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AN INTRODUCTION

> What little we know of the London before Boudicca is based on scraps of archaeological information, mostly obtained under conditions which precluded scientific accuracy, and a few sentences of Tacitus.
>
> (Merrifield 1965: 38)

Today, London is the most completely and accurately excavated provincial capital in the Roman Empire and the best-explored town in Roman Britain. A vast amount of data has either been published or made publicly available. Even so, the available information has not yet been drawn together to understand the foundation of the town and to address Merrifield's lament. While it may seem remarkable, the sheer quantity and complexity of artefacts, notes, photographs, maps, finds tables, and site reports in various stages of completion can be daunting. Studies of the foundation have tended, instead, to draw upon individual sites or groups of sites, remarkable features of limited number, and finds of interest. While such an approach might be expected within the pages of a site report, and was the only possible method fifty years ago (before the majority of sites included in this book were excavated), it is certainly insufficient in light of the data available today.

No evidence of the origin of any other urban centre in the Roman world rivals that of London; for wealth of excavation and records available to examine the earliest years of a Roman town, London stands alone. Other well-excavated towns (e.g. Pompeii, Silchester) have the benefit of the absence or removal of later buildings, which only makes the work of the London's archaeologists that much more impressive. Urban excavation is not usually driven by research motives, but rather by development and repair of the modern city. Since at least the Victorian period in London, individuals and institutions have had a passion for preserving Roman London through recording, buoyed by policy since 1990, which has produced a unique legacy of data.

No study of the origin of Roman London (or any other ancient urban site) has ever been undertaken, and the results presented here constitute the first major synthesis of the evidence. This study provides a solid footing from which to address the different interpretations of early Londinium and to contribute to the debate of the origins of urbanism in the Roman provinces. Although only Colchester (ancient Camulodunum/Colonia Claudia Victricensis) and St Albans (Verulamium) might present archaeological evidence with significant parallels to Londinium because they too suffered destruction in the Boudican fire of AD 60/61, there are no studies of the pre-Flavian levels or of the first two decades after the foundation of any other Roman town. Often, only 'new towns' have early Roman levels able to be distinguished from Late pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA) horizons beneath. To examine the 'foundation' of a Roman town somewhat arbitrary dates or construction events would have to be chosen as beginning and end points. The archaeology of early Londinium is hardly clear-cut and simple to isolate – indeed, a number of subjective decisions have been made to create the dataset for this study.

Londinium is a town whose foundation story has been of interest to scholars for centuries (a short list would include Maitland 1756; Craik 1841; Haverfield 1911; Wheeler 1928; Merrifield 1965; Marsden 1980; Chapman and Johnson 1973; Williams 1990; Millett 1994; and Perring 2011). As all scholars note, Londinium does not fit any simple foundation model as there is no evidence of a pre-existing *oppidum* or other significant LPRIA settlement, the administration founded no *colonia* there, and the town that did develop was not granted *municipium*

status – at least not before the Boudican Revolt of AD 60/61 (Tacitus, *Annals* 14.33). Ptolemy (*Geography* 2.3.13), writing approximately a century after the Revolt, gave no specific status to Londinium and placed it in the territory of the Cantiaci. Nonetheless, the city went on to become the capital of Britannia, and subsequently Britannia Superior, and gained the illustrious title Augusta by the fourth century. Epigraphic evidence from an inscribed slab of purbeck 'marble' suggests that Londinium was elevated to the status of *colonia* as early as the second century (Tomlin 2006a). Many authors have retrospectively suggested that Londinium held some degree of administrative importance from its inception, before the Revolt, although the total lack of literary evidence and procuratorial tile stamps is strong evidence to the contrary (Betts 1995). The burial in London of G. Julius Classicianus (*RIB* 12, Collingwood and Wright 1965: 5), the *procurator* sent to Britannia in the aftermath of the Revolt, provides evidence that the administration moved its headquarters from Colonia Claudia Victricensis (the colony at Colchester) to Londinium. Similarly, the monumentalisation of the forum area (Marsden 1987) and construction of buildings with the appearance of administrative functions (Hill 1989), a late Neronian fort at Plantation Place (Dunwoodie forthcoming), and Neronian quays and warehouses (Brigham and Watson forthcoming; Milne 1985), indicate the increased significance of Londinium's role in the provincial administration in the years *after* the Boudican Revolt.

