Two Studies on Roman London. Part A: London's military origins.

This is the first of two papers inspired by an attempt to prepare a review article based on recent publications of the results of rescue excavations within the City of London and Southwark. Here my intention is to advance some new suggestions, or, rather, revive some long unfashionable ones, concerning the origins and early development of the Roman town. Two important and under-reported discoveries of military-style ditches allow it to be suggested that London originated as a fort where the armies of Plautius waited on the emperor Claudius before marching on Colchester in the summer of AD 43. The alternative and generally accepted view that the city was a civilian foundation of *c.* AD 50 must be questioned, and this in turn suggests a reassessment of the role of London in the political infrastructure of the newly created Roman province. It seems likely that London remained firmly under the control of the provincial government, and a major centre of operations for both army and administration. This finds confirmation in the recently discovered evidence of fortifications and engineering works associated with extensive reconstruction in the aftermath of the Boudican revolt of AD 60/61.

The discovery of London's Claudian fort

Roman London was built atop two hills on the north bank of the Thames, where islands rising above the tidal flats allowed a river crossing to be engineered. Three main areas of occupation have been defined. The focus of the town was on the eastern hill, or Cornhill. This was where a forum came to be built at the heart of a regular street grid, the spine of which was formed by a road leading up from London Bridge. Settlement also extended over Ludgate Hill to the west, separated from Cornhill by the Walbrook stream, whilst an extensive suburb developed south of the Thames in Southwark.

There was no significant pre-Roman site in the vicinity and most studies conclude that London was established *c.* AD 50 on the boundary between the 'southern' and 'eastern' kingdoms that dominated south-east Britain prior to the Roman conquest. The evidence for this obtains from the dating of the earliest coin assemblages found alongside the southern approaches to London Bridge in Southwark and in the Cornhill settlement, where the dominance of Claudian copies is consistent with a date towards the end of Claudius' reign.[1] The absence of evidence datable to the period of the Roman conquest of AD 43 seemed to support the suggestion that London came into being in a secondary phase of the development of the Roman province. This in turn has given rise to suggestions that the city originated as a supply depot and trading entrepôt within pacified territories that had little need of a permanent military garrison, and where the military presence indicated by abundant finds and inscriptions can be attributed to the presence of officials and veterans involved in administration and supply. London has therefore been seen as something apart: neither the product of indigenous development nor converted from a disused military site. In Millett's words '*there is now a consensus emerging about the development of the city. Uniquely in Britain, the town seems to have grown up as a planned trading settlement*

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[1] Perring 1991, 6; Drummand-Murray *et al.* 2002, 50-1.

of citizens from other provinces within a decade or so of the invasion'.[2] This no longer seems the case.

In excavations at Bishopsgate in 1995 two large parallel V-shaped ditches set 2m apart – each originally about 2.5m wide and 1.4m deep with a square-cut 'ankle-breaker' at the base - were found at the base of the archaeological sequence. These ditches were aligned east-west, located some 150m to the north of the site of the early forum and 275m inside the line of the later city wall, and appeared to form the northern boundary of a double-ditch enclosure.[3] There are no convincing parallels for such an arrangement from civilian contexts, and a military origin is probable.[4] The ditches were open for but a short time before their backfill, after which a road was built on the line of the outer ditch. Unfortunately the site produced little in the way of dating evidence, and the excavators were only able to conclude that the ditches were pre-Flavian. Parallels have been drawn with fortifications established elsewhere in London in the aftermath of the Boudican revolt of AD 60/61, leading to the conclusion that the ditches formed part of a short lived military post set on Cornhill after the rebellion.[5] An earlier date would, however, be equally consistent with the evidence and now seems more probable.

Excavations above the east bank of the Walbrook in 2006 and 2007 uncovered the western boundary of a double-ditch enclosure of similar design to that found at Bishopsgate.[6] Here, however, a better dating framework was obtained. Although the ditches contained remarkably few finds, the lower fills of the inner ditch included the remains of a storage jar made from a Late Iron Age Romanising grog tempered ware: a transitional fabric of unusually early date for a London assemblage.[7] The absence of Romanised products that are ubiquitous in assemblages from *c.* AD 50 is notable and indicates that this ditch had probably been backfilled prior to this date. Secondary ditches represented a reassertion of the boundary established by the V-shaped double ditch, before a road was built over the line of the outer ditch in rebuilding that immediately post-dated the Boudican revolt. There are clear similarities to the sequence of engineering works recorded at Bishopsgate, in particular in the way in which roads were laid out over the line of the outer ditch. It seems likely that the two sites present evidence of contemporary sequences involving the construction and dismantling of a single large Claudian enclosure.

We can be confident that Cornhill was occupied no later than AD 48, on the basis of dendrochronological dates obtained from structures associated with the bridges that gave access to the site. Timbers felled in the winter of AD 47/48, and in the following spring or summer, were used in the construction of roadside drains on the west bank of the Walbrook next to the bridge that linked Cornhill to Ludgate Hill.[8] The crossing of the Thames was even more crucial to the viability of the Cornhill settlement. Timber structures found close to London Bridge show that there was an early bridge

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[2] Millett 1994, 433. This argument influences John Creighton's reading (2006, 125) of London's urban topography: the distinction he draws between London and other urban foundations in Britain is now difficult to sustain.
[3] Sankey 2002, 3.
[4] Wilson 2006, 26-7.
[5] Wilson 2006, 28.
[6] Booth 2007, 291; Booth 2008, 319-20.
[7] I am grateful to Ian Blair for providing details in advance of publication.
[8] Tyers 2008, 73.

