

**P. T. Bidwell, *The Legionary Bath-House and Basilica and Forum at Exeter*.** Exeter Archaeological Reports No. 1. Exeter City Council and the University of Exeter, Exeter 1979. XXX und 262 Seiten, 78 Abbildungen, 10 Tabellen und 21 Tafeln.

Archaeological evidence for Roman military penetration of Central and Eastern England in the period after the Claudian invasion is abundant, as a glance at the fourth edition of the Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain (1978) will show. Despite wide-ranging fieldwork and excavation, pioneered by Lady Aileen Fox, there is still no sign that the Romans concerned themselves with the far South West for at least 15 years after the conquest. However, by about A.D. 60, the situation had changed and Exeter on the river Exe became the seat of a legionary unit (presumably the Second Legion) engaged in extending formal control over the scattered civitas of the Dumnonii.

Paul Bidwell's account of his excavation of the legionary bath-house and overlying basilica and forum at Exeter is important for our understanding of how and when the South West was annexed: but it also demonstrates how a new-born urban centre could take advantage of its military past.

The fortress described in Chapter I was founded about A.D. 55–60 and was, at 15.4 ha., cramped; but Mr Bidwell argues convincingly that it could have held a complete legion. Parts of its barracks, fabrica and granaries are known in addition to the internal bath-house. The presence of the Second Legion is suggested by two fragments of antefix from the same mould as examples found at Caerleon, the later Flavian base of that legion. The author demonstrates that the fortress was abandoned in about A.D. 75, but does not pursue the implications of this for the legionary sites at Kingsholm and Gloucester.

The legionary bath-house, the focus of the excavations of 1971–77, was built about A.D. 60–65 on a site reserved for it. The caldarium, a furnace-house and parts of the tepidarium were uncovered in excavation. Their architectural scheme is ably discussed by the author in the light of developments in the continental provinces and an overall reconstruction is attempted, with notable success.

Of particular value and unusual technical interest is Mr. Bidwell's review of the evidence surviving in the caldarium and furnace-house for the methods by which the baths were heated and supplied with hot water. Not only does he give an excellent account of the development of wall-heating, but offers an impressive reconstruction of the boiler and testudo which supplied hot water (fig. 8, p. 39). Calculations of capacity lead him to conclude that the main heating of water took place in the evening and that its temperature was maintained so far as possible during opening hours.

After the withdrawal of the troops (c. A.D. 75) the local community took over the baths, but reduced the size of the heated rooms. The former frigidarium may have housed the civil administration. However, about A.D. 80, perhaps as part of the wave of urbanisation credited to Agricola, a new forum and basilica complex replaced the military buildings. Demolition was careful and parts of the old structure were incorporated in the new. The author compares the new civic centre with other Romano-British forum-complexes, but is not able to claim any special position for it.

The Exeter forum and basilica remained substantially unchanged until the end of the Roman period; but each generation either repaired it or added new features, such as shops and offices. The final demolition of the basilica in the late fourth or early fifth century and the removal of its rubble is difficult to understand; for it seems to point forward of new work which never took place. Instead, the space was used for a cemetery, apparently starting in the fifth century.

The final chapters of the book are devoted to a series of reports by specialists on the various categories of portable find from the site. One may mention in particular the

battered remains of an eagle in Purbeck marble, and fragments of an unusual polychrome mosaic of c. A.D. 60, the earliest so far recorded in Britain.

The discussion of the coarse pottery is very competent indeed. Five important groups of dated vessels are selected for review in advance of the publication of a definitive type-series for Exeter. Table 9 provides a convenient conspectus which includes the more closely datable fine wares. It is unfortunate that, while context codes are given for the finds entries, there is no description or separate list of the findspots.

The form of the volume owes much to the fact that it was an independent publication by the Exeter City Council and the University, with support from the Department of the Environment and the County Council. It is difficult to imagine that a commercial publisher would have been willing to print so many pull-out plans!

There are few editorial slips. The headings and sub-headings are sometimes curiously set out on the page and hard to follow, and there are some unfortunate misprints: fig. 26 is printed before fig. 25, and the scale on pl. VIII B is surely of 2 metres, not 30 cm. Half-tones plates, drawings and plans are of high quality, although the reader may feel that the plans should have carried more lettering.

In sum, this is a sound excavation report, written and presented in a workmanlike manner – and on sale at a workmanlike price.

Manchester.

John-Peter Wild.

**Studies in the Romano-British Villa.** Herausgegeben von Malcolm Todd. Leicester University Press, 1978. 244 Seiten und 66 Abbildungen.

In dem kürzlich neu aufgelegten Buch von S. Perowne, *Hadrian* <sup>2</sup>(1977), stehen drei einleuchtende Sätze, die geradezu als Hintergrundbeweis für den erstaunlichen Standard der Villenforschung in Großbritannien gelten können: „In Italien und anderen lateinischen Ländern waren immer die Städte die Zentren der Zivilisation und Kultur gewesen, in England dagegen die Landhäuser. Die Briten haben das Land stets mehr geliebt als die Stadt, wie die Schönheit ihrer Gärten und die graue Eintönigkeit ihrer Städte beweisen. Je reicher sich das Leben auf dem Lande entwickelte, um so weniger Briten hatten den Wunsch, in der Stadt zu leben“ (S. 97).

Neun Jahre nach dem grundlegenden, von A.F.L. Rivet herausgegebenen Werk „*The Roman Villa in Britain*“ (1969) gilt es zu fragen, ob das damals von G. Webster entwickelte Programm in die Wege geleitet wurde (ebd. 217 ff.: an mehreren Stellen komplette Ausgrabung einer landwirtschaftlichen Einheit = Villa). Weitere Hilfe bei der Erforschung des römerzeitlichen Gutshofes gibt jetzt das Werk von J. Percival (*The Roman Villa. An Historical Introduction* [1976]), das sich mehr allgemein mit den Villen, vor allem im nordwestlichen Imperium Romanum, beschäftigt.

Der hier anzuzeigende Sammelband, der elf Vorträge einer an der Universität Nottingham im März 1976 abgehaltenen Tagung vereinigt und bereits knapp zwei Jahre nach Redaktionsschluß im Dezember 1976 (Vorwort von Todd S. 9), gedruckt vorliegt, läßt sich in vier Hauptabschnitte gliedern. Die Beiträge 1–4 von W. Rodwell, *Rivenhall and the emergence of first-century villas in northern Essex* (S. 11–32), D.S. Neal, *The growth and decline of villas in the Verulamium area* (S. 33–58), J.P. Wild, *Villas in the lower Nene Valley* (S. 59–69) und D.E. Johnston, *Villas of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (S. 71–92) summieren die Ergebnisse neuester Grabungen in einem geographisch gut zu umgrenzenden Gebiet, wobei dann ältere Feldforschungen einer erneuten Analyse unterworfen werden, so wie es G. Webster (a.a.O. 237) forderte und A.H.A. Hogg