The short window of time between the foundation[1] of Londinium and the horrific destruction it suffered during the Boudican Revolt (see page 23) is bounded both by historically attested events and by identifiable archaeological horizons. The key to understanding the origin of London lies within these bounds and, although scarce evidence hampered scholars for centuries, the questions of origin have nonetheless fuelled lively discussions. Understanding the birth of Britannia's capital city holds as much significance to the study of the province as the deep antiquity of the modern capital does to English identity. For these reasons, the study of London's foundation and the character of the earliest settlement have been accompanied by dynamic and impassioned scholarly debate. Until relatively recently, however, this discourse was supported by little more than the static and short historical accounts provided by Caesar in his *Gallic Wars*, by Tacitus' *Annals*, and, more remotely in time and space, by the historian Cassius Dio. The speculations derived from logical reasoning based upon ancient sources and upon London's geographical setting dominated these discussions until the early twentieth century. Although archaeological observations have been made in London during construction projects over the last three centuries, it is only those of the last forty years that have been used as opportunities for systematic recording and collection of archaeological evidence. The key to understanding the origin of Londinium lies in these rich archaeological remains, which must be understood in the context of social, political, and economic changes in Britain in the lead-up to, and as a result of, the Claudian invasion.

BEFORE LONDINIUM

Britain had been in the process of becoming Britannia for some time when the first roads and buildings were constructed in Londinium. Imports of Continental goods, such as wine and Gallo-Belgic pottery and coins, the transition to burying the cremated remains of the high-status dead in grand ceremony with ceramic vessels accompanied by objects (personal adornment, feasting vessels, etc.), and the minting of the first British coins indicate the significant changes in the south-east resulting from contact with people living on the Continent in the LPRIA (Cunliffe 1991; Haselgrove 1984). Tribal leaders in Britain were refashioning social hierarchies, political and military alliances were made between British kings and Rome; wine, oil, and objects from across the Empire

[1] For the purposes of this project, the word 'foundation' is used to refer to the establishment of the earliest settlement in the town, not to a particular model characterised by a specific system of religious or administrative actions and boundaries within an overarching cultural urban ideal, as expressed by Virgil and Vitruvius (see e.g. Woolf 1998: 215–16, 2000: 120).

were imported to Britain; and burial practices, architecture, settlement patterns, and coin imagery were changing (see, e.g., Creighton 1995, 2000, 2001, 2006; Cunliffe 1984, 1991: 107–29, 541–8; Haselgrove 1984, 1988; Millett 1990: 17, 29–39).

Although Britannia was not officially incorporated as a province until AD 43, it was within the sphere of the Roman world just across the Channel during the first century BC. The provinces nearest to Britannia – Gallia Lugdunensis, Gallia Belgica, and the military zone of Germania Inferior (Figure 1) – were incorporated (originally as parts of the Three Gauls) during the campaigns of Caesar in the 50s BC. As Gaul was incorporated into the Empire, the people of south-eastern Britain became more receptive to Roman contact, in the form of trade and communication, in the century before the invasion of AD 43. The port at Gesoriacum (Boulogne) was probably the one from which Caesar's forces as well as the Claudian invasion fleet embarked, and may have been an important link through the Continent and to the Mediterranean via the Via Agrippa (Woolf 1998). The Morini and Menapii tribes lived on the coastal areas of Gallia Belgica across the Channel, but what direct contact they may have had with south-eastern Britain is unknown, although Caesar's claim (*Gallic Wars* 4.20) that tribes in Britain united with tribes in Gaul to fight against the Romans suggests that ties of loyalty and shared goals bound the groups across the Channel.

Changes visible in the archaeological record in Britain from the mid-first century BC could be linked to treaties formed by Caesar with the southern kings. Although these treaties would have been voided by the death of Caesar in 44 BC, Augustus re-established new treaties in the 20s BC and Caligula made an attempt, albeit unsuccessful, to invade Britain and incorporate it into the Empire. Accounts of Caligula's campaign in Britain are largely lost in Cassius Dio (although see Cassius Dio 59.21.2) and Tacitus, but his intervention could have had a significant effect on Britain, of which we are unaware from the literary sources. In the early first century AD the Commian and Tasciovanian dynasties in the south and east were both in alliance with Rome, and coinage minted by British kings emulated forms of Roman propaganda and supports coin use in trade and transactions with people from the Continent (Creighton 2001, 2006).