abutment antedating AD 63 and possibly constructed *c.* AD 52, but that two crossed beams from an earlier phase may represent an initial Conquest-period structure, possibly the landward abutment of a pontoon bridge.[9]

Metalled road surfaces associated with structures destroyed in AD 60/61 show that a regular street grid had been laid out over Cornhill prior to the revolt.[10] This street system was based around the road approaches to the bridges over the Thames and Walbrook, which met at a central T-shaped road junction where an open gravelled area established the site of a forum that was monumentalised in stone in the Flavian period.[11] If it is assumed that this central T-junction was part of the original Claudian layout of the site, and that the defensive enclosure was both rectangular and symmetrical, it is possible to project southern and western boundaries to the double-ditch enclosure (fig 1). Excavations have yet to take place in the relevant areas to put this suggested plan to test, although a wide pre-Flavian ditch located in excavations at Regis House might have been part of the outer line of defences on the crest of the bank above the Thames.[12] The subsequent topographic development of London, in particular deviations in the line of the Roman road that headed east to Colchester that suggest the location of gate east of Plantation Place, lend considerable weight to this reconstructed plan.[13]

These observations combine to suggest that the Claudian ditches enclosed an area of about 630m by 390m, with an approximate internal area of 24.5ha. This is larger than normal for a legionary fort of this period (17-20ha.) but broadly comparable to the Flavian fort at Chester (22.7ha). There are only two plausible explanations for the construction of such a large defended enclosure of this date at this location. It is possible that the army was deployed to build a town here *c.* AD 48, some 5 years after the initial conquest and as part of a programme of urbanisation promoted by the provincial government in an area where there was no native community to coax into taking the initiative in such matters. If, however, these were urban defences we would expect to see evidence for the contemporary construction of the other buildings and facilities that a nascent town would require. Such evidence has not yet been forthcoming despite numerous excavations within the relevant area. It seems more probable that the defences were those of an early Roman fort, but there would have been no need for a fort of this scale at this location once the Legions had been deployed to more forward locations after the capture of Colchester. The only date at which a large military force would sensibly have been camped in this area was in AD 43.[14] It is consequently probable that the fort on Cornhill was built to house elements of Plautius' army after it had halted on the Thames early in July AD 43, whilst waiting on the Emperor Claudius' arrival before marching on Colchester sometime in the middle of the following month.[15] This is an exciting conclusion, establishing the probable date of the foundation of London and adding a vital component to the archaeological description of the Roman conquest of Britain.

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[9] Brigham 2001.
[10] Williams forthcoming; Rowsome 2008, fig 1.3.3.
[11] Dunwoodie 2004, 8, 38; Philp 1977 8-10; Marsden 1987, 17-18.
[12] Perring and Brigham 2000, 126.
[13] Birbeck and Schuster 2009, 33-4; Williams forthcoming.
[14] The possibility that this fort was pre-Claudian finds no support in the archaeological evidence and is sufficiently improbable to be discounted.
[15] Frere 1987, 51, following Dio LX.xxi.1-2.

Although many sites have been excavated within the fortified area, none has produced evidence securely assigned to the period before AD 50. This need not surprise us if the fort at London had been a temporary encampment, occupied for less than two months. A mobile army leaves less trace than a permanent garrison: tents and temporary facilities leave little structural evidence, whilst robust hardware substituted for pottery.[16] The absence of internal structural evidence to associate with the fortifications adds weight to the suggestion that this was a site that was not permanently garrisoned. The defended area was too small to have housed all four Legions that took part in the conquest of Britain but we know from Dio that the invading army had been divided into three parts and it seems likely that *legio II Augusta* was campaigning westwards under Vespasian's command rather than waiting on the Thames with Plautius.[17] Some forces are also likely to have been based on the south bank of the Thames to defend the bridgehead, as is also implied by Dio's description of Claudius taking command of the waiting forces before crossing the Thames to lead the forces in the assault on Colchester.

A solitary feature found in Southwark might have been associated with a military outpost on the southern side of the river. An early Roman V-shaped ditch with an 'ankle breaker' was recorded in excavations at Park Street in 1990.[18] The lower fills of this feature included an important assemblage of Iron Age pottery also notable for the absence of products of the Romanised industries that are abundant in assemblages dated after AD 50, with a single sherd of a fine-ware beaker that was perhaps an import from northern Gaul.[19] The ditch would appear to have been backfilled, at least in part, prior to AD 50. This feature lay some 180m to the north of the line of the Roman approaches to London Bridge, close to the Thames waterfront. It is possible that this was the north-west boundary of a conquest phase camp set to the north-west of and controlling the approaches to the bridgehead. It is difficult to see what other function could have been served by an early military style ditch at this location. Other finds of late Iron Age material from Southwark might possibly be associated with conquest phase activity: these include sherds of vessels found in the fills of natural river channels in the vicinity of the road leading towards London Bridge as well as a pit assemblage from Bermondsey Eyot, some distance to the south-east of the bridgehead, where there may have been an earlier farmstead.[20]

A military annex might also await discovery on Ludgate hill, west of the Walbrook. There is mounting evidence of a military presence in this area, with large assemblages of pre-Boudican pottery and other finds of types often associated with the military, although it is not yet possible to press the dating for this earlier than AD 50. A copper alloy name tag of an auxiliary soldier was found in a pre-Boudican quarry pit at Paternoster Square, whilst the finds assemblages from a roadside ditch here included a high percentage of imported pottery suggestive of military or mercantile presence and high status kitchen waste of the sort produced by army supply trains.[21]

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[16] Millett 1990, 45.
[17] Suetonius *Div. Vesp*. Iv.
[18] Cowan 2003, 12-13.
[19] Tyers 1996, 143.
[20] Rayner 2009, 38-9.
[21] Watson and Heard 2006, 70-1.

