





CHAPTER 3

RECENT ADVANCES IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF ROMAN LONDON

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COMMERCIAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF ROMAN LONDON

London is one of the world's most intensively studied Roman cities. The need to accommodate high-value construction projects within a rich archaeological landscape has attracted an exceptional level of developer funding, providing for the continuous employment of hundreds of archaeologists over many decades. According to the on-line catalogue of the London Archaeological Archive Resource Centre (LAARC) a total of 422 excavations of Roman sites were initiated in the City of London and Southwark between 1990 and 2008. Significant Roman remains were encountered in about half of these investigations, whilst summaries published in the journal *Britannia* describe around 60 more recent excavations of noteworthy Roman sites in London. Steady progress has also been made on the publication of earlier work, much of which was also the product of commercial sponsorship. Developer funding has supported most rescue archaeology in the City of London since around 1979.

We do not want for new information, but struggle to make best use of what we have. Published output is inevitably dominated by site-specific accounts, since funding is targeted on individual construction sites. An open policy to the dissemination of unpublished data, promoted by the LAARC, has facilitated some wider reviews (notably Bird *et al.* 1996; Monteil 2004; Clark *et al.* 2008; Gerrard 2011b), but resources for such work remain limited.

As a consequence, this survey concentrates on the accessible evidence of architectural history, drawing on information won from recent fieldwork to outline a new biography of the Roman town. For reasons of space topics covered elsewhere in this volume, principally funerary archaeology, are not fully addressed. Here our key concern is the planning history of the city, which shows how London's urban topography was moulded by the needs of the imperial administration. Three main areas of advance in our reading of Roman London are described. Firstly our understanding continues to benefit from precise dendrochronological dating. In a recent overview Tyers (2008) listed 994 dated Roman oak timbers recovered from sites in London. A significant number of these provide exact construction dates, owing to a preference for unseasoned wood felled on demand. The availability of absolute dating, supplemented by tightly dated ceramic assemblages from extended sequences, presents both an opportunity and a challenge. A narrative drawn from such evidence risks subordinating archaeological readings to historical ones, but is a necessary starting point for research.

Secondly our description of Roman London is enriched by a wealth of new topographic detail. London's design was the product of many distinct phases of engineering, incorporating planned components within inherited landscapes. The built landscape was the ordered creation of episodic political intervention, accommodating significant changes in population scale and density, but designed with impressive regard for the topography of the site. Our improving understanding of the urban morphology, especially with regard to the use of streets, boundaries and civic spaces, not only illustrates how profoundly and frequently the landscape was transformed, but

also suggests new readings of the ideological meaning of the city. Creighton's work (2006, 93–107) offers an exciting glimpse of what can be achieved from such study, in particular in his engagement with ideas drawn from social theory such as time-space distanciation, the duality of social structure, and cities as storage containers of authoritative resources. Creighton's conclusions are compromised, however, by an outdated model of how London's urban form evolved. Irregularities in the town plan are used to argue that the city's architecture was chiefly the product of private acts of patronage by individuals who engaged in urban living in ways that mirrored towns elsewhere in the Roman Empire, leading to the conclusion that 'no grand design need ever have existed'. The evidence brought together here suggests, instead, that these irregularities were the product of a series of separate exercises in urban town planning as the growing city subsumed features inherited from earlier landscapes. An important distinction can be drawn between episodes of politically inspired town planning, which gave shape to the early Roman town, and more subtle processes of change representative of individual actions that gained importance in the later stages of London's Roman history.

Finally the study of the artefactual evidence, set within these refined chronological and topographical frameworks, makes it possible to describe a lived in city, embracing different communities where identities were manifest in patterns of consumption and disposal. Here, as in the architecture of the city, it is easy to recognise the hand of elite social control. Recent work indicates that London remained resolutely alien, enjoying lifestyles that were radically different to those of subject populations within the urban hinterland (Perring and Pitts 2013). Further study stands to benefit from the high-density descriptions of spatial change now achieved, although the potential of this material is unlikely to be realised through developer funding alone.

THE ORIGINS OF LONDON (FIG. 1)

Archaeologists are agreed that London was a Roman foundation, but recent discoveries have renewed debate over how and when the city first came into being (Perring 2011; Wallace 2013). Most contemporary attempts to describe Britain's urban origins have followed Millett in emphasising the agency of local elite society competing for status within the emerging Roman political structure (Millett 1990). These readings reject earlier models that credited the Roman army with a leading role in engineering Romano-British towns (Webster 1966; Frere 1967; also Grahame 1998).

London is a difficult site to accommodate within these competing models. There is negligible evidence for the local presence of an elite of sufficient standing to have engaged in building a new city, whilst Tacitus explicitly observes that London was not a Roman colony (*Annals* 14.33). Millett consequently argued that London was established by foreign traders as an entrepôt for business affairs in the province (Millett 1990, 88–91; after Haverfield 1911). A similar view had been reached by archaeologists working within the city, following a failure to find settlement evidence predating *c.* A.D. 50 (Marsden 1980, 17–26; Perring 1991, 16–17). This consensus no longer holds true and there is renewed interest in the role of imperial intervention in the building of London (Wilson 2006a, 26; Pitts 2014). Recent work offers three new strands of evidence that contribute to this argument. These include evidence of an Iron Age settlement south of the Thames, parts of a large ditched enclosure built north of London Bridge, and a date of A.D. 47–48 for the construction of London's western approach road.

Excavations near Bermondsey Abbey show that Bermondsey eyot, south of the Thames, was occupied from the Middle Iron Age onwards (Grange Road/Grange Walk 1989–91; Rayner 2009, 38–40). A farmstead may have stood here at the time of the conquest, and there are some features in neighbouring Southwark that may be contemporary (Cowan 1992, 11). By contrast the north bank remained unpopulated at the time of the conquest, adding weight to the suggestion that London emerged from the geography of Kent and is correctly identified as a place of the Cantiaci by Ptolemy (Millett 1996, 35). If farmers in Bermondsey became friendly to Rome then their geographical knowledge may have helped in the engineering of London: this might even have been the place from which *Londinium* was named (Coates 1998).

It was north of the river, however, where London took urban form. In a recent paper I argued that the town was preceded by a short-lived fort (Perring 2011), in response to which Wallace

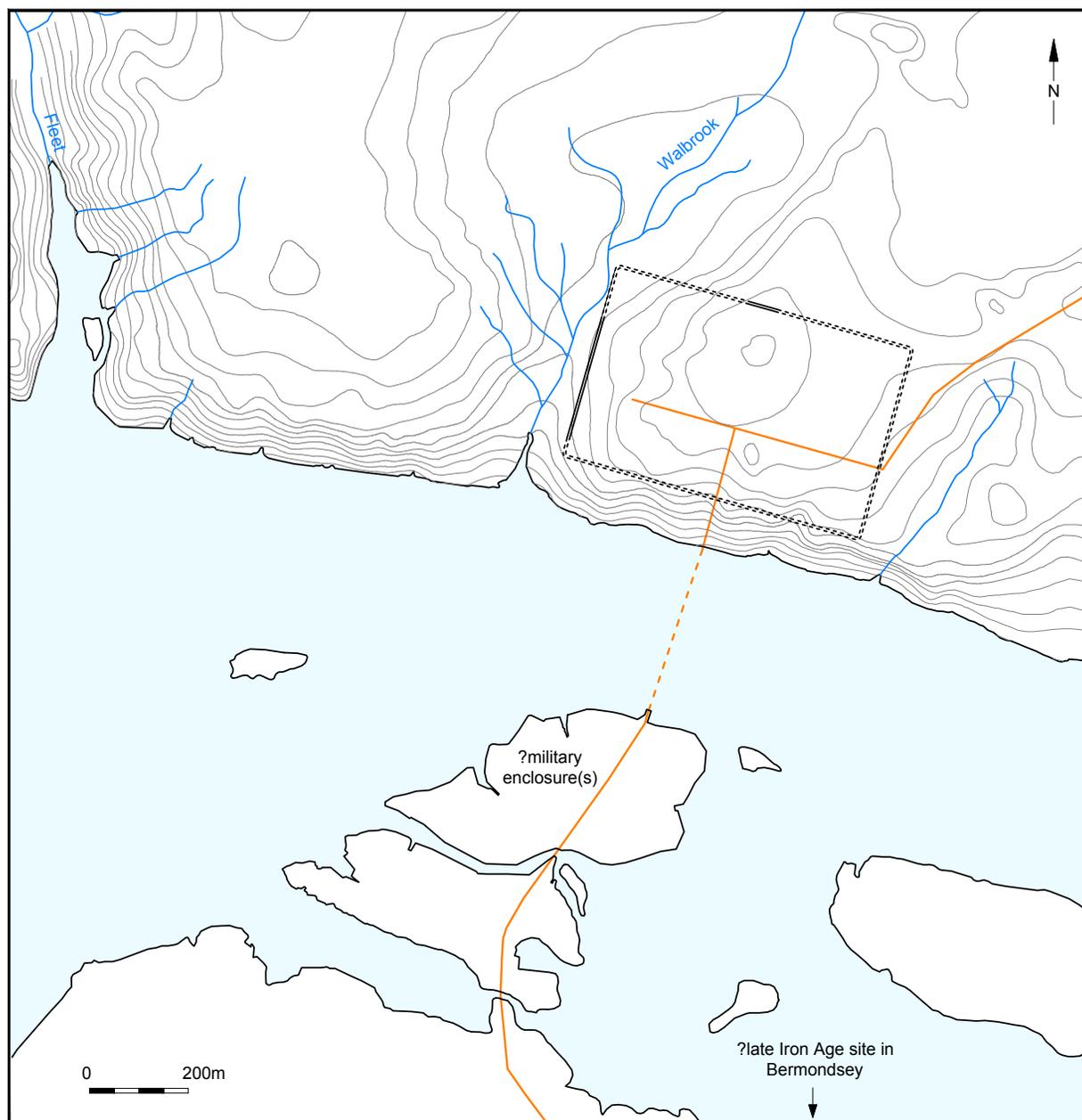


FIG 1. Roman London *c.* A.D. 43.