The growth of centres of tribal focus indicates centralisation of control, directly related to the increased wealth and power of certain people or families. These central places, often termed '*oppida*', for lack of a better word, are a characteristic of the LPRIA. They were areas of increased population where kings had coins minted, high-status people constructed elite residences in the form of groups of buildings within ditch enclosures, prestigious individuals were commemorated with elaborate funerary rites and burials, and large ditch-and-dyke systems requiring significant consolidated authority and wealth served as defensive features, boundaries, and links. LPRIA sites known as *oppida* in the south-east include Camulodunon (Colchester) to the north-east of London; Verulamion (St Alban's), Wheathampstead, Braughing, and Dyke Hill north of the Thames and west of London; Oldbury, Loose, Bigberry, and Canterbury, south of the Thames and east of London; and Chichester, Silchester, and Winchester south of the Thames and west of London (Figure 2). The Iron Age *oppida* in south-eastern Britain do not, however, seem to have functioned as centres of dense population, commerce, justice, and administration – characteristics common to Roman towns. Constructing towns did not apparently become important until after the Claudian invasion; the long-standing treaties with Rome allowed the local kings to administer their lands as they saw fit. The vast majority of the population in pre-Roman and Roman Britain was probably rural (Millett 2005: 37; see also Taylor 2007), and yet the Roman model for governing conquered territory in the provinces was based on centralised administration. The process of urbanisation in Roman Britain has, therefore, long been viewed as a purposeful action on the part of the military and imperial administration to subdue, control, and acculturate the native inhabitants. The role of native kings and elite groups in the creation of towns, however, is likely to be far greater than is often acknowledged (Creighton 2006).

The questions regarding who built the earliest towns in Britain, why, how they responded to LPRIA sites and landscape features, how they functioned, and who lived and worked in them are at the centre of the study of the origins of urbanism in Britannia.

The British kings did not apparently take any interest in the area of later Thames settlement, however; during the LPRIA the landscape of the area that would become Londinium was natural and lacking in significant occupation (see also page 34), although Bronze Age and Iron Age sites are known in the Greater London area (Greenwood 1997; Kent 1978; Merriman 1987; Sidell 2002; Wait and Cotton 2000). It has been shown through extensive survey of the material evidence that relative levels of human presence in London are strongest in the Bronze Age with a distinct hiatus in local activity during the Iron Age (Holder and Jamieson 2003). Characteristics of other Iron Age settlement areas in the south-east, such as rich cremation burials and Gallo-Belgic pottery, are absent in the London area. Despite the excellent geography of the site and advantages for an *oppidum* at London, there is no evidence of a significant LPRIA settlement, although prehistoric finds are not uncommon. Within the modern bounds of Greater London there are sites that demonstrate that the general area was not entirely devoid of occupation in the centuries preceding the foundation of Londinium, although no LPRIA occupation sites were situated along the Thames or on the site that would become Londinium.

In the area where the later town would be constructed there are a number of finds that suggest earlier occupation, especially in Southwark. Although the LPRIA is most significant to the discussion of the growth of the Roman town, it is still worth noting that postholes were found representing a Late Bronze Age (LBA), possibly Early Iron Age (EIA), round house and an Iron Age field or enclosure boundary at Courage Brewery in Southwark, the site of an early Roman building on the western side of the northern eyot[2] (Cowan 2003; Sidell 2002; Wait and Cotton 2000). Beneath the main road in Southwark, at 124–126 Borough High Street, an inhumation burial of a thirty-year-old male of probable Iron Age date was found (Dean and Hammerson 1980) and some of the ditches at 15 Southwark Street may be LPRIA in date, although they also contained Roman material (Sidell 2002). Possible Iron Age pottery was found at 11–19 St Thomas Street, less than 100 metres east of early Roman buildings on the northern eyot (Cowan et al. 2009) and on Bermondsey eyot, south of the Thames about a kilometre east of the nearest early Roman site, a pit was excavated that contained LPRIA shell- and grass-tempered pottery, along with flint tools and bones of cattle, sheep, and horses at 170–176 Grange Road (Cowan et al. 2009; Heard 1996). Four other sites on that eyot also indicate possible human activity in the Iron Age (Heard 1996: 79, fig. 2).

North of the Thames, scattered prehistoric objects occasionally come to light, such as LBA/EIA potsherds found in the Cripplegate area, a bronze drinking-vessel mount from near Eastcheap, and fragments of a pedestal urn from near Paternoster Square (Wait and Cotton 2000). Northeast of Lorteburn Stream, a possible Iron Age inhumation was located beneath Roman levels in the nineteenth century, and, in 1976–7, a large pit and a possible LPRIA burial were found near the Tower (Kent 1978; Merriman 1987; Parnell 1977; Wait and Cotton 2000) – both of which lie east of the bounds of the Roman town.