V-shaped ditches of military style, buried beneath stratigraphy associated with the Boudican revolt, have also been found outside the Cornhill enclosure flanking the Roman roads that headed west (towards Verulamium) and east (towards Colchester).[22] Whilst these may have been associated with later phases of activity, as has hitherto been assumed, it can now be argued that these testify to early military engineering as the Roman army put in place a road network focussed on the vital Thames crossing at London.   Bone sword grips found below the earliest metalling of the main east-west road at Cheapside remind us of the army's involvement in this exercise.[23] It was the strategic importance of this road system, and the potential of the site as a port for onward supply, that gave London continued importance after the Claudian army had decamped and moved on. London was also ideally located to serve an imperial administration interested in developing the new province, placed as it was on the boundary between the major pre-Roman polities, and Plautius may have been influenced by longer term strategic goals in making this the site of his principal encampment.

From fort to town

The fort was soon converted into a civilian site. Several of the military ditches had been backfilled by AD 50 suggesting that the defences had been deliberately slighted before this date.   This finds close comparison with the contemporary sequence of events at Colchester, where the defences of the early legionary fortress investigated in excavations at Balkerne Lane and Lion Walk were backfilled in the AD 50s without replacement.[24] It is hard to believe that there wasn't a continuing military presence in London between 43 and the later 40s, given the strategic importance of the river crossing here, but this may have been on a small scale and we have little in the way of archaeological evidence to refer to. It is probable that the site of the fort had been converted to other uses by AD 47/48, at which time timbers were being felled for use in the construction of drains associated with the regulation and expansion of the settlement west of the Walbrook.

There is also ample evidence of building activity associated with a growing town dated to the 50s.[25]   A range of dendrochronologically dated structures indicates that the period AD 52-55 was one of the busiest for construction activity in the history of Roman London, at which time new wharfs and quays were built on the north bank of the Thames up-stream of London Bridge.[26]   The Roman street grid on Cornhill appears to have been extended at some point in the 50s, whilst roads, waterfronts, and buildings were laid out in Southwark in a planned fashion in the decade after AD 50.[27] Rows of stores, one of which contained a stock of imported grain that was torched in the rebellion, were set out around a central forum in a planned development at the core of the site.[28] London and its southern suburb also acquired a few precociously

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[22] Along Cheapside (Hill and Woodger 1999) and Aldgate (Chapman and Johnson 1973, 5-7; Williams forthcoming). See also Creighton 2006, 94 on the strategic and official nature of the road system.
[23] Hill and Woodger 1999, 6.
[24] Crummy 2003, 51.
[25] Perring 1991, 10-11; Tyers 2008, fig 2.2.1.
[26] Brigham 1998 on waterfront development at Regis House AD 52; Swift 2008 on revetments at Arthur Street AD 54-55.
[27] Yule 2005.
[28] Dunwoodie 2004.

early high-status stone-built houses and baths, adorned with mosaics and wall-paintings, before the revolt.[29] In the absence of evidence for a local pre-Roman political elite to engage in the social patronage implied by such architectural display it seems safe to assume the presence here of leading figures within the new colonial regime.

The port was the focus of this activity, and it is notable that the significant investment in building new timber quays and warehouses along the waterfront was not matched by an equivalent concern to provide London with the civic architecture normally associated with a self-governing community. It is also worth emphasising the unusual nature of the extensive port facilities that were developed on the north bank of the Thames. It is difficult to see this as the product of private enterprise, built from mercantile profits: the port preceded and created the circumstances for London's subsequent economic success. The status of London at this time is unclear, and the presence of a small cemetery dated to the late 50s in the area immediately to the north of the gravelled area that formed the central forum implies a lack of civic regulation.[30] Tacitus' description of the cities razed by Boudica implies that London had no recognized status at the time, unlike the *municipium* at *Verulamium* and the colony at Colchester.[31] It has been speculated that Roman citizens resident in London may have formed their own administrative apparatus in a *conventus civium Romanorum*, but as Wilson has argued this is an unlikely arrangement.[32] It is perhaps more likely that London temporarily lacked independent civil government and remained under the direct control of the provincial administration, which took in hand the construction of a port here as part of the infrastructure of supply needed to support the military campaigns of the period. It also seems likely that a major impetus for this development came early in the governorship of Ostorius Scapula, who replaced Aulus Plautius in AD 47 and was responsible for the campaigns into the north and west that depended on supply lines routed through London.[33]

By the time of the revolt the settlement at London, whatever its formal constitution, had grown considerably, with current estimates suggesting a population of 10-15,000 before the site was sacked.[34] As Creighton has recently reminded us, this was a city of many communities: of soldiers and bureaucrats working for the offices of provincial administration; of freedmen and traders profiting from the need to supply Rome's armies and the growing appetites of the first Romano-British towns; and a workforce of slaves and artisans drawn from the surrounding countryside and beyond to service the needs of the rapidly expanding town.[35] Several houses built in native, rather than Roman, style have been found in peripheral areas, where different patterns of consumption also applied. These buildings were often associated with small scale industrial activity.[36] The largest density of such buildings has been found at the western limits of the settlement west of the Walbrook. Up to eleven Romano-British roundhouses alongside two small rectangular buildings, dating from about AD 50-70,