(2013) has reasserted Millett's argument for a civilian origin. The evidence at issue consists of two recent sightings of what may have been a double-ditch enclosure within the angle formed by the rivers Thames and Walbrook (7–11 Bishopsgate 1995: Sankey 2002; Walbrook House 2006–7: Blair 2010; Booth 2007, 291; Booth 2008, 320). On both sites two parallel, V-shaped ditches were found at the base of the sequences. In each case the inner ditch was notably wider than the outer one, a distinctive feature typical of defensive enclosures. Whilst it is not certain that the observations formed part of a single circuit, there are sufficient points of similarity for this to seem likely. Both locations were on the boundaries of Roman London's inner urban core, as marked by the extent of the orthogonal Claudio-Neronian street grid (e.g. Swain and Williams 2008, fig. 1.4.1), and there are topographical grounds for suggesting that they represent the northern and western boundaries of a defended area of 24–25 ha (Perring 2011, 251). No dating evidence was recovered from Bishopsgate, but Walbrook House finds included a storage jar in Late Iron Age Romanising grog-tempered ware: a transitional fabric dating to the beginning of the Roman period (Thorp 2010). The absence of Romanised products ubiquitous in London assemblages

from c.A.D. 50 suggests that the ditches had been filled by that date. An early date is also indicated by an extended structural sequence, in which the ditches predated the earliest street system.

Wallace has drawn our attention to other observations of V-shaped ditches, most of which were associated with roadside drainage or enclosures alongside roads leading into London, and prefers to treat the Bishopsgate and Walbrook House features as more of the same (Wallace 2013, 286). This fails to account for their particular characteristics, since the double-ditch configuration was clearly occasioned by something other than street building or drainage. To all appearances these were part of a defensive circuit, and whilst there are no parallels from civilian contexts, there are many military ones (Wilson 2006a, 27). Although smaller than typical, at up to 1.8 m deep, the London ditches were similar in scale to those of the Claudian fort at Longthorpe (Frere and St Joseph 1974, 10).

The military parallels cannot be ignored and, in the context of affairs in Britain before A.D. 50, encourage two competing hypotheses. One possibility is that the army built a defensive circuit on behalf of a civilian community, following the example suggested for Augustan Waldgirmes (Becker 2003; Wilson 2006a, 25). If so the defences probably date to A.D. 47/48 when an urban site was established at London (see below). A town of sufficient importance to warrant urban defences ought, however, to have housed major public buildings of the sort not seen in London until the Flavian period. The alternative would be to see this as a military rather than a civilian site. If so, its scale only makes sense within the context of troop deployments at the time of the conquest. Although we cannot date the defences to A.D. 43, there was no need for a large military post here once the invading army had advanced on *Camulodunum*. Later accounts place Plautius' army close to the Thames for several weeks in the summer of A.D. 43, waiting on the arrival of the emperor Claudius (Dio Cassius 60.20.5–60.21.3), suggesting that a military base of this period exists hereabouts. The topography of the Thames valley suggests few sites equally suited for the river crossing, whilst the later Roman road system, a product of military engineering, was directed through London (FIG. 8). London is a sensible location for a Claudian military site. The scale of London's Claudian defended enclosure fits closely with what would have been needed to house Plautius' army (Crummey 1997, 35 offers a speculative reconstruction of the successor encampment at Colchester), but exceeds any other known military requirement. The absence of internal evidence dated to A.D. 43 accords with the interpretation of this as a short-lived facility, occupied by an army housed in tents. The subsequent engineering of the Roman town involved extensive landscaping, sometimes reducing the pre-Roman land surface by over 1 m (Milne and Wardle 1993, 28). The case is not proven, but it is difficult to see what else would account for the presence at London of a large defended Claudian site of military style.

THE FIRST ROMAN TOWN (FIG. 2)

Regardless of whether or not London was formed from the site of an earlier fort, the town was built c. A.D. 48. This is implied by timbers felled A.D. 47/48 used in building the main west road (1 Poultry 1994–6; Hill and Rowsome 2011, 258). This route would not have been vital in A.D. 43, when only the route to Colchester mattered, but obtained strategic importance with Rome's advance west along Watling Street. A foundation date of A.D. 47/48 would make London one of three cities built under the governor Ostorius Scapula: a veteran colony was established at Colchester in A.D. 49 (Tacitus, *Annals* 12.31–2), whilst *Verulamium* appears to be contemporary (Frere 1983, 5). A common inspiration for all three cities, despite their different legal status, is suggested by patterns of consumption which distinguished them from other towns of southern Britain but aligned them with sites tied into military networks (Pitts 2014).

Recent work shows that major investment in the urban fabric of London was delayed until the early 50s, with energetic building programmes taking place A.D. 52–54. Waterfront timbers suggest that London Bridge was built c. A.D. 52, perhaps in replacement of an earlier pontoon bridge (Regis House 1994–6; Brigham 2001b). Modest waterfront revetments near by were associated with hard-standings suitable for beaching ships (Arthur Street 2001–2; Swift 2008, 19; Brigham 1998, 23). Behind the waterfront a strictly orthogonal street grid regimented a settlement of timber-and-clay houses built in wholly Roman style (Wallace 2013, fig. 1). The

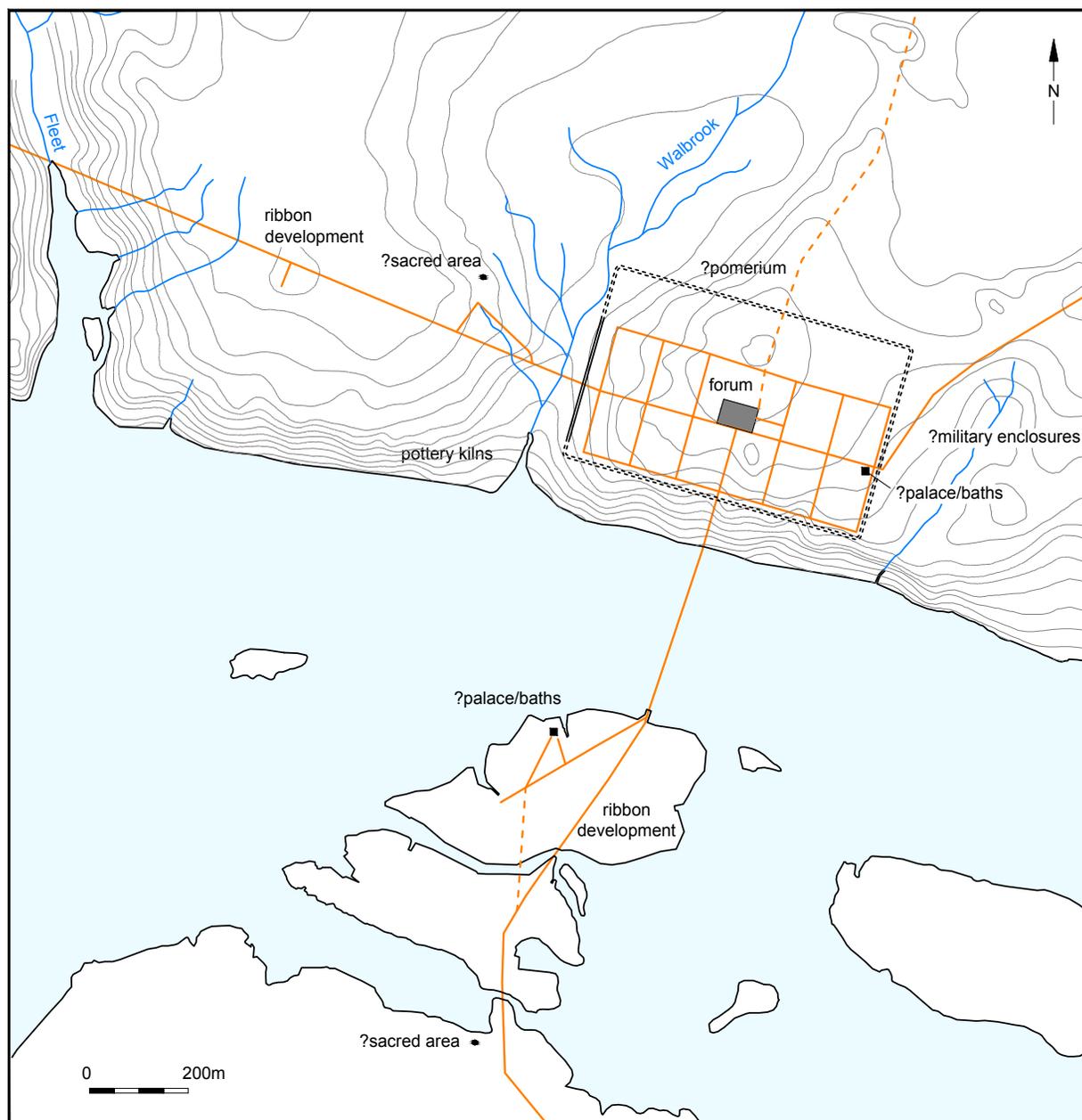


FIG. 2. Roman London *c.* A.D. 55.

settlement was set within the boundaries of the supposed Claudian encampment, the layout of which apparently influenced the planning of the town. Although the original defences were slighted, smaller Claudio-Neronian ditches reasserted their line at Walbrook House and perhaps marked a city *pomerium*. A large open space at the heart of the street grid may have constituted a public forum, although the absence of evidence for a basilica has discouraged its description as such (168 Fenchurch Street 1995–2000: Dunwoodie 2004, 23). By A.D. 60 this area benefited from a public water supply (Philp 1977, 15), adjacent buildings were built using distinctive construction techniques suggestive of military design (Perring 2002, 99), and others in the area had tessellated floors (Neal and Cosh 2009, 398–9, 421). This was most probably a planned civic centre, although the modest nature of the architecture shows that it was not a significant place for competitive social display in the public arena.

