

The virtual absence of 3rd and 4th century finds from the large volume of ditch filling excavated from F1, suggests that it was probably kept open during the 4th century. This contrasts with the Phase 4c filling, F1302, of ditch F223, which produced all of the late 4th century pottery found during the excavations and two late 4th century coins. Therefore F223 was probably allowed to silt up during the 4th century, leaving F1 as the only defensive ditch during Phase 4c.

PHASE 5 AREA B (fig 4.27)

S Bryant

Description

Four sunken features were encountered north of the Phase 4a stone wall. F547 was cut into the secondary filling of F223; it was 4m long by 3m wide and 1m deep, with steeply sloping sides. Nineteen possible stake holes were cut into the natural sand subsoil to a depth of 0.1m, and contained a brown silty loam fill. More of these may have been present around the rest of the feature, as it was not possible to identify them in the filling of F223.

The second sunken feature, F229 (Section E, fig 4.21) was cut through the exit road (F421), Phase 3b ditch (F176) and the Phase 2 ditch (F249). A layer of compacted gravel, 229a, lined the bottom of the feature, and was overlain by two separate deposits of silt 229b and 229c. A deposit of gravel 229d, possibly created by erosion from the sides of the feature, was observed in Section E. Another layer of silt 229e occurred in the infilling of deposit F59. An irregular feature (F231) was found with F229 at its south east corner, but the relationship between the two is unclear; a number of possible stake holes were observed surrounding F229, which were cut into the Phase 2 refuse deposit, F150, filling the Phase 2 ditch, F249.

The third sunken feature, F290, was 3.2m long by 2m wide and 0.6m deep. As with F229, it was cut through the exit road F421 and the Phase 2 ditch F249, and also had possible stake holes around its periphery which were similar in nature to those from F547 and F229.

The fourth sunken feature (F804) was larger than the other three, measuring 6.4m by 2.5m. It was 0.7m deep on the north side, where it cut into the filling of the Phase 3a ditch (F738) and 0.1m deep on the south. It, too, was surrounded by possible stake holes which cut into the ditch filling of F738 and F223 to the south. F804 contained a layer of small stones set in a matrix of compacted silty loam.

To the south of F804 was a spread of red sandstone set in green silty loam (F1303) which contained animal bone and charcoal; it sealed the secondary filling of the Phase 4 inner ditch (F223). North of F804 was a layer of semi-angular cobble set in a sandy loam (F1300), which sealed the secondary filling of the Phase 4a outer ditch (F737). This

layer also occurred to the east but did not continue towards F547. Associated with this layer were two separate groups of possible stake holes. The first group lay in an apparently haphazard cluster between F804 and F290. The second group was located north of the cobble and clay layer, in the filling of the Phase 4c ditch (F1). Further possible stake holes may have existed along the southern edge of F1, but it was not possible to excavate further in this direction because of modern intrusions.

Discussion

V Tanner

The sunken features were cut into the secondary filling of ditch F223, which contained late 4th century pottery, and so are 4th century or later. It also seems probable that no wall demolition occurred prior to their construction. However, as they neither contained, nor were cut or sealed by, any features containing datable artefacts, they can not be assigned a more precise date.

By virtue of their dimensions and dating, one possible interpretation of these features is that they are the remains of Anglo-Saxon sunken floored huts, known as *grubenhauser*, and it is possible that the deposit of a compacted silty loam found in F804 is the occupation floor of such a building.

The sizes of sunken floored buildings vary from 1.8m by 1.5m to 9.1m by 5.1m (Rahtz 1981, 75) and those from the site would fit comfortably within this range. They are frequently found to have associated settings for posts or stakes to support their roofs and walls. The most common type of hut is the two post type, though some have a series of post holes numbering six or more (Rahtz 1981, 81). Stake holes, where present, are usually found within the sunken area (Bell 1977, 202). The range of possible functions assigned to these buildings is summarised in Rahtz (op cit, 76):

living-houses, barns, or specialist craft huts being among the suggested functions. Against the interpretation of the Phase 5 features as sunken-floored buildings are a number of facts. The first is geographical; sunken-featured buildings are rare north and west of a line drawn between the rivers Tees and Exe (Rahtz 1981, fig 2.1). The second is structural; sometimes, as here, post holes are absent, for example at Ezinge (van Giffen 1936, Beilage 2, Abb 2), but in Britain this is extremely uncommon. It is also unusual to encounter stake holes outside the area, and the fact that those recovered at Manchester might represent root holes can not be totally discounted. Indeed, such a theory has been considered recently by Watkins (1983), where the roots of certain plant species have been found to produce holes identical in shape to possible stake holes.

Thirdly, the absence of artefacts is also rare; however, the layer containing organic materials (F1303) to the south of F804 could be a midden deposit resulting from the use of this or any of the other sunken features. Finally, whilst



Fig 4-27

NORTHGATE AREA B PHASE 5

sunken-featured buildings are occasionally the only type of structure in a settlement, as for example at Cassington (Arthur and Jope 1962), they are often found with other house types and traces of occupation.