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[29] Neal and Cosh 2009, 397-402; Pringle 2009; Yule 2005, 25; Cowan 1992, 14.
[30] Milne and Wardle 1993.
[31] Tacitus *Annals* 14.33.
[32] Wilson 2006, 30.
[33] Mattingly 2006, 101-2, following Tacitus *Annals* 12.31-6.
[34] Swain and Williams 2008.
[35] Creighton 2006, 98-99.
[36] Perring and Roskams 1991, 6; Rayner 2009, 40; Hill and Woodger 1999, 10; Brigham 2001, 12-27.

were found here in excavations at 10 Gresham Street in 2001. One of these houses had been involved in the manufacture of glass beads in late Iron Age style using traditional methods, but from recycled Roman glass. This appears to have been a distinctly British area on the boundaries of the Roman settlement, and it is perhaps significant that these roundhouses were amongst the few buildings of Roman London to have escaped being torched in the Boudican revolt.[37] We do not know the status of the inhabitants of these round-houses, although arguments have been advanced that such buildings might represent the presence of conscripted and slave labour.[38]

The Boudican revolt and its aftermath

It is generally accepted that London recovered slowly and hesitantly after the Boudican revolt, and witnessed a decade long hiatus in most areas of residential building.[39] This is, however, open to question. Dating problems for the period are recognised in specialist reports but have been given inadequate weight in synthetic reviews. Millett has described how the misdating of Neronian Samian has influenced the dating of coarse wares and warned that '*this problem needs to be examined before we accept the conclusion that London resembled a bomb-site for a decade in the 60s*'.[40] Finds assemblages associated with the occupation that followed the revolt suggest that high status wares and artefacts may have been in shorter supply, adding to problems of the archaeological recognition of the period.[41] A series of recent excavations has radically changed our understanding of what happened in London after AD 60 and indicates that some aspects of recovery were swift. The evidence now available also provides further testimony of the central role played by the provincial administration and army in managing the affairs of London.

The splendid series of dendrochronological dates obtained from London's timber structures provide some independent dating of the events of AD 60/61. A building found in excavations at Cheapside, next to the main west road, was built using timber felled in the winter of AD 59-60 before being burnt to the ground in the revolt.[42] Foundation piles associated with post-fire reconstruction at the same site incorporated timbers dated AD 62-3, whilst a timber felled in the winter of AD 61-62 was used in the construction of a sump cut into fire debris nearby at One Poultry.[43] We know that the builders of Roman London normally preferred unseasoned wood and that stocks of reusable timbers would have been low at this time, so these felling dates probably coincided with programmes of construction.[44] The archaeological data match the historical sources, although leave us none the wiser as to whether the revolt took place in the summer of AD 60 or 61.[45] These instances of building activity can, however, be seen in the context of a series of major engineering and building works dating to the years immediately after the revolt, most of which can be attributed to the Roman army (fig. 2).

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[37] http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/learning/features_facts/digging/invasion/s2.html.
[38] Webster 2005.
[39] Perring 1991, 22; Cowan and Rowsome 2009, 170; Fulford 2008, 10.
[40] Millett 1994, 430.
[41] Rayner 2009, 46.
[42] Building 2 at 75 Cheapside: Hill and Woodger 1999.
[43] Wilson 2006, 26; pers comm. Julian Hill and Peter Rowsome.
[44] See Goodburn 2008, 51 on the general preference for the use of fresh green timber in Roman constructions in London.
[45] For a full discussion of the date and chronology of the revolt see Carroll 1979.

The clearest evidence of a military involvement in the affairs of post-revolt London was found in excavations at Plantation Place in 1999, near the south-east corner of the Cornhill settlement. A Roman fort was built here in the aftermath of the revolt, as evidenced by the north-east corner of a double ditch enclosure that had been cut through the remains of burnt timber buildings.[46] The ditches survived to a depth of 1.9m, and protected a turf-fronted, timber laced mudbrick rampart some 7m wide. Traces of an *intervallum* road and associated structures, including a possible cookhouse and granary, along with various military items were found inside the fortified area. The tentatively reconstructed footprint of this fort suggests that it occupied an area of about 1ha. carved out of the south-east quarter of the Roman settlement. The fort was built over the line of the main east-west road south of the site of the forum, disregarding the earlier topography. It is not clear how long this fort remained in use, but the summary information presently available suggests that it had been abandoned before AD 70, although the site may not have been levelled until *c.* AD 85.

London was not only garrisoned, but restored. Engineering works testify to the reconstruction of the port, the reorganisation and improvement of the town's water supply, and the construction of new defences around the town. Dendrochronological dating has established that substantial new quays built were built at Regis House, a short distance upstream of London Bridge on the north bank of the Thames, in AD 63.[47] An inscription branded onto timber used in this construction indicates the involvement of the Augustan cohort of Thracians, whilst finds from the infill of the quay included scale armour (*lorica squamata*) and leather fragments from a military tent. The quays may have been built by military work gangs drawn from forces stationed in the newly built fort.