West of the Roman settlement, in Westminster, a Bronze Age/Iron Age timber structure was found in Richmond Terrace Mews and LBA–EIA pottery and a spindle whorl in St Margaret Street. Most significant to the early Roman period is the LPRIA potin coin hoard in St James's Park (Wait and Cotton 2000). Potin coins found east and west of Londinium derive, possibly, from north Kent (Haselgrove 1988: 103, 119–20) and Gallo-Belgic B gold staters concentrated west of Londinium could indicate a significant LPRIA centre there (Kent 1978). Other Bronze Age–Iron Age occupation sites are known along the Thames valley in Wandsworth, Richmond, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Hounslow (see Wait and Cotton 2000: map 6).

[2] An eyot is a small island, especially in a river, and is the usual term to refer to the small sandy islands in the Thames where the Roman settlement at the southern end of the bridge was located.

The prehistoric use of the Thames in the London area is presented by Celtic prestige artefacts found during dredging, much of it from west of London near Battersea Bridge – particularly the bronze, enamelled ceremonial shield (British Museum 1857,7–15.1; Stead 1985). These artefacts, which include feasting objects, weaponry, and harness equipment, demonstrate that the Thames was in use as a depositional location from at least the Bronze Age. Although the date of the deposition can only be based on the style of the objects, parallels for some can be found in the LPRIA, such as in complex elite burial assemblages (e.g. Stead 1967), common in nearby Essex and Hertfordshire, but which are unknown in the London area. The Thames assemblage could be related to the same phenomenon of elite burial, and perhaps represents the material remains of a similar rite (Bradley and Gordon 1988: 504; Sharples 2008: 210–11). Nonetheless, there was a significant decrease in deposition of prestige armour and feasting equipment in the Thames in the LPRIA, perhaps because the area where Londinium would be built was a significant boundary (Creighton 1995: 298; Wait and Cotton 2000: 108).

Human crania also found during dredging of the Thames west of London in the nineteenth century (precise numbers of skulls and their finds locations are unknown, although 299 survive: Bradley and Gordon 1988: 504; Cuming 1857: 237; Lawrence 1929) could indicate a link between river burial and deposition of weaponry and other objects in the Thames. Four crania have been C-14 dated to the M/LBA (the range covers *c.* 1388–800 BC: Bradley and Gordon 1988: 508). Few mandibles (only fourteen are known) or other human bones have been found, indicating the likelihood that the bodies were exposed to decay and became disarticulated before the crania were selected for deposition in the river (Bradley and Gordon 1988: 504). Of the 299 surviving skulls, 60% were male and 40% female, and 94% were aged between twenty-five and thirty-five years, suggesting that this rite was reserved for a select group of people (Bradley and Gordon 1988: 505). The later, Roman-period skulls found in the upper Walbrook (see page 23 below) could be part of a continued tradition, perhaps demonstrating that those Iron Age groups who were using the Thames for ritual deposition of weaponry and human remains continued to come to the area, perhaps even living in Londinium in the Roman period (Marsh and West 1981).

The Celtic metalwork and crania from the Thames do not necessarily mark the position of a bridge, ford, or settlement at London, but probably do indicate a symbolic or otherwise significant location of votive offerings in a watery location and river burials. Votive deposition in watery contexts is well-documented across prehistoric Europe (Bradley 2000: 51–63) and springs, marshes, and rivers are likely to have had great cult significance, drawing diverse people from surrounding settlements to make offerings to deities associated with such places. This interpretation is somewhat speculative, however, as it has also been argued that the Thames skulls and artefacts could originate from eroded bank sites upstream (Ehrenberg 1980: 5–14).

These objects nonetheless highlight the probability that the Thames was in use, probably as a major route for communication and inland trade in the south, during the LPRIA and early Roman period before the creation of the road network. This trade can be seen in imported Continental goods at inland locations such as Calleva, as well as in the distributions of British and Gallo-Belgic coins. The type of boat that appears on some bronze coins of Cunobelin (*c.* AD 10–40) found in Colchester and Canterbury is of a high-sided, flat-bottomed type, well suited to estuary and river transport, and may represent just this type of use of the Thames, perhaps by the Trinovantes and Cantiaci (Muckeroy et al. 1978; Sealey 1996: 62, fig. 8 and pl. 1; Wait and Cotton 2000: 112).