The positioning of these features on the line of the exit road leaving the Roman fort is a point worth commenting on, in view of the presence of similar remains along a road running east-west at the Saxon Shore fort of Portchester (Cunliffe 1976, 301). These structures were interpreted as huts of late 4th/early 5th century Germanic mercenaries living in the lee of the fort. There were, however, more extensive remains of settlement in the form of structural features and artefacts, both in and outside the fort, throughout the immediate post-Roman and Saxon phases. The blocked Phase 4 roadway and the well-draining backfilled ditches provided, at the end of the Roman period, a reasonably dry site with a slight hollow of soft ground running parallel to the wall. This hollow was still to be seen in the 18th century (Whitaker 1771). It is clear that, given their size and shape, such sunken features could, despite latter levelling and intrusions, have been found in Areas A and C. That they were not, clearly shows that they were limited to a single line. As wall debris ran across these features it is probable that the wall still remained to a substantial height when they were in use and it would seem reasonable to assume that it afforded some protection against the prevailing south-west winds.

In the light of the discussion above, the interpretation of these features as sunken-featured buildings cannot be definitely proved one way or the other. It is possible that they represent remnants of a brief stay by a small group of people at this spot, or that they represent non-domestic features relating to activity of a completely different nature; the evidence presently available is insufficient to support either theory.

PHASE 6 AREA B (fig 4.28)

J Walker

Description

Overlying the Phase 5 deposits and the initial filling of F547, F229, F231, F290, F804, was a layer (F59) of red sandstone fragments, pieces of yellow mortar and some glacial pebble (Section C). Contained within this layer were blocks of cut red sandstone.

Discussion

The cut red sandstone blocks were almost certainly the remains of the collapsed facing wall of the Phase 4 fort. The yellow mortar and irregular sandstone and pebble fragments were also possibly derived from the facing and core of the fort wall. The absence of voussoirs, coping stones and other architectural elements from the gate and wall, and the presence of mortar fragments from this deposit, may indicate that the wall was robbed of much of its stonework. Stones derived from the

wall occur, however, sporadically throughout the gradually accumulating erosion material of later phases (Section E fig 4.21) and it is clear that some, at least, of these fallen deposits result from the collapse and erosion of the wall. The absence of mortar in these later phases indicates that these initial deposits were different to the later material formed by natural processes.

If the hypothesis of deliberate robbing is accepted, then it is difficult to imagine a historical context for the activity as, by virtue of the stratigraphy, the event took place after the construction of the possible grubenhauser and the demise of the fort, and therefore in the 5th century or later and yet prior to the Phase 7 activity thought to be associated with a medieval park. Therefore this activity took place in what, for the North-West, were the Dark Ages.

Although examples of Dark Age stoneworking are known from places such as Wroxeter, in the North-West the earliest dates are associated with the building of stone churches which commenced around the 8th or 9th century. Collapsed facing stones were also seen by Bruton (1909), Roeder (1899), Phelps (1913) and Petch (1956) along the north and eastern wall and similar blocks in situ are recorded by Dryden (1844). Bruton found two early 4th century coins (1909, nos 13 and 14) which may have come from this deposit, and Petch (1956, no 5) a late Roman mortarium. These finds confirm the suggested late or post-Roman date. It may be, however, that the large patches of facing stones and mortar represent the deliberate toppling of the defences, although in this case one would have expected architectural fragments to be found. This toppling may be associated with the creation of the Anglo-Saxon burh (D Hill, pers comm).

The Anglo-Saxon Burh

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in AD 919 King Edward ordered an army of Mercians to occupy Manchester, in Northumbria, and to repair and man it (Morris 1983, 15; Harland 1861, 13). The word "gebetan", used in the Manchester entry, is quite different from that usually used elsewhere in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to denote the building of a new burh. Its use may be evidence that at or around Manchester, reconstruction work upon a pre-existing defensive structure was taking place.

The reconstruction of the burh appears to have been part of a concerted plan by Edward to create a series of forts demarking the northern boundaries of his territory. In AD 923, when the final fort at Bakewell was established, peace was achieved when Edward received the submission of the northern kings. It is interesting to note that the repair of the burh indicates that it probably existed prior to AD 919, as a number of traditions survive to the effect that Dark Age Manchester was variously occupied by Queen Ethelburga, wife of King Ine of Wessex sometime around AD 686 (Harland 1861, 11-12); the Danes (Morris 1983, 15); and the giant Tarquin, killed by Sir Lancelot (Stukeley 1776; Horsley 1732).

At Rhuddlan, King Edward built a new burh that may have enclosed 72 acres (29.1ha). It was defended



Fig 4:28

NORTHGATE AREA B PHASES 6 AND 7

by a 13m wide bank, in front of which was a ditch 17m wide and up to 3m deep (Hanley 1981). No traces of such large ditches have been found immediately outside the fort at Manchester, neither is there room for them, (see fig 4.7).

Whitaker (1771, 28-30, 52-3, 272-3) recorded the presence of large ditches, to the east, north and west of the fort, apparently running down to the river. The confused nature of his text makes it impossible to locate them, but it is just possible that they may represent a ditch similar to that at Rhuddlan.