Evidence for the reorganisation of the water supply comes from a series of massive wells equipped with water-lifting machines built on high ground south of the site of the later amphitheatre, where they could have been used to gravity feed most of London west of the Walbrook.[48] The earliest of these features was built with timbers felled in AD 63, contemporary with the construction of the new port facilities. It has been estimated that one of the later wells at this site was capable of raising more than 72,000 litres (16,000 gallons) of water over a ten hour operating day: sufficient drinking water for 8,000 people, about a third of the contemporary urban population. This water supply may have been associated with the construction of a bath-house at Cheapside and permitted the improvement of the settlement infrastructure in the western part of the Roman settlement, perhaps also compensating for loss of access to water from the Walbrook as the urban area expanded. We cannot be certain of a military involvement in developing these water-works, but it is difficult to identify an alternative source of civic patronage at this particular date given the lack of any evidence for the involvement of the native elite in the affairs of London and the presumed fragility of confidence amongst any immigrant mercantile community. There are also grounds for believing that the area west of the Walbrook included military housing from the Flavian period, if not before, and the new facilities may

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[46] Wilson 2006, 25; Fitzpatrick 2001, 365.
[47] Brigham 1998, 25; Brigham 2001, 43.
[48] Blair *et al.* 2006.

have been built to support military settlement in the area.[49] Similar water-works may also have been built to service the port, where a less securely dated water-lifting mechanism has also been found.

A new defensive circuit enclosed the restored city, perhaps in AD 62, a year before the re-engineering of the port and water-supply. An interim report on excavations at Drapers Gardens, a site close to the Walbrook at the northern extreme of the settlement, describes the construction of a timber causeway. This was built with split logs, several of which have given a dendrochronological date of the spring of AD 62.[50] Intriguingly the woodworking techniques employed in preparing these timbers differ from those used elsewhere in Roman London and show greater affinities with what is known of 'native' British carpentry. The causeway was aligned east-west, with ditches to either side and a ballista bolt was found in the fills of the ditch to the south.   Although the report suggests that the logs supported a track they might alternatively have been the foundation course of a rampart, and a four post-structure that was also found here might have been a tower.[51]   The causeway at Drapers Gardens was on the same line as a V-shaped ditch found at Baltic House, some 450m to the east, and the two features may have been part of the same defensive circuit. The Baltic House ditch, which was originally up to 6m wide and 2.45m deep with an 'ankle-breaker' slot at its base, was traced along its line for a length of 50m.[52] The ditch fills included pottery dated AD70-100 which would be consistent with a construction date in the 60s, whilst a barrel-lined well found beneath the line of the presumed rampart was dated AD 50-80 and may have antedated the construction of the new ditch and rampart.[53] This new boundary was set some 110m to the north of line of the earlier double-ditch boundary and some 100m inside the line of the later city wall. The London that was restored in AD 62 was expected to be every bit as large as the city razed by Boudica's rebels.

The defensive circuit may also have been extended to enclose the settlement on London's western hill, although the evidence for this remains tenuous. The Claudian boundary along the east bank of the Walbrook was not restored in the Neronian period, and an extended circuit would have accommodated the new waterworks and the buildings it supplied: a significant part of the street system in this area had been established by c. AD 70, although irregularities in the layout suggest several phases of incremental growth.[54]   Two observations of appropriately dated V-shaped ditches need to be taken into consideration. A large V-shaped ditch was found cutting into the Boudican fire debris in excavations at One Poultry on the west bank of the Walbrook, about 80m or so to the west of the line of the redundant Claudian fortification on the east bank of the river.[55] The curve on this feature suggests one of two possibilities. It may have been part of an outwork designed to protect the bridge-

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[49] Millett 1994, 434 has suggested a military origin for the layout of this area. The architecture of Houses D and F at Watling Court (Perring and Roskams 1991, fig 30) is strikingly similar to Centurions houses in the contemporary Legionary fort at Gloucester (Hurst 1999, fig 3 – houses 1.11 and 1.12), but finds no civilian parallel, perhaps indicating that the environs of Watling Court constituted an area of military housing. See also Perring 2002, 62.

[50] Pre-Construct Archaeology 2009, 9.

[51] I am grateful to Gary Brown for providing details in advance of publication.

[52] Howe 2002.

[53] Wilson 2006, 15 suggests an early Flavian date for this ditch.

[54] Bateman et al. 2008, 116.

[55] I would like to thank Julian Hill for drawing my attention to this feature in advance of publication.

crossing in the initial refortification of London. Alternatively if could have been the north-eastern corner of an enclosure built to defend the military annex that might possibly have been built west of the Walbrook on Ludgate Hill. A V-shaped ditch, up to 2.4m wide and 1.6m deep with a central slot at the base, was also found on the line of the southern boundary of the later fort at Cripplegate some 400m further west. The backfills of this feature contained a large pottery assemblage of the late first century AD and this may also have formed part of the Neronian engineering works.[56] It is not presently possible to establish the precise date or boundary to the enclosure of the area east of the Walbrook, but the subsequent development of this area leaves little doubt that it had become an integral part of the Roman town, rather than simply a suburb, by the early Flavian period.