There are two sites on either side of the Thames, about 15 kilometres downstream from where Londinium would be built, that might indicate significant Middle Iron Age (MIA) settlement in this part of the Thames valley: the settlement and/or ritual sites represented by large (7.62 metres deep) M/LIA (Late Iron Age) V-shaped ditches enclosing round buildings and pits at the site of Woolwich Power Station in Greenwich; and the MIA remains at the 19–24-hectare Uphall Camp in Great Ilford, where

a variety of timber structures were enclosed by earthworks (Greenwood 1997; Wait and Cotton 2000: 106). These sites, which many would consider *oppida*, indicate that the Thames was an important navigation route in the MIA, and probably integral to the importation of goods from the Continent. The 17.4-hectare MIA site of Caesar's Camp, Keston Common, about 18 kilometres south-east of Londinium, is another substantial ditch-enclosed site from the period that suggests a focus on the area (religious? economic? defensive?). South-west of Londinium lay the MIA/LIA temple at Caesar's Camp, Heathrow, a rectangular beam-slot-defined '*cella*' surrounded by postholes within an earthwork enclosure (Grimes and Close-Brookes 1993: 312–18). With construction and occupation of these sites separated in time from early Londinium by at least two hundred years, these sites clearly had no direct relationship to the creation of the town, but they demonstrate the possibility that the area continued to hold some significance into the LPRIA.

The choice to build a town may not have been a direct result of these activities, but the importance of the Thames, both as part of the communication network and as a symbolic waterway, supports the notion that the site of Londinium was not unknown to Iron Age traders and other people moving through the south-east. The position of Silchester and Dyke Hill near the Thames and its tributaries in the west is of particular importance to the possible use of the rivers for trade and communication. Imported Continental artefacts found at these two sites, such as the bulky and heavy Dressel 1 wine amphorae that would be easiest to transport by ship, coupled with the lack of known LPRIA roads, would suggest that the mode of transport was river-borne. In this context, it is possible that the Thames artefacts and skulls found near London could mark a control point or other significant location along this route. Also, in the early Roman period native craftsmen were attracted to Highgate Wood a few miles from Londinium where they worked as itinerant potters to produce Belgic forms of pottery for the population at Londinium (Brown and Sheldon 1974: 224–5). These potters did not construct a settlement that has been located archaeologically, but their presence supports the idea that native groups were familiar with the area and its resources. Although there is no evidence for LPRIA settlement or occupation debris in London, a more transient or intermittent form of activity in the London area in the LPRIA and early Roman period is undeniable.

THE THEORY OF A PRE-ROMAN LONDON

This study of the earliest phase of Londinium has a clear chronological focus, attempting, as it does, to illustrate life in the Roman-period town up to the Boudican Revolt in AD 60/61. From Tacitus' description (*Annals* 14.32) of the town at the time of the Revolt, most scholars have, historically, agreed that it was probably a trading port inhabited primarily by merchants at the time. Before intensive excavations began in London in the twentieth century, however, there was no stratigraphic or material basis for ruling out significant LPRIA occupation; the question of London's origins had, therefore, engendered diverse hypotheses and lively debates. Currently, the lack of evidence of any substantial LPRIA settlement is so strong as to be undeniable, but disregarding, dismissing, and devaluing earlier arguments would be denying the genealogy of the academic creation of the story of early London. The dramatic transformation of evidence, approaches, and goals in the research of early London over the last century has rendered it virtually impossible to find a cohesive overview of the earlier academic discourse, although the trends occurred within the academic context of the study of Roman Britain generally. Nonetheless, the arguments relating specifically to the foundation of London are important to the historiography of the early Roman town, and yet there is no publication that concisely describes the intellectual development and theories of the most influential scholars, as they relate specifically to London (although Merrifield 1969, 1983; and Wheeler 1928, 1930 do provide overviews).

Study and discussion of the establishment of settlement at Londinium has a long history, beginning with a twelfth-century foundation myth (Geoffrey of

Monmouth: see Reeve 2007), which was discarded in favour of logical reasoning informed by ancient authors and linguistic analysis during and after the Enlightenment (e.g. Camden 1610; Craik 1841; Maitland 1756; Lane Fox 1867; and Wren 1750), and finally superseded by analytical approaches to material and archaeological remains from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g. Lethaby 1923; Lane Fox 1867; and Oswald and Pryce 1928). Although discoveries made during building work in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries (e.g. Craik 1841; Smith 1859; and Wren 1750; see also Smith et al. 1974) supported the Roman foundation of the town, for many years some scholars still wished to show that London could have been founded by the indigenous Britons (e.g. Lane Fox 1867; Lethaby 1923; and Home 1948), perhaps tacitly to elongate the history of the important city and to claim a truly British origin for the nation's capital, which would bolster the longevity and genealogy of the national identity.