Two buildings incorporating heated rooms, perhaps baths, were built on the edge of town. Although we have not found *in-situ* remains from either, their presence is marked by concentrations of box-flue and wall tile used in heating systems (Pringle 2007). These tiles,

which were not produced after A.D. 60/61, were made in local fabrics, presumably for use in London. One building stood just inside the east entrance to the town, where a concentration of pre-Flavian samian inkwells implies an association with official use (Plantation Place 1999–2003: Brigham 2001a; Monteil 2008, 178). The other was represented by demolition debris from a masonry building on the south bank of the river (Winchester Palace 1983–90: Yule 2005, 25; 47). These were both commanding locations where the heated rooms may have been attached to high-status residences, perhaps belonging to leading officials within the administration, although their use as military or public bath-houses cannot be discounted.

A palace in Southwark, detached from the affairs of town but overlooking the settlement and its river port, would have been eminently suited to a senior military command. Although civilian ownership of this property cannot be ruled out, various strands of evidence suggest that it was closely associated with the military administration. Roads radiating from this site gave it unusual primacy within the urban topography, whilst later buildings here were decorated with unparalleled luxury. These later buildings also contained finds illustrative of military and official use, including a third-century inscription listing soldiers perhaps attached to the governor (Cowan and Wardle 2009, 97–8; Yule and Rankov 1998; Hassall 2012, 160–2). This site can plausibly be identified as the London seat of the provincial governor, perhaps based here before A.D. 60. Further speculation would place the residence of the imperial procurator north of the river, accounting for the presence of Classicianus' tombstone in London's eastern cemetery (Grasby and Tomlin 2002) and giving this office closer involvement in managing civic affairs. The governor and procurator represented distinct, often rival, commands and the geography of early London may have been engineered to accommodate their different spheres of influence. Regardless of such speculations, London's more imposing buildings were peripheral to the planned core, indicating that power was exercised from plural locations, in which the central forum had a lesser role than normal in Roman urban living. Whilst we may not be sure of London's legal status, this was the principal seat of government in Roman Britain and was perhaps intended as such from its foundation. In the absence of any local élite society to co-opt, political control and architectural patronage depended on government officials rather than civilian association, generating a particular urban form.

London grew rapidly through the 50s, by the end of which it had an estimated population of c. 10,000 (Swain and Williams 2008). Much growth was suburban. Early developments outside the urban core included ditched enclosures flanking the roads leading into London, particularly in the southern and eastern hinterlands of the two higher-status buildings identified above (Wallace 2013, fig. 1). Some of these probably defined temporary military annexes similar to those explored outside Exeter (Holbrook, this volume). Residential suburbs, analogous to the *vici* set beyond fort gates, developed after c. A.D. 53 in extensive ribbon development along the main roads into London from the south and west (Hill and Rowsome 2011, 274; Drummond-Murray *et al.* 2002). These housed a combination of roadside buildings of imported design, including shops and workshops in strip buildings, and circular houses built following pre-Roman architectural traditions (Hill and Woodger 1999; Hill and Rowsome 2011, 271–4; Rayner 2009, 40). The circular buildings were clustered in peripheral locations and used in small-scale industrial production. In one case glass beads were being made in traditional Late Iron Age style using imported glass (10 Gresham Street 2001: Casson *et al.* forthcoming). These may have been areas of native British settlement, but it is an open question as to whether they housed craftsmen drawn to the city by market opportunity or were associated with slave-run factories.

Other industrial production was Roman in character, as the fine-ware pottery (Sugar Loaf Court ware) that wasters and burnt debris suggest was being produced on the west bank of the Walbrook. The potter, Caius Albucius, whose name was found stamped onto the neck of an amphora in this fabric, can be identified as an immigrant from Gaul (modern Burgundy) (Davies *et al.* 1994, 29; Symonds 2003). His wares were unevenly distributed through London, appearing commonly on sites with a military connection but disappearing at the time of the revolt. Patterns of consumption identify different communities within these suburbs, with some assemblages suggestive of military origin (e.g. Paternoster Square 2000–2001: Watson and Heard 2006, 70–1; Howe and Lakin 2004, 49). Considerable local variation, compounded by the rapid

pace of urban change, complicates attempts to describe wider differences between London east and west of the Walbrook and south of the Thames. On most measures, however, the inhabitants of the urban core were more likely to use material culture in ways that conformed to ideas imported at the time of the conquest (which ideas soon had currency west of the Walbrook), whilst the urban fringes found more space for lifestyles influenced by pre-Roman practice (e.g. Monteil 2004; Crummy with Pohl 2008). An often described dichotomy between military and commercial influences (Dunwoodie 2004, 37) can be misleading, since provincial business affairs were dominated by military supply and official contracts. The mercantile community was parasitic on the administration and drew its membership from veterans and the *familia* of government officials, blurring distinctions between soldiers, administrators and merchants.

Religious precincts may have been established on the borders of the settled area, assuming that the second-century temple complexes found at the entrance to Southwark and beside the amphitheatre had emerged from earlier ritual sites (Perring 2011, 273–8). The replacement of open-air sanctuaries with temple buildings was a common feature in the evolution of Romano-Celtic religious sites (King 1990), and on balance it seems probable that Roman London's later Romano-Celtic temples used locations that had obtained ritual potency in earlier periods. Archaeological evidence testifies to the ritual uses of both areas before the Boudican revolt, and the presence of early sanctuaries at these sites would account for local peculiarities in London's topographic development. The southern approach to London took travellers across a series of Thames channels, where each crossing was a natural location for votive offerings at sacred boundaries. Perhaps the most important of these was where Watling Street first met the Thames at Borough Channel: votive shafts containing sacrificial offerings were dug here from the mid-first century onwards, and in much greater density than has been found anywhere else in London (Swan Street 1998; Beasley 2006). Religious practices at this approximate location were later housed in the temples found at Tabard Square (see below). Another open-air sanctuary may have preceded the amphitheatre and associated temples in the western suburb, occupying one of the highest points of London, where water lay suggestively close to the surface. A large and carefully engineered artificial pond was an unusual and important feature in the early landscape here, and its fills contained a gilt-bronze arm likely to have been a votive deposit (30 Gresham Street 2001; Bayley *et al.* 2009; Blair *et al.* 2006). This allows us to speculatively identify a sacred spring on this prominent site overlooking the planned town. The need to provide early access to this area, perhaps embracing festival processions of the sort common to cities throughout the Roman Empire (e.g. Price 1984, 110–13; Rogers 1991, 80–126; Harries 1992, 91–2), would account for the early construction of a road to the site from the Walbrook crossing, an otherwise peculiar aspect of the urban layout (1 Poultry 1994–6; Hill and Rowsome 2011, Road 2). Extramural religious sanctuaries were important throughout the Roman world, and a particular feature of urban geographies in Roman Gaul (Laurence *et al.* 2011, 44, 135). The examples identified here share common characteristics with such sites, and would have helped locate the new town within the landscape onto which it was imposed. They appear to describe a spatial dialogue between the sacred identity of the planned urban community within the *pomerium*, and counterpoised sanctuaries at potent landmarks to south and west. It is interesting to note that the supposed palaces of government officials were set far from these tentatively identified sacred sites and the routes that linked them; perhaps an intended discretion.

Although speculative, this reconstruction of London's Claudio-Neronian geography shows how the orthogonally planned town sat at the core of a wider suburban and peri-urban landscape. Later building projects monumentalised aspects of this landscape as it was absorbed into the growing city: providing nodal points for an architectural armature that emerged with greater clarity in building programmes of the second century.

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION (FIG. 3)

London's subsequent architectural history continued to mirror imperial involvement in the affairs of Britain, and never more so than in the aftermath of the Boudican revolt. Recent discoveries testify to major works of army engineering A.D. 62–63. Chief amongst these was a 1 ha fort