Before concluding this review of the archaeology of post-Boudican London it is worth turning our attention to the question of the human remains found in the Walbrook. There has been much speculation over how and why a series of human crania came to be found in early Roman deposits in and around the Walbrook valley.[57] These crania, predominantly but not exclusively of young males, were sometimes found in association with human long bones and horse bones (especially skulls). Most of these finds came from wet locations - including river channels, wells, ponds and roadside ditches - in the Walbrook valley or its immediate vicinity. Whilst some of the remains may have derived from disturbed inhumation cemeteries north of the city walls, there is compelling evidence that most were the product of the excarnation of human corpses and the ritual deposition of select body parts - human crania and some long bones - in wet places. There is evidence of dog gnawing and post-mortem knife cuts on some bones, indicating that bodies had been left exposed before the more significant and readily identified parts of the body were collected and prepared for ritual deposition.[58]   Prolonged exposure would also account for the characteristic brown staining observed on most of these skulls. All of the skulls recovered from the Walbrook appear to date to the late Iron Age or early Roman period (up to the mid 2nd century AD), as is indicated by both their stratigraphic context and the available C14 dating.[59] The practices responsible for this archaeological evidence almost certainly continued into the early second century AD, although the disarticulated nature of the remains and the extensive reworking of the riverside deposits make it difficult to distinguish between primary and reworked finds. It is important to note, however, that most of the more securely stratified examples come from deposits associated with post-Boudican reconstruction.[60]

The suggestion that these were the remains of victims of AD 60/61, tentatively advanced by Wheeler, has fallen from fashion in the face of the complexity of the archaeological data and the wider evidence for head cults and unusual funerary rites

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[56] Howe and Lakin 2004, 18, 48.
[57] Butler 2006; Cotton 1996, 87-9; West 1996; Knüsel and Carr 1995; Merrifield 1995; Bradley and Gordon 1988, 503-9; Marsh and West 1981, 86-102.
[58] Butler 2006, 40.
[59] Bradley and Gordon 1988, 507.   A distinction can be drawn with finds recovered from the river Thames, where much earlier material is present.
[60]Examples from post-Boudican reconstruction deposits have been found at Watling Court (Perring and Roskams 1991, 30) and Walbrook House (Blair pers. comm.). See also Marsh and West 1981 and Cotton 1996. A skull was also placed between the thighs of a body buried – and perhaps desecrated - in a pre-Flavian ditch outside early Roman London's eastern gate: McKinley 2009.

in prehistoric and Roman Britain.[61] Merrifield observes that the predominance of young males indicates that these were unlikely to be the remains of the weak and elderly abandoned to their fate by the retreating Roman forces, but fails to note that this was the demographic group most at risk from Roman reprisal. Previous studies have also struggled to account for why human remains should have been found within the city, in contravention of Roman practice.[62] This ceases to be such an issue when it is recognised that most of the evidence comes from sites outside the boundaries of the Claudian fort and subsequent Neronian settlement. The distribution of disarticulated skulls broadly respects the boundaries to the Cornhill settlement, with most crania concentrated in wet locations to its north-west: a location commonly associated with mortality. The vast majority of skulls, several hundred in number and representing an original population likely to number in the thousands, comes from sites in the area to the north of the line of the presumed defensive circuit of *c.* AD 62, whilst several isolated examples come from sites west of the Walbrook. The remains of human skulls bearing weapon marks were also found in the ditch of the Claudian fortress at Colchester, and are perhaps the product of similar practice.[63] In the light of what we know of the military nature of the early settlement at London, and of Rome's harsh suppression of the rebellion, it is entirely credible that the corpses of victims of Roman justice would have been left on gruesome display outside the north-west corner of the site.[64] It should not be assumed that these practices would have been alien to the Roman forces in Britain. Cotton has drawn our attention to a parallel ritual use of human crania from Late Iron Age cult sites in northern Gaul, where the circumstances of burial suggest that the remains were from victims of war or the result of sacrifice.[65] Many senior figures within London's Roman community, as well as soldiers serving in the Legions and auxiliary units, were drawn from the very regions of Gaul that had engaged in these macabre cults. The presence of parts of dead horses with the human remains is also consistent with a point of origin amongst the warrior elite: horses were central to the status and identity of military leadership of late Iron Age society in north-east Gaul and Britain.[66] On the basis of the iconography of late pre-Roman Iron Age coins Creighton suggests that there was a particularly close relationship between the images of the head and of the horse, and that these established links between the ritual of kingship and the concept of sovereignty. The archaeological evidence from London might testify not only to the massacre of rebels, but to the systematic physical, public and ritual destruction of the Gallo-Belgic warrior class and their dispatch to the world of the dead.[67] The suppression of this social group is also implied by the disappearance of patterns of elite 'Gallo-Belgic' consumption and display from sites in the surrounding territories in the period after AD 61.[68]

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[61] RCHM 1928, 16; Hingley and Unwin 2006, 64.

[62] Merrifield 1995, 36.

[63] Hingley and Unwin 2006, 19. These possible instances of the ritual deposition of human remains in the context of post-Boudican reprisals need to be set within the context of a wider body of evidence for deliberate violence to bodies in Late Iron Age and early Roman Britain (e.g. Evans 2003, 258).

[64] The sources imply that Roman retribution was brutal (Tacitus *Agricola* 16) and the public display of executed rebels and criminals should elicit no surprise. The absence of evidence for decapitation does not preclude the use of other, more common, forms of execution.

[65] Cotton 1996, 89.

[66] Creighton 2000, 22-4.

[67] Other burials may also derive from earlier and later executions.

[68] Pitts and Perring 2006, 207.