The Trojanic foundation myth

Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century tale of the mythical foundation of London, in *Historia Regum Britanniae* (see 'Description of the Island' and Books 1–5 in Reeve 2007), may recount stories that originated perhaps six centuries earlier; there is evidence that Geoffrey was influenced by Gildas' sixth-century *De excidio Britanniae* and by Bede's eighth-century *Historia Ecclesiastica* and *Historia Britonum* (Reeve 2007: lvii). Geoffrey tells a tale, years after the Trojan War, in which the great-grandson of Aeneas, called Brutus, was exiled from Rome and, after an adventure that took him to Troy to free the enslaved men, settled on an island in the western ocean called Albion, which was inhabited by giants. He renamed it 'Britannia' after himself, and, after he and his followers defeated the giants, he sought out the site for a new city, which he called 'Troia Nova' (corrupted to Trinovantum over time). The myth goes on to describe how the city was later overtaken by King Lud, mythical predecessor of Cassivellaunus, who constructed a great wall with many towers around the town. Geoffrey proposed that King Lud renamed the town 'Caer-Lud', which was corrupted to 'Caer-London' before changing to 'London' under Saxon rule. He explains that King Lud was buried at Ludgate, giving that landmark its name. In an era before archaeological investigation and systematic inquiry, speculations and foundation myths represented a combination of vernacular history and explanatory modelling. It seems that Geoffrey's myth was still significant six hundred years later; the eighteenth-century historian William Maitland (1756: 4–11) showed extreme contempt for Geoffrey's story and constructed a logical, detailed argument to disprove it, suggesting that it had become a popular fiction at the time.

The etymology of 'Londinium'

The etymology of the word 'Londinium' has long been used as evidence of its Celtic foundation. 'Harbour for Ships' from the Celtic words *lhong* (ships) and *porth* (harbour) was an early hypothesis (Camden 1610), as was 'Ship Hill' from *lhong* and *dun* or *don* (hill) (Wren 1750: 264–5), 'Plain Hill' from *lon* (plain) and *dun*/*don* (Maitland 1756: 17–19), and 'Town of Ships' from *lhong* and *dun* (meaning 'town' this time) (Craik 1841: 148). Some of these hypotheses have been related to topographical and archaeological evidence (see pages 8–9 below), such as 'Lake City' from *llyn* and *din* (Pitt-Rivers as Lane Fox 1867).

None of these early attempts to decipher the word has withstood the test of time, however. Currently, the etymology of Londinium is thought to be, first, a Latinisation of Celtic 'Londinion', and, secondly, 'the place (or land) of Londinos' (Haverfield 1911: 145; Rivet and Jackson 1970: 76; Rivet and Smith 1979). What 'Londinos' means is unknown – although a personal name derived from *londos* (fierce) has been suggested (Home 1948: 18–19), this translation is incorrect and the derivation is, in fact, unknown (Rivet and Smith 1979: 396–8). The only other true link to the Celtic word *londo* is ancient 'Londobris' mentioned by Ptolemy (2.5.7), modern Berlanga Island off the coast of Portugal (Rivet and Smith 1979).

There is another possible interpretation, although it is somewhat tenuous (Coates 1998). The name may be derived from a local pre-Celtic river name 'Plowonida' composed of *plew* and *nejd*, suggestive of the meaning 'the (wide) flowing river'. In this interpretation, 'Londinion' would be the place name derived from the river name, meaning 'the place/settlement on the (wide) flowing river' (Coates 1998: 227).

The earlier arguments based on these Celtic translations suggested that a Celtic name equalled a Celtic population and pre-Roman foundation (e.g. Lewin 1866: 59; Lethaby 1923: 230). It is well documented, however, that the Romans often gave native names to new settlements (Haverfield 1911: 145; Home 1948: 19; Maitland 1756: 17–19; Rivet and Smith 1979: 22–23; Wheeler 1928: 19) and, despite the intensity and longevity of interest in this debate, the exact meaning of the Celtic word 'Londinion' is immaterial to (dis)proving the existence of a pre-Roman settlement.

Material evidence of prehistoric activity

Seventeenth- through nineteenth-century construction and sewer trenches and early archaeological excavations in the City and Southwark provided keyhole glimpses of the Roman settlement that led to much speculation and hypothesising among academics and excavators. For example, Pitt-Rivers (as Lane Fox 1867: lxxvi–lxxix) suggested that a structure founded on wooden piles that he excavated in the area of London Wall was evidence of native pile-supported lake dwellings, and hypothesised that they were the remains of the British capital of Cassivellaunus, a theory that was already in existence (Lewin 1866). Similarly, in the 1920s a small collection of early first-century Arretine (*terra sigillata*) sherds had a significant impact on the dating of the foundation of London to the pre-Claudian period (Lethaby 1923; Oswald and Pryce 1928), but excavations over the next thirty years produced such a plethora of Claudian and later pottery that these early sherds became statistically insignificant and could easily be explained as older objects in the possession of later inhabitants (Merrifield 1965: 29–32; Morris 1982: 87–90). Indeed, the argument surrounding the early *terra sigillata* in London is now known to be a moot point as these objects were very probably imported from the Continent by nineteenth-century art dealers who claimed that they had been found in London to increase their value (Marsh 1979). More than any other finds, however, the prestige objects found during dredging of the Thames, discussed above (see page 5), once seemed strong evidence to support a pre-Roman settlement (Cuming 1858; Haverfield 1911: 146; Lawrence 1929; Lethaby 1923: 231–8; Roots 1844; Vulliamy 1930: 119–29; Wheeler 1928: 24–7).