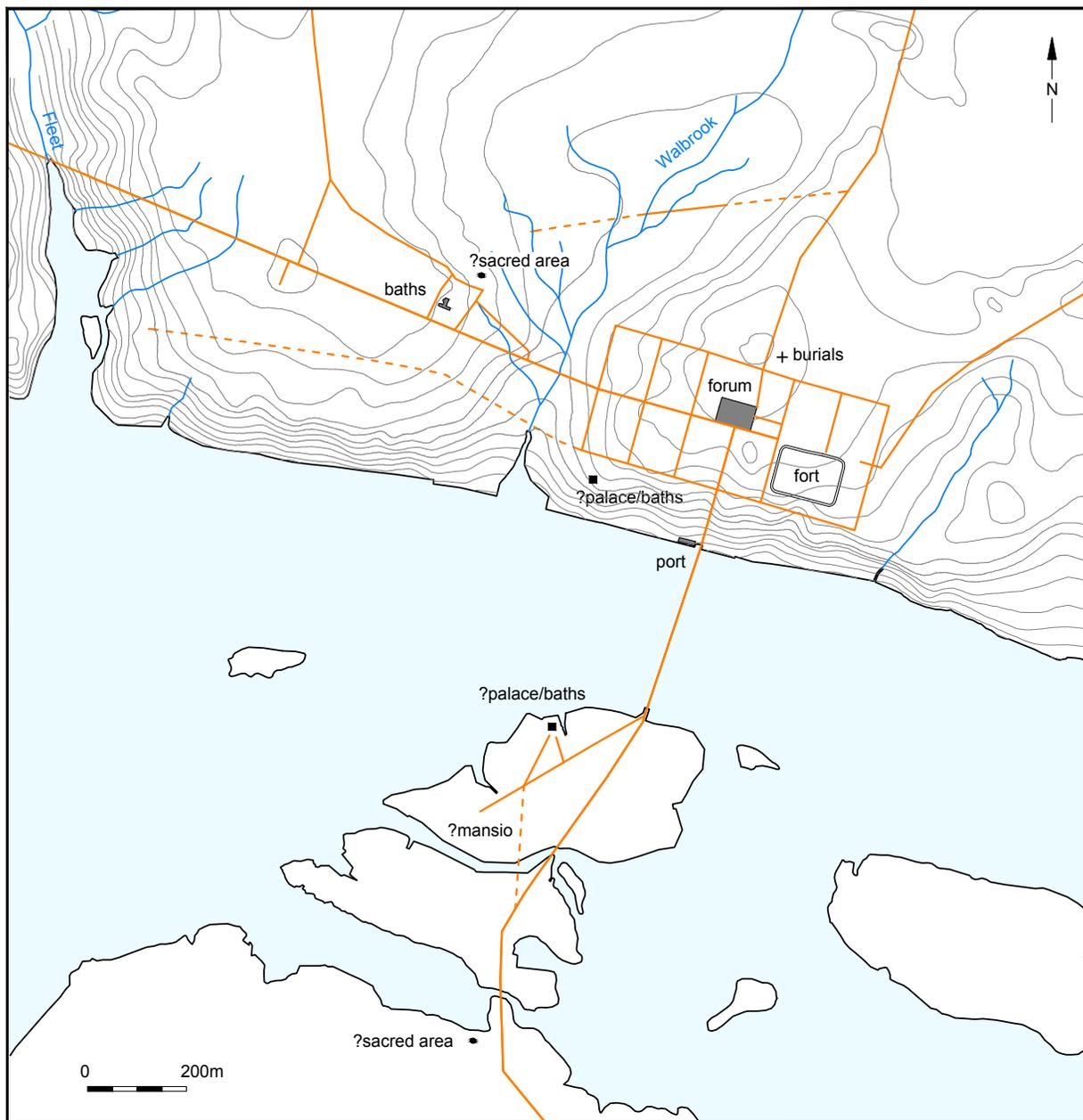


FIG. 3. Roman London *c.* A.D. 65.

carved out of the south-east quarter of the town (Plantation Place 1999–2003; Wilson 2006a, 25–6). The fort was built over Boudican destruction debris and may initially have provided winter quarters for troops associated with the re-imposition of military rule north of the Thames (Fulford 2008b, 11; for the context of which see Tacitus, *Annals* 14.38).

The first closely-dated engineering operation involved the building of a timber corduroy built A.D. 62 on an unusual alignment across the upper Walbrook valley (Drapers' Gardens 2007; Butler and Ridgeway 2009). This was built using 'native' woodworking techniques, in contrast with the Roman techniques used elsewhere in early Roman London, and may have carried a track that by-passed the ruined town, presumably to facilitate troop movements (an alternative interpretation would see this as the base of a defensive rampart). The involvement of native craftsmen may point to the use of forced labour (the date makes it unlikely that this would have been a rebel construction).

Massive new quays, more imposing than anything of the pre-revolt period, were built along the Thames waterfront from A.D. 63 (Regis House 1994–6; Brigham 1998, 25–7). Finds from

the construction site included armour, fragments of a military tent, and a timber stamped by the Augustan unit of Thracians, suggesting that military work-gangs were responsible. A row of open-fronted *tabernae* of the type commonly associated with Roman fora, was built as part of the new quay. These seem likely to have been public facilities tenanted by private contractors. One of the workshops was used by a glassworker, making luxury glass items before A.D. 70 (Shepherd 2008). Lead ingots buried later beneath the floor of an adjacent unit were stamped as the product of British silver mines and the property of the emperor Vespasian, and probably came from an official consignment shipped through London.

New waterworks were built on the western hill, just south of the putative sanctuary (30 Gresham Street 2001; Blair *et al.* 2006). These consisted of wells and water-lifting machines, the earliest of which dated to A.D. 63. Later contraptions on this site could have provided water sufficient for 8,000 people and supplied most of western London. Engineering of this sort is, however, more usually associated with public rather than private demand, and it is possible that the wells were dug to supply the adjacent Cheapside baths (Marsden 1976). Opinion has wavered as to the likely date of this bath-house, excavated in the 1950s, but a date of A.D. 63 is credible. If the army of A.D. 63 had been responsible for building these baths, then it is unlikely to have been for the benefit of troops in the fort on the opposite side of town. It is instead possible that the area south of Cheapside housed officers and administrators, whose presence here is documented in the Flavian period (Perring 2011, n. 49; Millett 1994, 434). The baths might also have been associated with use of the religious precinct to the north (Laurence *et al.* 2011, 222).

Centres of earlier Neronian power were also restored after the revolt. High-status buildings were built by the forum (Marsden 1987, 145), whilst reclamation dumps on the south bank included wall-plaster from a richly decorated building demolished *c.* A.D. 80 (Winchester Palace 1983–90: Yule 2005, 19, 83, 113). Another important building, marked by substantial earth-foundations and a high density of military finds, was built in Southwark on a site later supposed to have housed a *mansio* (Cowan 1992, 14). On the north bank gold-working at the confluence of the Walbrook and the Thames may have marked another late Neronian official building (Governor's House 1994–7: Brigham and Woodger 2001, 45–6). It is possible that activities displaced by the construction of the fort had been relocated here, pioneering the development of the Thames waterfront for public architecture.

Evidence of urban renewal within residential districts is more limited. Where rebuilding took place it usually did so within boundaries established in the 50s, showing that London had the institutional capacity to record and regulate property ownership. Building density was, however, reduced and artefacts from after the revolt are generally more utilitarian, with fewer imports (Rayner 2009, 46). The town may also have occupied a smaller area than before. A small cremation cemetery found at Leadenhall Court, of the late 50s or early 60s (Milne 1992, 11), might indicate that the town's northern boundary had been moved inside the line of the earlier defensive circuit at Bishopsgate.

FLAVIAN TOWN PLANNING (FIG. 4)

A major programme of urban redevelopment took place in the early 70s presumably kick-started by the arrival of Vespasian's governor, Petillius Cerialis (Shotter 2004, 1). Once again construction work can be seen as the product of political strategy, directed by an active imperial administration working to an expansionary policy emanating from Rome. Planned improvements included an extension of the street grid, the construction of a new town boundary, and the monumentalisation of the earlier public landscape. Work on the civic infrastructure was most intense in the period A.D. 72–74, with contemporary investment directed towards buildings associated with administration, such as the *mansio* and amphitheatre.

An enclosed forum and basilica was built in the town centre, providing facilities suitable for town government (Marsden 1987), and the port was enlarged with massive new timber quays in an ongoing programme that started soon after A.D. 70 (Milne 1985). The city expanded beyond its original limits in all directions. Early Flavian streets were laid over the line of the outer ditches of the Claudian enclosure in an extension of the street grid that maintained the order and



FIG. 4. Roman London *c.* A.D. 75.

proportions of the former town (7–11 Bishopsgate 1995: Sankey 2002; Walbrook House 2006–7: Blair 2010). A massive late first-century ditch probably marked the *pomerium* of this enlarged town and was perhaps part of a new defensive circuit (Baltic House 1995–6: Howe 2002; Wilson 2006a, 15–17; Cooper’s Row 1999–2004: Hunt 2010, 50), whilst a palisaded stockade built to the north in the early 70s may have been associated with military activities, anticipating later developments in this area (Drapers’ Gardens 2007: Butler and Ridgeway 2009), culminating in the construction of the Cripplegate fort (see further below). The western suburb was now subsumed within the town, where new roads laid A.D. 73–8 established a more ordered street grid within the inherited Neronian layout (Roads 3 and 4 at 1 Poultry 1994–6: Hill and Rowsome 2011, fig. 82; 10 Gresham Street 2001: Bateman *et al.* 2008, 116–17). This area may also have been enclosed by a formal town boundary, as suggested by burial distributions and a late first-century Roman boundary ditch south of the Cripplegate fort (Wood Street 1997: Howe and Lakin 2004, 18–20).

London’s amphitheatre was built in A.D. 74 on the northern margin of the enlarged town

(Bateman *et al.* 2008). This monument was set next to the supposed early sanctuary west of the Walbrook, where a masonry Romano-Celtic temple was built in the late first century (30 Gresham Street 2001: Bateman *et al.* 2008, 116). The timber amphitheatre could have been an important destination for ceremonial processions, adding to the significance of this area in civic life (Laurence *et al.* 2011, 267–82). It also served the nearby military community, whose needs may have encouraged the construction of the Huggin Hill baths to the south (Rowsome 1999). These baths added emphasis to the monumental character of the Thames waterfront. From this period the riverfront was given greater architectural prominence than other ceremonial and civic locations, and the most important views of London were obtained on crossing the river from the south bank. The bridging of the river was itself a symbol of the Roman ordering of space, uniting pre-Roman territories under imperial authority.

Flavian renewal is also evident in Southwark. The waterfront was reorganised starting in A.D. 72, probably in a series of smaller ventures in contrast to the larger civic projects on the north bank (51–3 Southwark Street 1996: Killock 2005, 31). Such works paved the way for the construction of a large courtyard building presumed to have been a Roman *mansio* in A.D. 74 (Cowan 1992, 32–4). These building operations fell within the immediate hinterland of the palatial complex at Winchester Palace, and the development of north-west Southwark may have been framed by the needs of the military administration, perhaps also responsible for nearby metalworking (Hammer 2003). Development along the main road to London Bridge was more typically suburban, where crowded shops and workshops may have included a market hall or *macellum* (96 Borough High Street 1991–8: Drummond-Murray *et al.* 2002, 59). The earliest architectural embellishment of the ritual landscape on London's southern border may also date to the late first century, when a colonnade appears to have been built around an open shrine here (Trinity Street 2009: Killock 2010).