A tentative chronology of post-Boudican reconstruction in London can now be suggested. The fort at Plantation Place is likely to have been amongst the first of the works commissioned. The construction of this fort would have followed the strengthening and redeployment of forces referred to by Tacitus, who describes how allied infantry and cavalry were placed in new winter quarters.[69] Prisoners taken in the suppression of the rebellion may have been brought to London at this time, both as slaves and for execution. New town defences were then erected in the spring/summer of AD 62, drawing on requisitioned supplies and forced labour. This initiative followed the replacement of Seutonius as governor by Petronius which is in turn believed to have resulted in the adoption of a somewhat less brutal policy towards the defeated Britons.[70] In the following year attention turned to the renewal of the urban infrastructure, which included restoring and enhancing the port facilities and the urban water supply. The involvement of the army in this programme of reconstruction, and the scale of the resources invested in the programme of urban renewal, make London an exceptional site. A key figure in the exercise was the imperial procurator (*procurator Augusti*) of Britain, Gaius Julius Alpinus Classicianus, who was also appointed around AD 61 and died in London before his period of office had expired (almost certainly before AD 65). His tomb provides the most striking evidence of London's importance to the Neronian administration.[71]

It remains the case that some residential districts were slow to be rebuilt after the revolt, and the changes in the nature of the pottery supply that makes it difficult to date assemblages of this period may reflect on a stagnant local economy. London's civic centre was also largely ignored in the building programme. There were no new temples and basilicas of this period and the settlement might have remained under the direct control of the Roman administration with no independent legal status, no curial class to take political office, and none of the normal institutions of self government.[72] The situation is consistent with Fulford's suggestion that government policy after the revolt may have involved the promotion of local government in the client kingdom to the south of the Thames, but that the territories to the north of the river saw the imposition of direct military control.[73]

The evidence for post-Boudican restoration at London can be contrasted with an apparent indifference to the fate of the urban communities at Colchester and Verulamium. The poverty of evidence for civil development at these sites has recently been summarised by Fulford .[74] Post-fire reconstruction appears to have been delayed by fifteen years or more in most quarters of Verulamium, whilst the town defences and forum/basilica complex are both likely to date to the early Flavian period.[75] At Colchester there is a similar poverty of evidence for late Neronian investment, with the construction of the town wall now dated to the early Flavian

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[69] Tacitus *Annals* 14.38.
[70] Carroll 1979 suggests that whilst Petronius may have been appointed Governor in AD 61 he probably did not arrive to take up office until AD 62.
[71] RIB 12; Grasby and Tomlin 2002.
[72] According to Wilson 2006, 30 earth and timber defences may have been used to display the grant of municipal status in early Roman Britain. The particular circumstances of the period after the revolt, and the unusual character of the settlement at London, suggest that different rules may have applied.
[73] Fulford 2008, 11.
[74] Fulford 2008, 9-10.
[75] Frere 1983: insula XIV, XVII, XXVII, XXVIII. Niblettt 2001, 72-3.

period rather than having Neronian origins as previously thought likely.[76] The contrasting fates of these different urban centres adds weight to the suggestion that London was singled out for special attention because of its value to the military administration rather than because of any more broadly based revival of Romano-British cities within the region.

Postscript: Flavian and Hadrianic developments

The London that emerged from Neronian reconstruction was the administrative hub of the new province, where a busy port engaged in the supply and support of military conquest and exaction. Merchants and businessmen connected to the political and military elite were an important part of this community, but not it's driving force.   It is not clear how long this state of affairs may have lasted, and when London acquired a greater degree of civil autonomy. Whatever the political structure it is clear that London prospered through the late first and early second centuries.

The city acquired most of its important public buildings in the early Flavian period. These included an amphitheatre dated by dendrochronology to AD70-74, a presumed *mansio* in Southwark built using timbers felled in AD 72-74, a forum basilica probably built AD 75/80, a riverfront bath-complex at Huggin Hill and major public buildings that have been interpreted as palaces on opposite sides of the Thames at Winchester Palace and Cannon Street.[77] Quays dating from AD 72 onwards were also built and rebuilt on both sides of the river.[78] Those on the north bank were characterised by major timber revetments and rows of shops or stores similar to those found around Romano-British *fora*, and are likely to have been the product of official patronage. The quays found in Southwark were more modest in scale and ambition, and may have included private facilities.[79]

These constructions followed the arrival in Britain of Vespasian's governor, Petillius Cerealis, in AD 71, and can be attributed to a co-ordinated programme designed to consolidate the political authority of the new Imperial regime.[80] The earliest Flavian public buildings, the amphitheatre and *mansio*, were types of construction closely associated with the army and administration. The likely sources of patronage for such buildings were senior members of the provincial administration, either acting in their own right or on behalf of the government.[81] A direct government involvement is implied by the centralised production of building material stamped by the office of the procurators of the province of Britain at London.[82] These stamped tiles supplied the public building programme, but do not appear to have found their way into contemporary private buildings. Betts has also noted close parallels between the materials used in building the Flavian baths at Huggin Hill, the palatial building at Winchester Palace, and the so-called 'Governor's Palace' at Cannon Street and identifies a coordinated programme of building on both sides of the river.[83] It is

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[76] Crummy 2003, 50-51.
[77] Marsden 1987; Bateman *et al.* 2008; Cowan 1992; Rowsome 1999; Yule 2005.
[78] Killock 2005, 31.
[79] Wheeler 2009; Cowan and Wardle 2009.
[80] Shotter 2004, 1.
[81] Esmonde Cleary 1999.
[82] The PPBRLON series, for which see Betts 1995.
[83] Betts 2003.

probable that the procurators' office took in hand the construction of London's main Flavian buildings, just as the army had been the principal agent of rebuilding Neronian London after the revolt.