Pre-Roman river crossing

The reasoning that a bridge or ford existed before the invasion and later settlement at London, and therefore precipitated the foundation of the Roman town, is based on ancient authors' descriptions of the military movements of Caesar in 55 and 54 BC and Plautius in AD 43 (Camden 1610; Craik 1841: 147; Lethaby 1923: 230, 242–4; Maitland 1756: 8). Caesar and Plautius landed in Kent and/or Sussex (Hind 2007: 100–5) and marched their armies north, requiring them to cross the River Thames (see also page 13 below). Caesar (*Gallic Wars* 5.18–20) stated that he crossed the Thames at a ford before heading to the capital of Cassivellaunus. Cassius Dio (60.20.5–21.3) recounted that Plautius and his army fought a skirmish after crossing the Thames at a bridge upstream from where the Batavian soldiers with him were able to cross (supposedly to swim across, but more likely at a ford). The word Cassius Dio used is γεφύρα, which usually refers to a bridge or a structure acting as a bridge, but, at the time Cassius Dio was writing, could also have referred to a dam, platform, deck, or causeway (Patrick James, pers. comm.; γεφύρα LSJ s.v.). Cassius Dio, a historian writing in Greek in the early third century AD who never visited Britain and was writing more than a century after the Claudian invasion, was almost certainly too distant from the events for his words to be understood literally, however.

It was also once thought that Watling Street east of London and in Southwark seemed to point westwards towards Westminster, which, along with Iron Age swords found near Westminster Bridge in 1847, caused some to suggest a ford or early bridge at Westminster (e.g. Home 1948: 29–31, 35–40; Lethaby 1923; Thomas 2008: 104), although today it is known that Watling Street turned north to cross the Thames and that there is no evidence for an early crossing at Westminster (Bird 2002; Sheldon 2000; Sloane et al. 1995; Watson et al. 2001).

The ambiguity of the word γεφύρα, the impossibility of demonstrating that the crossing points of either Caesar or Plautius were at the site of the later town of Londinium (other sites besides Westminster have been suggested, e.g. see also Sharpe 1906, who favoured a ford at Brentford, upstream), the likelihood that Plautius built his own bridge or raft to cross the Thames, that a pre-Roman bridge presupposes pre-Roman roads leading to and from it, for which there are no evidence, and the total lack of evidence for a substantial LPRIA settlement at London disproves these hypotheses (Smith 1859: 20; Haverfield 1911: 145; Merrifield 1965: 34; Wheeler 1928: 19, 1930: 15).

Pre-Roman trading port

The hypothesis of a pre-Roman trading port has long been popular (e.g. Wren 1750: 265), although evidence has never been strong (Wheeler 1928: 24–7). The natural advantages of Londinium and the assumed requirement of a port on the Thames to facilitate pre-Claudian trade with Gaul caused some early scholars to conclude the existence of a pre-Roman trading port (e.g. Lewin 1866: 61–2; Home 1948). Weak arguments are characteristic of this model, however, and none were based on archaeological remains. For example, it was once presumed impossible that the town could have been only eighteen years old (i.e. founded post-invasion) when it was destroyed by Boudica because Tacitus (*Annals* 14.33) suggested that the population already numbered 70,000 (Lewin 1866: 61–2). Modern readings of Tacitus do not credit these figures with great accuracy; his original purpose was probably to amplify the horror of the rebellion and, thereby, the glory of the victory in order to bolster the emperor's position as a military leader (through that of the governor Paulinus) and justify his rule for a specific, literate audience in Italy (Mellor 2011). The explanations of London's being the capital of King Lud and Cassivellaunus have already been mentioned (see page 7 above) (Lewin 1866: 61, 66), while some have supposed that the capital of Cassivellaunus, at Verulamium, must have required a port and that, being connected to Verulamium by a road, Londinium probably served as that port (Lethaby 1923).