The initial spurt of public building works of the early 70s, was followed by a second phase of public construction A.D. 84–90, when the port was further enlarged and London Bridge rebuilt (Brigham and Woodger 2001; Brigham 2001b; Milne 1996). The supposed palace sites north and south of the river were enlarged at this time, and a remodelling of the amphitheatre is dated shortly after A.D. 90 (Yule 2005, 32–41; Brigham and Woodger 2001, 19; Bateman *et al.* 2008). This chronology suggests that public investment in London continued throughout the Flavian period, although the governor Agricola had less of an impact on the architecture of London than his predecessor and successor in office. A shift can be described from an early interest in extending urban infrastructure A.D. 72–74, to a greater concern for the amenities of urban living A.D. 84–90.

HADRIANIC TOWN-PLANNING (FIG. 5)

London's next phase of urban transformation dates to the 120s, apparently stemming from another planned exercise in extending the city and improving its public architecture. These works, unparalleled in scale and ambition in the history of the Roman town, are sometimes assumed to have followed Hadrian's visit to Britain in A.D. 122 marking London's elevation to the rank of *colonia* (Tomlin 2006). During this period the city was given a massive new forum requiring local adjustments to the surrounding street plan (Milne 1992), whilst the amphitheatre was remodelled in stone giving it increased capacity and greater monumental impact (Bateman *et al.* 2008). Likewise the south bank palace was extensively rebuilt in the 120s (Yule 2005). At about this time a colonnade was erected to create a covered walkway along the approach road to London bridge (96 Borough High Street 1991–8: Drummond-Murray *et al.* 2002, 96–107), giving monumental emphasis to London's main arterial road. A Romano-Celtic temple and adjacent bath-house were built close behind this road in the early second century (11–15 Borough High Street 2011; 25 London Bridge Street 2010–11, pers. comm. C. Constable), where a statue base dedicated to Silvanus was amongst the finds (Tomlin 2012, 395).

The city expanded beyond its previous limits, at least to the north, and the ditch that marked the Flavian town boundary was levelled, probably leaving the city undefended until the end of the century. New streets and houses were built on reclaimed land in the upper Walbrook

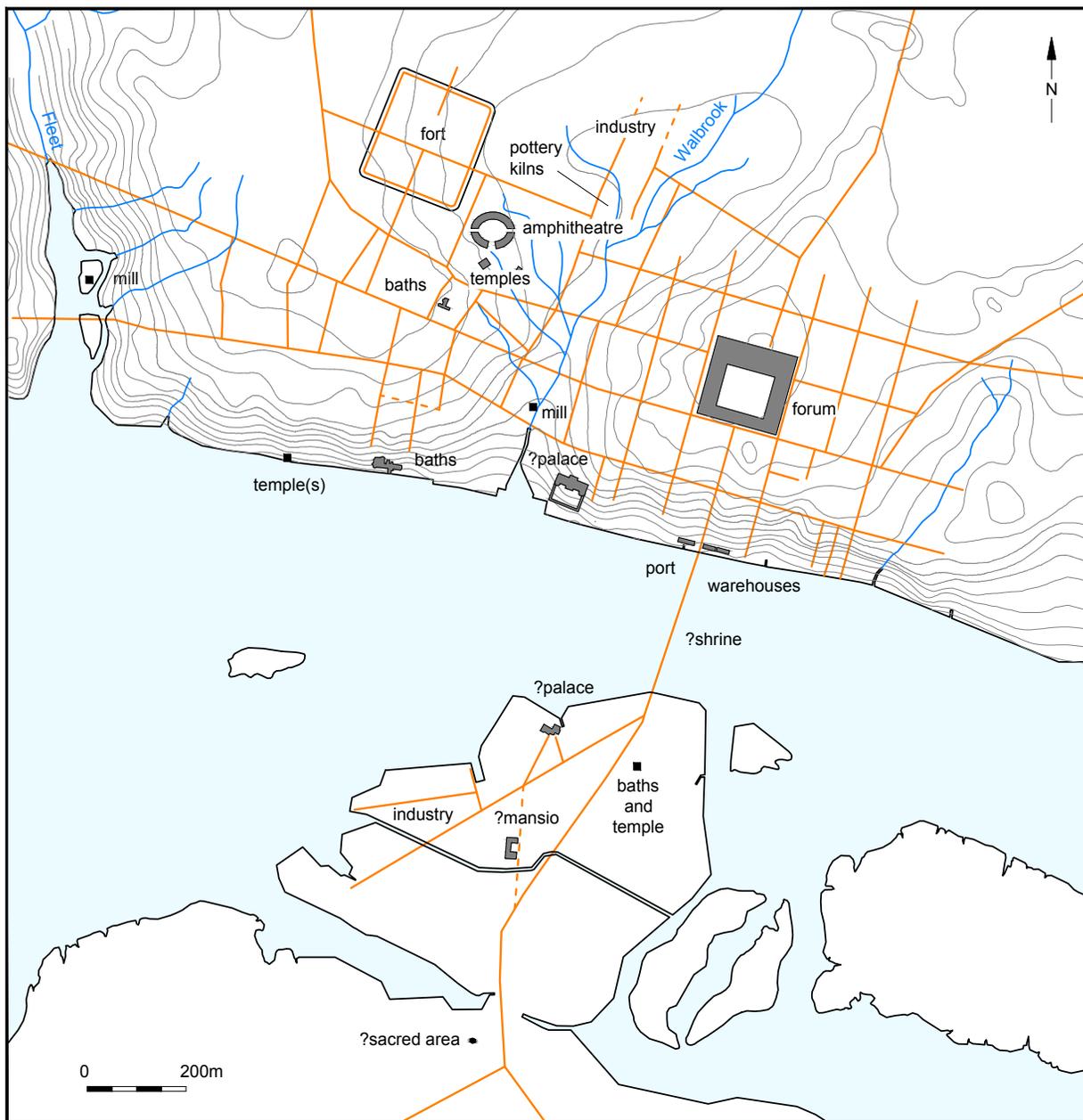


FIG. 5. Roman London *c.* A.D. 125.

valley which became an important area for industrial production. Potters here produced Verulamium region whitewares, primarily for local use (Seeley and Drummond-Murray 2005), whilst London's glass-makers relocated to the district in the mid-second century (Perez-Sala and Shepherd 2008). As previously, areas of industrial production were located on the fringes of the town and prone to relocation as boundaries shifted. The alignment of the new streets suggests that they were laid out in association with the building of the masonry Cripplegate fort. Recent excavations within this fort have established that it was built from new *c.* A.D. 120, in an under-developed area north-west of the town (Howe and Lakin 2004; Shepherd 2012). It was probably garrisoned by both legionaries and auxiliary troops, including cavalry, detached from units to serve with the governor. Officers' quarters were conspicuously absent, and senior ranks were probably quartered elsewhere in the town, perhaps south of the Cheapside baths. Urban garrisons were an extreme rarity in the Roman Empire and the London fort reflects the exceptional importance of London to the military government of Britain.

Several hundred Roman skulls, predominantly of young males, have also been found in the

upper Walbrook valley. Some may have washed out from inhumation cemeteries north of the city (Finsbury Circus 1987–2007: Harward *et al.* 2014) but others were deliberately deposited in streams, ditches, wells and pits, ranging from Neronian to Antonine in date (Perring 2011, 258). Recent studies show that some had suffered a disproportionate range of injuries before death, with evidence also for decapitation (52–63 London Wall 1989–90: Redfern and Bonney 2014), whilst body parts were sometimes left exposed before ritual disposal (Moor House 1998–2004, Butler 2006). This evidence suggests that the skulls were trophy heads taken from the victims of military justice (Fields 2005). They were found on the north-western margins of the town (a location frequently considered the most mortal), close to the fort and amphitheatre where justice may have been administered, and within the likely range of the city *pomerium*: an area favoured for the execution and burial of criminals (Campbell 2000, 44–5; 69–70). The main period of deposition coincided with the occupation of the fort where *speculatores* (military policemen), whose duties included the execution of criminals, were probably based (RIB 19; Hassall 1996). The distribution of these burials suggests that the upper Walbrook valley remained extra-urban until the end of the second century, despite the new streets laid out there. On which basis it seems likely that the formal town boundary continued to follow the line of the now defunct Flavian defences, although an extended *pomerium* may have been marked by boundary ditches set beneath the line of the second-century town wall (Wilson 2006a, 15–17). This suburban industrial quarter in the upper Walbrook valley was perhaps connected as much to the fort as the city.

Roman London was at its most vital at this time, reaching an estimated population of 26,000 (Swain and Williams 2008). The institutions of provincial administration continued to play a dominant role within the urban community, as indicated by a range of tombstones and dedications that refer to government officials. A recent illustration is found in a writing-tablet describing the purchase of a Gallic slave-girl by Vegetus, himself an assistant slave of a slave of the emperor (1 Poultry 1994: Tomlin 2003). Imperial slaves would have staffed the procurator's office, and their control of estates and taxes put them close to the pinnacle of power. The importance of such functionaries may have robbed oxygen from alternative patronage networks, contributing to a lack of civic euergetism in Britain. These circumstances left ample space, however, for London's shopkeepers and craftsmen to advance their social standing, as evidenced by the range of reception facilities found in houses of this period. London's privileged access to provincial wealth called into being a wide range of industries drawing on imported ideas and technologies. Milling and baking offers an example, with bakehouses associated with donkey-mills located within the town centre, and water-mills placed along the lower reaches of the rivers Fleet and Walbrook (Fleet Valley 1990: Milne 1995, 64; Bucklersbury House 2010–12: Watson 2012, 255).