There is, then, no clear evidence for the re-fortification of the fort, and the hypothesis that Edward was referring to the area around the cathedral seems quite attractive. However, the Chronicle refers to three distinct actions to be undertaken by the "army" of the "people of Mercia", namely: to occupy Manchester; to repair the existing defences (either at the fort or around the cathedral area); and to man the resulting structure. It is always possible that the occupation took place but, as the Chronicle is recording an order, not an event, that the repair and manning did not. All that can be said, at this stage, is that the Phase 6 deposits probably result from the robbing of the wall for stone for a structure, possibly the burh, elsewhere.

Whitaker (1771) recorded a tradition that stones from the fort were used in the building of the cathedral and bridges in medieval Manchester. There seems to be no reason to doubt this, but if the cause of the various deposits outlined here and below is accepted, then Phase 5, the only stone-robbing phase, is unlikely to be as late as Manchester's medieval bridges, as insufficient time would be available for the formation of the Phase 7 and 8 deposits. Whitaker's record preserves the obvious fact that the deserted fort represented the best source of stone in the area between the 4th and 18th centuries.

PHASE 7 AREA B (fig 4.28)

J Walker

Description

In 1978 Professor Jones discovered a series of post holes cut into layer 59, Phase 4. Some of these post holes contained voids: however, the majority of them, all of which were U shaped in profile, were filled with a matrix very similar to that of Layer 59. During this phase a further accumulation of derived material occurred in the upper filling of the ditches (fig 4.7 and fig 4.21).

No post holes belonging to this phase were found in Areas A and C but this is unlikely, given their depth, to have been due solely to later levelling. It seems likely, therefore, that they only originally existed in Area B.

Discussion

The plan of the post holes would seem to indicate that they formed part of a rectangular structure

approximately 10m by 5m. The size of this building, and its construction techniques, are typical of the remains of Medieval and Anglo Saxon rural structures, although Anglo Saxon gateways which always appear to be at the rear of the rampart front, can produce similar patterns of post holes (Gould 1968-9).

There are a number of factors that make it unlikely that the post holes represent an Anglo-Saxon refurbishment of the gate, namely the distance of the post holes from the gateway, the presumed condition of the demolished gate and the fact that projecting gateways are a later medieval phenomenon. Although it has proved impossible to accurately date this phase of the site, it would seem reasonable to suppose that the pattern of post holes, recovered by Professor Jones, represents the continuation of rural settlement occurring in Phase 5.

Camden recorded, about 1600, that the fort stood within the park of the Earl of Derby known as Aldport. Together with Over Aldport, the park, first recorded in 1282 (Roeder 1899), included a lodge fronting onto Deansgate (Palmer 1822). In 1322 (Wright-Procter 1874) the Nether Aldport area consisted of 30 acres (12.1ha) of heath, 20 acres (8.1ha) of pasture, 2 acres (0.8ha) of meadow and presumably 43 acres (17.4ha) of woodland. Roeder (1899) comments on the fact that the apparent bounds of Aldport correspond to the area of Roman settlement. Its northern boundary appears to have been formed by Quay Street which also marked Whitaker's limit of Roman material (see fig 1.1) and the southern boundary of the manor of Manchester (Harland 1861). Pre-Hanoverian houses also occurred at various places along Deansgate that were known as Aldport town (Casson and Berry map of 1750; Whitaker 1771), but these are, traditionally, late expansions from Manchester (Roeder 1899). It seems most likely that the post hole building was probably associated with the park, and may have been a small agricultural building. The significance of the name of Aldport, meaning 'old town' or 'old market', remains unclear as there is, as yet, no clear archaeological evidence for extensive occupation or use of the area in the period between the end of the fort and 1322.

PHASE 8 AREA B (fig 4.7)

J Walker

Description

The upper fills of the ditches in Area B consisted of a silty brown loam that contained occasional stone fragments.

Discussion

A soil survey by Mr J McPeake indicated that this deposit was similar to the majority of the upper ditch fills, and it would seem to represent the gradual accumulation of erosion deposits. The lack of any inherent zonation in this layer may indicate that the area had been ploughed at some point. These soils probably accumulated when the area was agricultural land.

PHASE 9 AREAS A, B & C (fig 4.7)

J Walker

Description

The whole site was covered by a mixture of brown and black loam layers, containing 19th century and later finds as well as the remains of pipes, drains and other services.

Discussion

It is clear from the sections that these modern deposits, in places, removed and destroyed a number of layers representing the later phases of the site.

In Area A, Phase 4 deposits were immediately overlain and cut away by these deposits, and the same is true of Area C. Only in Area B were the remains of later phases found, so that it is not clearly known how much activity took place in Areas A and C in later phases. It is possible that very little activity occurred in these phases on the site as a whole for the following reason. Regardless of disturbance, pottery is a relatively indestructible item; therefore, if Hanoverian works had disturbed later levels in Areas A and C, the pottery from them should have survived in the Hanoverian and later levels. The dearth of later Roman pottery from the site clearly suggests that occupation was relatively slight.