The Roman West, AD 200–500

This book describes and analyses the development of the Roman West from Gibraltar to the Rhine, using primarily the extensive body of published archaeological evidence rather than the textual evidence underlying most other studies. It situates this development within a longer-term process of change, proposing the later second century rather than the ‘third-century crisis’ as the major turning point, although the latter had longer-term consequences owing to the rise in importance of military identities. But in many areas more ‘traditional’ forms of settlement and display were sustained, to which was added the vocabulary of Christianity. The longer-term rhythms are also central to assessing the evidence for such aspects as rural settlement and patterns of economic interaction. The collapse of Roman imperial authority emphasised trends such as militarisation and regionalisation along with economic and cultural dis-integration. Indicators of ‘barbarian/Germanic’ presence are reassessed within such contexts and the traditional interpretations questioned and alternatives proposed.

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The Roman West, AD 200–500
An Archaeological Study

SIMON ESMONDE CLEARY
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reveal.
A note on places and maps

This book contains the names of hundreds of sites, find spots and so on. Many appear on the maps, but many more do not. So in order to help the reader locate them, I have tried at their first appearance (at least) to give the modern national administrative unit in which they lie (such as a French département or a Spanish provincia), the only exceptions being major sites such as a Barcelona or a Cologne, where such information seems to me otiose.

The base maps, prepared by Henry Buglass especially for this book, show the coastlines to either side of the North Sea as they were (approximately) in the late Roman period after the Dunkirk II marine transgression.