ANTONINE CHANGE

The established orthodoxy that London witnessed a massive contraction *c.* A.D. 160/170 has been questioned, but remains tenable (Perring 2011, 269). Whilst recent excavations show continuous sequences of timber and masonry buildings from the second to fourth centuries (e.g. 1 Poultry 1994–6: Hill and Rowsome 2011, 365–7; 71 Fenchurch Street 1996–7: Bluer *et al.* 2006), others confirm a picture of reduced occupation density, especially west of the Walbrook and on the Southwark waterfront (e.g. Paternoster Square 2000–1: Watson and Heard 2006, 55; Newgate 1992–2001: Lyon 2007, 45). Urban wastelands started to form in response to reduced building density, and studies of 'dark earth' confirm that this represented disused open land where soil formed as a result of bioturbation, accretion and dumping (e.g. Cowan and Seeley 2009). Rubbish disposal following mid-second-century abandonment shows an increased dog population in some peripheral areas, perhaps from culls of feral animals (Rielly 2006). The late second century may also have seen the abandonment of the Cripplegate fort (Howe and Lakin 2004, 25) and associated areas of housing, contributing to the disuse of the Huggin Hill baths. The departure of troops stationed in north-west London might account for a decline in the deposition of trophy heads in the upper Walbrook, before the subsequent construction of the town wall expelled such practices entirely.

An unexpected feature of the period of contraction was the building of several new temples. A precinct containing two Romano-Celtic temples was built at the southern entrance to Southwark A.D. 160–180 (Tabard Square 2002–3: Durrani 2004). This contained a dedication to Mars Camulus by Tiberinius Celerianus, a citizen of the Bellovaci (Beauvais) and official (*moritix*) of Londoners involved in trade with Gaul (Grew 2008). Mars, as the guardian of place, was a fitting deity for the location. Another Romano-Celtic temple was built south of the amphitheatre in the late second or early third century (54–66 Gresham Street 2007: Bateman *et al.* 2008, 118). A temple precinct may also have been built on the banks of the Thames west of the demolished Huggin Hill baths, where a timber felled *c.* A.D. 165 was used in foundations of a riverside ambulatory (Salvation Army HQ 2001–3: Bradley and Butler 2008). An octagonal temple of this date may have been built outside the west entrance to the city, overlooking the river Fleet (Perring 1991, 81–2). These new buildings gave emphasis to the sacred, and might additionally have established monumental locations along processional routes through London (Perring 2011, 275–7), offering a context for the building of arches or monuments alongside the main north and west roads at Newgate and Bishopsgate (Pitt 2006; Frere 1991, 265).

The speed and severity of London's Antonine contraction may have been influenced by the plague of Galens *c.* A.D. 165, which is known to have prompted prophylactic investment in religious architecture elsewhere in the Empire (Perring 2011, 279). Fear of this plague is expressed in an inscribed verse found on the Thames foreshore in 1989 (Tomlin 2013, 390), and might also account for the emergence of a cult of Apollo in second-century London (Merrifield 1996). Whatever the cause London A.D. 160–180 was a city in retreat, with a shrinking economy as well as a shrinking population: reflected in the cessation of local pottery production (Symonds and Tomber 1991). Apart from some local waterfront revetments of the late 180s (e.g. Cannon Street Station 1987–9: Brigham 1990b, 136–8; Tyers 2008, 72), London's public infrastructure was neglected until the end of the century, reflecting as much on the lack of imperial interest in Britain as on any exhaustion of urban resources.

The increased availability of space encouraged the consolidation of land-holdings into larger properties, facilitating the construction of grander town-houses (Hill and Rowsome 2011, 367–9). High-status buildings, perhaps suburban villas and rural sanctuaries, were also built in the environs of London in the course of the second century (e.g. Thorney Island, Westminster: Thomas 2008, 105). These improvements to the domestic architecture occurred over several generations, but the late second century saw a significant shift in the way in which status was defined and displayed. Despite the reduced building density, it is important to note that the late second-century city covered a much larger area than Neronian London, retaining an infrastructure of streets and buildings inherited from the Hadrianic town. This new urban landscape may have been less evidently dominated by the army, especially after the evacuation of the Cripplegate fort, creating political space for wealthy townsfolk. These circumstances perhaps favoured the rise of immigrant merchants, such as Celerianus, although the architecture of later Roman London continued to benefit from the patronage of government officials (Hassall 1980, 195–8).

SEVERAN RESTORATION (FIG. 6)

London witnessed another major programme of public building at the close of the second century. There is a strong case for seeing this as a consequence of Severan patronage following the defeat of Clodius Albinus, the governor of Britain whose claim to purple ended in death at Lyon in February A.D. 197. It can be no coincidence work started on building new waterfront quays in A.D. 197 (Upper Thames Street 1995: Esmonde Cleary 1996, 424), making the restoration of the port of London one of the first acts in Severus' settlement of affairs in Britain (Herodian 3.8.1). Further alterations to the port continued into the third century, as part of what Brigham has described as a 'concerted programme of reconstruction on an unprecedented scale', with the eastern quays dated to within the period A.D. 209–224 (Brigham 1990b, 138). This would fit a chronology of investment contemporary with the Severan military campaigns in Britain A.D. 208–211.

This is also the period when London gained its city wall. Sheldon (2010) has recently challenged

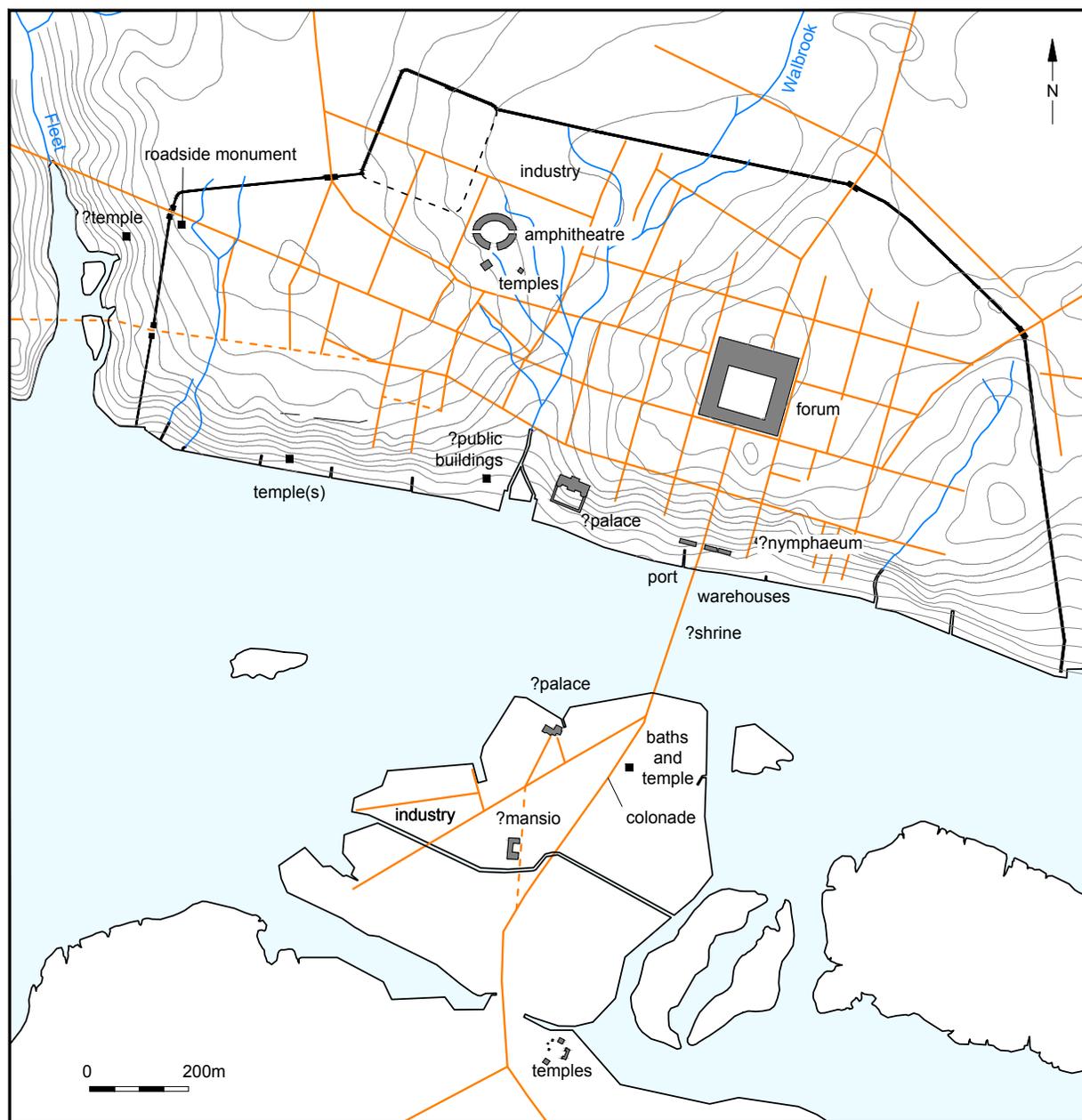


FIG. 6. Roman London *c.* A.D. 225.

the accepted dating of A.D. 190–230 (Marsden 1980, 125–6), preferring a much later third-century date, but his argument does not withstand scrutiny. Results from several unpublished excavations confirm a broadly Severan date for the wall. This is best illustrated by a series of third-century votive and funerary deposits, consistently using vessels dated earlier than A.D. 230, that were placed within the city ditch that accompanied the new masonry town wall (85 London Wall). Whilst we cannot be certain that work on the wall and waterfront were contemporary, it seems likely that these were complementary aspects of a single exercise in giving monumental emphasis to a closely controlled town boundary.

The early third-century rebuilding of London included several public buildings along the Thames waterfront, the visual impact of which may have been intended to rival that of the town wall, offering an equivalent declaration of urban status. New works, identified from recent excavations, included additions to the temple precinct in the south-west quarter dated A.D. 205–233 (Salvation Army HQ 2001–3: Bradley and Butler 2008), and a monumental building terraced into the hillside downstream of London Bridge A.D. 176–221 (Monument House 1998: Blair and

Sankey 2007). A massive drainage culvert testifies to the importance of running water in the architecture of this building, whilst the pottery assemblage includes vessels frequently associated with ritual use. One possibility is that public buildings here incorporated a nymphaeum: a monument type favoured in Severan patronage (Lusnia 2004). A richly decorated bath-house was also added behind the Hadrianic palace on the south bank at this time, using techniques and materials normally associated with military or official establishments (Yule 2005, 67–72). The topography of the Severan city was in large part inherited, but the new walls and waterfront buildings re-asserted a dominant Roman identity as London was restored to prominence in the exercise of Roman power in Britain.