The end of pre-Roman London

The creation of a complex and detailed archaeological record has been the result of rescue archaeology and museum initiatives in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as the formation of full-time, professional archaeological organisations, such as the DUA, and has had an enormous impact on these earlier debates. Because no LPRIA settlements or significant domestic refuse have been found in London, despite extensive archaeological excavation, arguments for a purely Roman foundation of London are now common and uncontroversial (e.g. Merriman 1987). The question of a pre-Claudian-invasion settlement at London was put to rest in scholarly circles by the early to mid-twentieth century (e.g. Wheeler 1928, 1930; Merrifield 1965, 1983), when the debate shifted to questions of the impetus of foundation and the research objectives began to focus more strongly on describing the evidence to develop a narrative (e.g. Chapman and Johnson 1973; Hassall 1996; Merrifield 1965; Marsden 1980; Morris 1982; Millett 1994; Philp et al. 1977).

The rejection of Geoffrey of Monmouth's myth, and eventual rejection of a pre-Roman London altogether in the latter part of the twentieth century, propagated yet another myth: that of an empty London area during all of prehistory (Holder and Jamieson 2003: 23). There is significant evidence of at least transient activity during the Late Bronze Age, Mesolithic, and Neolithic in

particular, followed by a relative hiatus in common human presence during the Iron Age (Holder and Jamieson 2003: 32–9).

AFTER THE CLAUDIAN INVASION

In AD 43 the Roman Empire encompassed nearly the entire Mediterranean basin and spread from the Atlantic coast of the Iberian Peninsula in the west to Anatolia in the east and from the mouth of the Rhine in the north to North Africa in the south, but Britannia was at its edge. The nearest non-Roman territory across the Channel was in the modern-day Netherlands, north of the Rhine – a significant boundary beyond which Roman military campaigns accomplished little. The expansion to Britannia signified the emperor's conquest of the 'Ocean' and of the British tribes who supported Gallic tribes against Rome and Caesar in the previous century (Caesar, *Gallic Wars* 4). It was also politically symbolic for Claudius both to emulate Caesar's campaigns and purported success as well as to carry out the incorporation of the territory as a province, as Caesar and Caligula had been unable to do. The Claudian invasion did not put an end to kingship in Britain, and treaties were created with Prasutagus who ruled in East Anglia, Togidubnus who ruled the south, and Cartimandua in the north. Significant sites where towns would later be formed, such as Gosbecks, Silchester, Canterbury, and Verulamium, were held by kings of the south and east at the time of the invasion; the role of local leaders in engendering urbanism in Britannia was significant (Creighton 2006: 124). The area that was to become Londinium, however, lay on a boundary formed by the Thames estuary, at the limits of influence of cultural groups, and was not claimed by the Trinovantes to the north or the Cantiaci to the south (Creighton 2006: 95; Millett 1990: 89; Wait and Cotton 2000: 102, 113); that habitation sites did not focus on the territory along the Thames in the LPRIA (see pages 3–6 above) supports this hypothesis.

Academic models for understanding urbanisation in Britannia have evolved over the years. Of all paradigms proposed to explain town-formation in Roman Britain, the most significant for influencing later interpretations has its origins in the nineteenth century, when fantastic new discoveries were being made all over the country during construction related to rapid industrialisation and growth of the cities and suburbs of England. In previous centuries antiquarians such as Aubrey and Stukeley had begun the trend of serious academic investigation into the classical antiquity of England, but archaeology as we recognise it today commenced later in the Victorian era, with early investigators, such as Pitt-Rivers. This work coincided with the height of nineteenth-century British imperialism, and this sociocultural context coloured much of the interpretation of the earlier archaeological discoveries from Roman towns in Britain. The colonial model suggests that Roman colonists arrived in the province and created and populated its towns, from which they conducted administration and brought Roman culture to the 'natives'.

In the twentieth century ideas began to evolve, and a new model gained popularity whereby towns in Britannia were inhabited not, as had been long imagined, entirely by Italian imperial colonists, but rather by indigenous Britons eagerly adopting Roman ways of life with the educational aid of the administration and the army – a situation not so different from one ideal model of the British in India at the time (Haverfield 1911). This is not to say, however, that the top-down colonial method of social change was abandoned. Strong focus remained on the 'Roman' aspects of the archaeology of towns – defences, public buildings, baths, amphitheatres, and town-house plans – explicitly separating the indigenous population from the town-dwellers and implicitly forwarding the view that the origins of the towns were intentionally planned for 'Roman' reasons and that the 'native' settlements were separate, more organic developments (Collingwood 1930: 92–5).

A number of urban sites in the south-east appear, like Londinium, to have developed as urban centres relatively rapidly, although only Verulamium and Camulodunum/Colonia Claudia offer direct comparisons for the development pre-AD 60/61 because they, too, were burnt in the Boudican Revolt. Comparisons of the growth of these towns based on occupied area and density of structures