The forum may not have been built until a few years after the other public buildings described here, and tiles produced by the procurators office were not used in its construction. It is tempting to suggest that this building was the product of a different form of patronage, perhaps witnessing the tardy engagement of an emergent curial class in developing the material and political architecture of self-government. Millett reminds us that there is no 'systematic relationship between the presence of *fora* and any particular constitutional status', but it remains the case that at this period these civic buildings were usually associated with formally constituted self-governing communities.[84] The emergence of ceremonial architecture in the Flavian period, as described below, may also testify to the patronage of town magistrates.

The fate of the Neronian defensive circuit in this programme of Flavian expansion is unclear. The Baltic House ditch was still open at the beginning of the Flavian period, but a palisade enclosure was built across the line of the log corduroy at Drapers Gardens *c.* AD 70 according to dating suggested by the excavators.[85] This palisade stood about 2m high with spear-shaped upper ends, and it is tempting to suggest that it defined a military compound projecting forward from the line of the rampart. Whether or not the Neronian defences survived to define the Flavian city, there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that the boundary was relocated to the line taken by the second century masonry wall *c.* AD 120/125.[86] U-shaped ditches of this approximate date have been seen at several locations beneath the later town wall, as at Duke's Place and to the west of the Cripplegate fort.[87]

The assertion of a new and more ambitious town boundary would have been an important political act, likely – at this date - to have been a civilian initiative designed as an expression of civic status.[88] Tomlin argues that London achieved the rank of *colonia* as a consequence of a Hadrianic grant made on the occasion of his visit to Britain in AD 122. He bases this suggestion on a speculative but credible reconstruction of an inscription on a Purbeck marble slab found during excavations at the site of the Roman baths at Huggin Hill in 1989. The style of the inscription, its context, and the use of Purbeck marble all suggest an early second century date.[89] Tomlin's suggestion is consistent with the conclusions that can be drawn from the historical and architectural evidence, and with what we know of imperial policy under Hadrian. Many of London's principal public buildings were enlarged and improved in the Hadrianic period, and this may have been part of a coordinated programme of patronage inspired by the Emperor's visit and associated with this elevation in status. Constructions included a massive forum complex built in replacement of the Flavian forum AD 100-30, the replacement of the timber amphitheatre with a larger stone-

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[84] Millett 1994, 432-3. It should be noted that it is not universally accepted that this building was a forum basilica: Wacher (1995, 90) has argued that it was instead the office of the Procurator or a market building.
[85] Pre-Construct Archaeology 2009.
[86] Wilson 2006.
[87] Butler 2001, 45.
[88] Esmonde Cleary 2003.
[89] Tomlin 2006.

built construction *c.* AD 120/125, and the extensive rebuilding of the palace complex at Winchester Palace in Southwark *c.* AD 125.[90] Tiles bearing the stamp of the *Classis Britannica* were used in the last mentioned of these buildings, and army commanders and imperial officials were still the likely sponsors of most of these building works.[91] Various inscriptions and finds testify to the continued importance of the army and provincial administration at London.[92] The Cripplegate fort was also built in this period, evidently to house soldiers on secondment to duties in London, including, but not restricted to, service on the Governor's guard. Recent excavations have confirmed that this 4.7ha. fort at the north-west corner of the Hadrianic city was first built *c.* AD 120.[93] The excavated barrack blocks were not provided with the usual centurion's blocks and it is likely that officers continued to have their houses in other parts of town. This presence of this fort confirms the exceptional nature of the military presence in London.

The archaeological biography of early Roman London can now be rewritten around a narrative of military and imperial control and patronage, where commerce and trade were of secondary importance, and which almost entirely bypassed British elite society. It seems likely that the goods that reached London were either part of the command economy of military and administrative supply, or were for the market constituted by the wealthy and powerful bureaucrats and officials that came to reside in the city. The evidence does not support the contention that London was a thriving centre for market-driven commerce or that '*a large market existed for imported goods within ... it's increasingly Romanised hinterland*'.[94] London grew rapidly in the period AD 70-130, and despite the abiding importance of the imperial administration a greater plurality of patronage networks emerged from competing official commands and within London's wealthy civilian community.

Here I have argued that London began its life as the principal fort associated with the initial Claudian invasion of Britain, strategically located to facilitate the longer term colonial domination of southern Britain, and that it was always dominated by the needs of the provincial administration. I have carefully avoided describing the site as the provincial capital, in order to avoid the anachronistic implications of the term, but this was the commanding site from which Roman power in Britain was exercised. The most important sources of patronage within the urban community appear to have been embedded within the command structures of Rome, on which other communities of interest depended.   This made it less necessary for Rome to promote institutions of self-government, but these were eventually developed in the course of the late first and early second century.

Acknowledgements

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[90] Marsden 1987; Milne 1992 ; Bateman *et al.* 2008 ; Yule 2005.
[91] Yule and Rankov 1998.
[92] Hassall 1996; Milne 1996, 52-3.
[93] Howe and Lakin 2004.
[94] Merrifield 1983, 135-40.

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Figures

Fig.1.   Claudian London: the conquest phase fort. 1. 7-11 Bishopsgate; 2. The
Walbrook; 3. One Poultry; 4. Regis House; 5. Park Street; 6. 72-75 Cheapside;
7. Aldgate; 8. Paternoster Square; 9: Leadenhall Court.

Fig. 2.   Neronian London: after the Boudiccan revolt. 1. Plantation Place; 2. Regis
House; 3. Gresham Street/Cheapside; 4. Drapers Gardens; 5. Baltic House; 6.
One Poultry; 7. Wood Street Site D; 8. Swan Street