The next major building works took place outside the walled city, at Shadwell, 1 km downstream. The settlement here incorporated a tower-like structure and a large bath-house. The baths were probably built in A.D. 228, the date of a feature apparently associated with the primary water supply (Tobacco Dock 2002; Douglas *et al.* 2011, 15). Whilst the pottery assemblages hint at an official connection, the absence of military objects is equally notable. Gerrard favours seeing this as a nucleated settlement under élite control, perhaps involving immigrant settlement (Gerrard 2011a, 168–70). There are, however, parallels with earlier arrangements in London, when baths may have been attached to the suburban residences of senior officials. A reorganisation of Britain's coastal commands, contemporary with the division of Britain into two provinces and implicit in works on sites of the 'Saxon Shore' and the evacuation of the *Classis Britannica* base at Dover, might have occasioned the building of a new administrative palace at Shadwell, along with housing and facilities for a related entourage. This speculative argument assumes that a high-status residence awaits discovery elsewhere at Shadwell.

LATER ROMAN CHANGE (FIGS 7–8)

New quays were built in parts of Southwark down to A.D. 241 (Wheeler 2009, 76; Perring and Brigham 2000, 133), at which approximate time temples were being built and restored in London (Shepherd 1998; Hassall 1980, 195–8). The period after *c.* A.D. 250 was, however, one of greatly diminished public building. This was not simply a case of neglect, but the consequence of planned redundancy. This was most evident in the deliberate destruction of London's port, where quays and landing-stages were deliberately reduced to their foundations *c.* A.D. 240–270 (Brigham 1990b, 139; Perring and Brigham 2000, 133). The forum basilica was also dismantled in the late third century (Brigham 1990a, 81), whilst the supposed *mansio* in Southwark had been demolished by the early fourth century (Cowan 1992, 53). The baths attached to the south-bank palace were also redundant in the late third century and demolished after A.D. 287 (Yule 2005, 85). We cannot prove that these different redundancies were contemporary, but the evidence suggests a co-ordinated exercise in decommissioning facilities associated with provincial and civic administration in a decided reversal of the Severan vision for London. This relegation of London appears both ideological and political, presumably consequent on new institutional arrangements that demanded the redundancy of earlier centres of command and supply: London was no longer required as a subordinate centre of imperial power whilst being denied the means to become a rival one. The creation of the Imperium Galliarum, following Postumus' rebellion of A.D. 259, suggests a political context for these changes that ended London's privileged relationship with Imperial Rome (Fulford 2008a).

From this date onwards public expenditure in London was largely restricted to the city walls, involving the construction of a riverside wall A.D. 268–75, the addition of bastions to the eastern circuit A.D. 351–75, and local modifications to the riverside wall in the 390s (Perring 1991, 124–7). Each of these defensive refurbishments can tentatively be associated with imperial campaigns in Britain, but none suggests a major investment in making London a permanent site for the exercise of imperial authority. A notable exception to this pattern of architectural patronage occurred in A.D. 294, during the reign of the British claimant Allectus, when construction work started on two large classical temple podia facing the Thames (now better understood through work at the Salvation Army HQ 2001–3: Bradley and Butler 2008). This curious project was never raised above its foundations, but the classical nature of this addition to the monumental

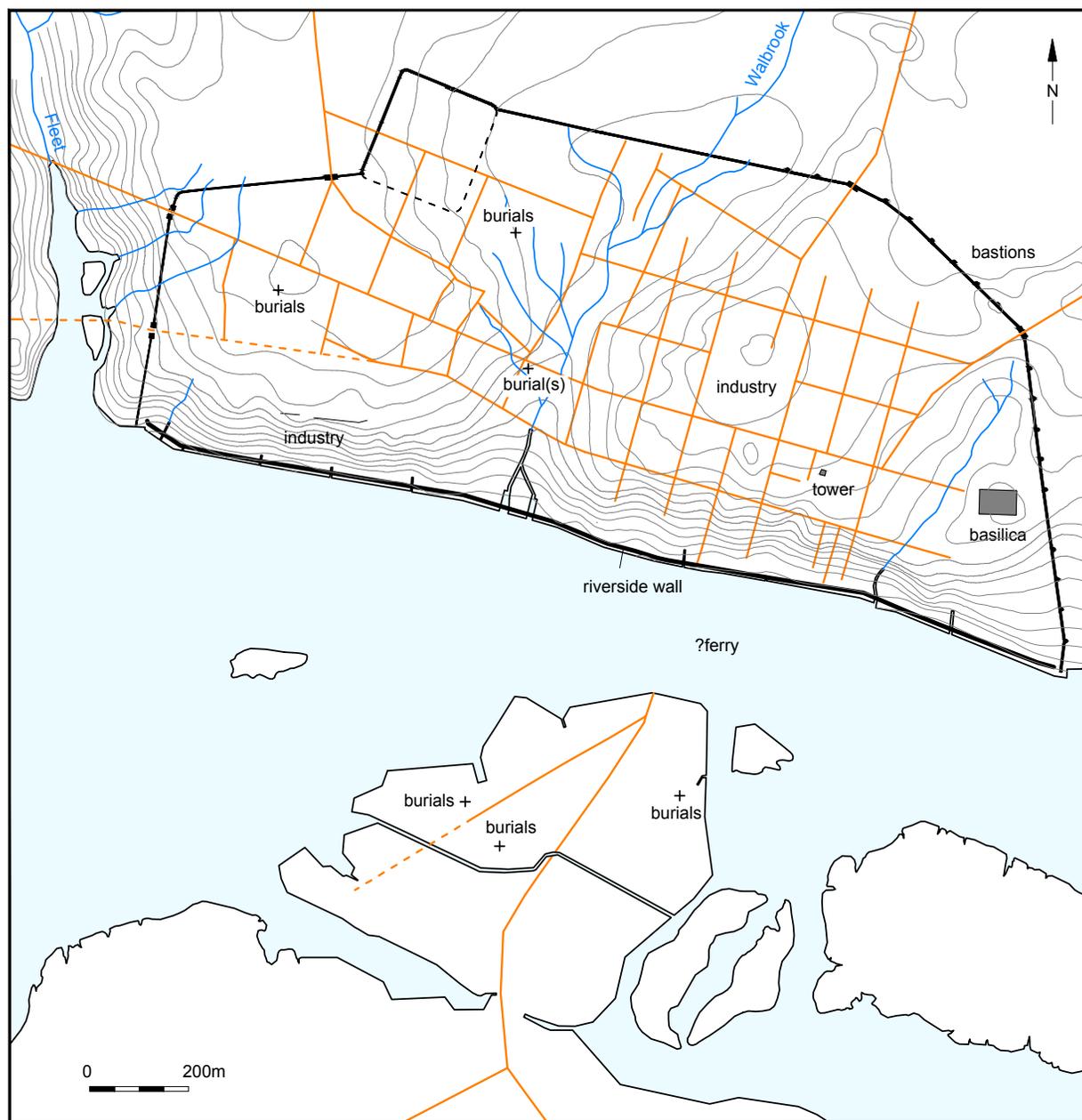


FIG. 7. Roman London *c.* A.D. 375.

Severan waterfront suggests an archaising attempt to restore the city to its earlier glory. This presumption, much in keeping with what is known of the ideological ambitions of Carausius and his successor from their coinage, did not outlast Allectus' brief reign.

Here and elsewhere the sites of redundant public buildings were converted to industrial use (Rogers 2011, 78–9). The placing of workshops on public land, from which building materials had been systematically salvaged, would appear to have been a deliberate and widely applied policy. Whether this was a product of commercial decisions aimed at generating rental income, or an expansion of state-controlled production, is unknown. The outcome was a transformation of civic space, in which previously marginal activities were drawn into central locations. It seems likely that this illustrated the diminished importance of centrality as a concept in urban landscapes, rather than any increase in the status of craft production. What persists, however, is the impression that industry preferred lands most likely to have been state controlled.

The sites made redundant in the third century were those associated with government, and although power was differently configured, other aspects of ceremonial life may have shown

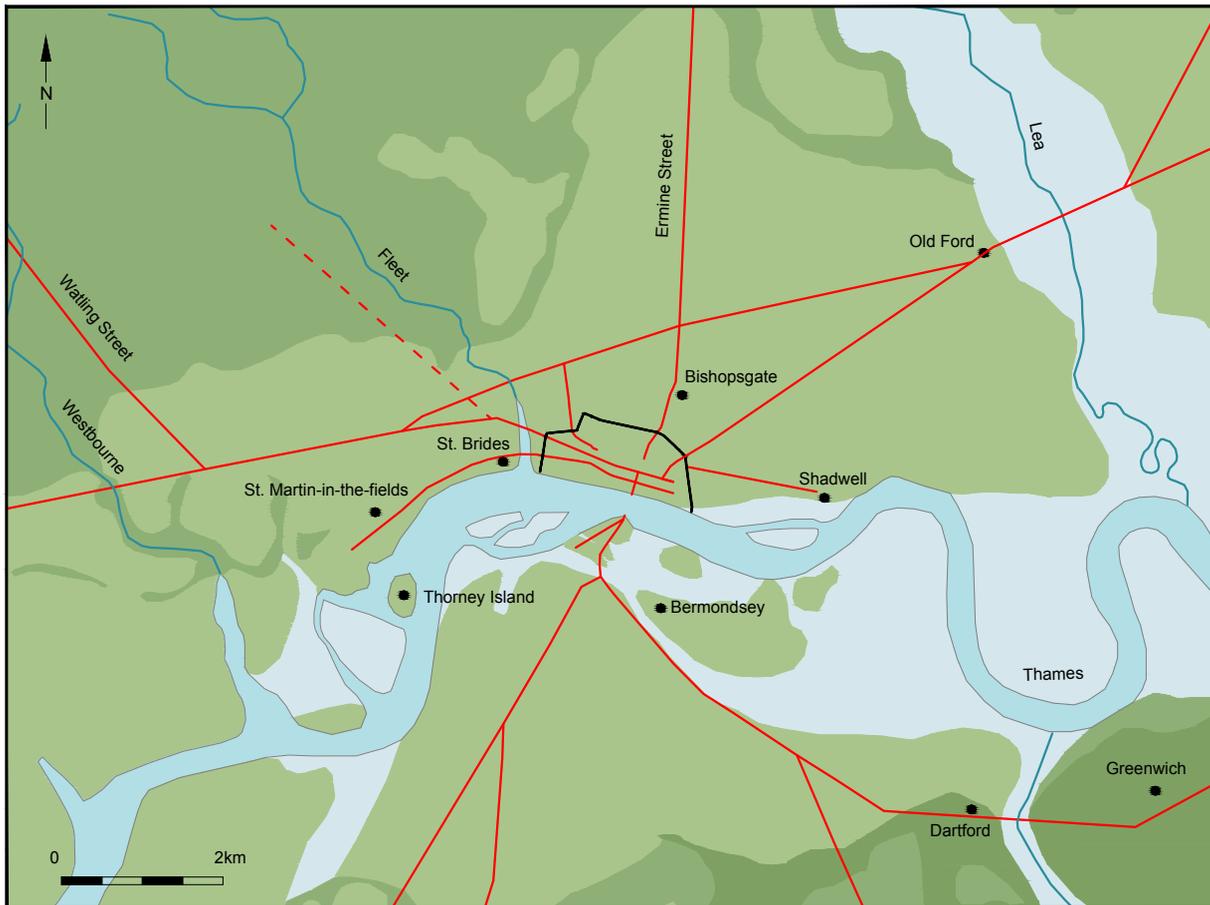


FIG. 8. Roman London and environs *c.* A.D. 375.

greater resilience. Such continuities might account for the retention of an apse within the forum basilica, perhaps saved from destruction as a setting for civic ritual (Brigham 1990a, 79). By the middle of the fourth century, however, any former processional uses of urban space must have ceased. It has also been argued that the bridge over the Thames was no longer standing *c.* A.D. 330, severing road communications between north and south of the river (Rhodes 1991, 190). Some lesser streets within the walled area fell out of use in the late fourth century (Hill and Rowsome 2011, 447). Similarly the amphitheatre, such an important site in the earlier life of the town, was abandoned by the mid-fourth century (Bateman *et al.* 2008). The armature of public spaces and buildings that dominated the Hadrianic and Severan city had lost social importance, and life refocused around private houses, perhaps providing a context for the construction of a large fourth-century tower in the south-east quarter of the town (Plantation Place 1999–2003: Fitzpatrick 2001, 365). Outside of the domestic arena Roman urban ideologies were now almost uniquely symbolised by the city walls, with little role for other forms of public architecture.

A significant exception to this was represented by a large basilica built on the eastern margins of the town after *c.* A.D. 350, on a site where the coin-loss profile and earlier pottery assemblages imply cult use (Colchester House 1995: Sankey 1998; Gerrard 2011b; Gerrard 2010, 87). The location of this building, in an area that was suburban prior to the building of the town wall, is consistent with wider fourth-century trends in the establishment of cathedrals: usually located pragmatically on the borders of settlements but within the town walls (Cantino Wataghin 1999, 156). The Christianisation of urban space might also have contributed to changes in burial locations in the period A.D. 350–400. Several small cemeteries of the second half of the fourth century were located amidst the ruins of high-status buildings, particularly in Southwark (Cowan 2003, 70–3; Booth 2013, 332). This also occurred on some intramural sites west of the Walbrook, including a small cemetery dated after A.D. 365 within the redundant amphitheatre (Bateman

et al. 2008, 91). A contemporary decapitated burial found within a roadside culvert next to a precinct on the Walbrook crossing may be an outlier from another such cemetery (1 Poultry 1994–6: Hill and Rowsome 2011, 248). Here too the evidence from London is consistent with wider trends of the period. Rules excluding burial from the city were giving way to a closer relationship between the living and the dead, influenced by Christian practice (Galinié and Zadora-Rio 1996). Whilst the changes in London were comparatively early, there are parallels from Gaul and Italy: for example a small intramural palaeo-Christian cemetery in Poitiers dates to the late fourth century (Le Masne de Chermont 1987). Intramural cemeteries remained a rarity, but cemetery encroachment into suburban areas was a more widespread phenomenon. It is possible that the area west of the Walbrook was no longer considered urban by the second half of the fourth century, as perhaps also indicated by the fact that bastions were only added to the eastern part of London's walled circuit.

Another late fourth-century development involved the rise to prominence of suburban sites. Several important satellite sites were located within walking distance of the walled city, but outside the zone occupied by London's penumbra of burial grounds. These present some of the best evidence for continuity into the fifth century (St Martin-in-the-Fields 2006: Booth 2007, 294; 274–306 Bishopsgate, Lant Street and Bermondsey Abbey: Gerrard 2011b, 190). Some may have been residential sites, including suburban palaces as is suggested at Shadwell, but others may have incorporated holy sites: burial places of saints and martyrs that became destinations for religious ceremony and hence retained importance into the fifth century. This hypothesis, for which we lack direct evidence, is based on what was happening elsewhere in the Western Empire (Cantino Wataghin 1999). Roman London was denied the opportunity to develop a Christian architecture of the sort known from the cities of Roman Gaul by the collapse of the Roman administration at the beginning of the fifth century, but the evidence summarised here may illustrate an early stage in the transition from Roman to Christian topographies. In this case the emergence of Christian spaces, drawn to previously peripheral locations, took place after earlier architectures were redundant: filling a civic void rather than offering a competing vision of urban space.

Study of the end of Roman London is complicated by the paucity of dendrochronological dating, a product of the lack of public constructions using imported timber and itself a notable feature (Tyers 2008), and changes in rubbish disposal as middens replaced pits. Distributions of late pottery and coin assemblages confirm, however, that whilst much of intramural London was still occupied in the closing years of the fourth century, it was abandoned in the course of the fifth century (Symonds and Tomber 1991; Gerrard 2011b). The process of abandonment, underway in the late fourth century, was sometimes abrupt, as implied by finds assemblages associated with building disuse (1 Poultry 1994–6: Hill and Rowsome 2011, 447). In other cases it may have been accompanied by communal acts of departure involving the sacrifice and votive burial of prestigious objects (Drapers' Gardens 2007: Gerrard 2009, 180). These individual closures accompanied the staged withdrawal of Roman forces and eventual abdication of the Roman administration, and are perhaps better described as the product of evacuation rather than decline.

CONCLUSIONS

This condensed account presents a partial and conjectural reading of Roman London's architectural history, showing how the topography of the city can be read as the product of episodes of town-planning directed by the Roman administration. In every case changes to the town were integrated with earlier landscapes, generating new visions of London that reflected contemporary political and urban ideologies whilst recognising (if sometimes rejecting) established values. This political narrative is a necessary starting place if we are to use the evidence of the urban environment to understand how London was conceived and experienced. It is clear, however, that other forces were at work in the shaping of London, and a more nuanced reading of the evidence would give greater weight to the ways in which individual lives and identities came to be expressed within this colonial and political (and perhaps finally Christian) landscape.

The story presented here is based almost entirely on the evidence of developer-funded archaeology, which has transformed our understanding of Roman London. The precise chronologies and detailed topographies described here build from intensive, carefully managed and properly funded research. The bibliography attached to this essay, which only touches on the available literature, gives some indication of the large body of recent scholarship based on this work. Arguments presented here concerning the military origins of the site, the layout and chronology of the planned urban core, the early construction of suburban palaces and baths, the evidence of late Neronian military engineering, the evolution of ritual and ceremonial architectures, the extent of Severan renewal, the importance of late antique satellite sites, and the identification of a possible Christian topography, all depend on these new data. We can now offer a far more ambitious and nuanced description of urban change than was possible 25 years ago (as Perring 1991).

Future research will benefit from the exceptionally high standards of publication achieved in London, and the planning authorities deserve enormous credit for making sure that this work is properly resourced and considered integral to the conservation agenda promoted by PPG16. There are, of course, problems still to be addressed. Too many sites remain unpublished, and more of this summary derives from interim reports than is comfortable. Excavations undertaken in the late 1980s and early 1990s are particularly poorly represented in the published sources, whilst there is a considerable time-lag between excavation and publication. As a consequence nearly two-thirds of the important excavations of Roman London undertaken in the course of the last quarter century have yet to be published in full. Much of this unpublished material can be consulted through the LAARC, and has successfully been used as the basis for important doctoral research (as Monteil 2005 and Wallace 2010), but the complexity and relative inaccessibility of the data means that it is an under-used resource.

There is also a long-standing complaint that the research agenda in London has failed to advance because studies are ‘tram-lined into similar approaches to the same general questions’ (Millett 1996, 33; Esmonde-Cleary 1999). This is a product of funding arrangements, as much as any failure of invention. Research in London will continue to benefit from rescue opportunities that excite new generations of archaeologists, but the most interesting data are already in our hands. London has rich databases of coherently and consistently described finds, the full potential of which has yet to be realised. Much of these data remain comparatively inaccessible and there are some serious gaps in knowledge (most notably the absence of a full coin list from the Roman city). New work is needed but nowhere is the potential of multi-variate spatial analysis greater, and nowhere do we have a better framework for asking ambitious questions of differences in patterns of consumption and display. This paper is offered as a contribution to the refinement of that framework.

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