

# Of Castles and elephants

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IN AD 43 THE ROMAN invasion army under Aulus Plautius forced a crossing of the Thames at a point which seems to have been just above the head of the tide. Some German auxiliaries swam across, while other troops (perhaps cavalry) crossed over by a bridge a little way upstream. After dispersing the enemy, Plautius decided to advance no further and sent to Rome for Claudius<sup>1</sup>.

The aim of this article is to seek a possible location for the base camp of Plautius while he awaited Claudius, and to look at some related matters. The base camp was undoubtedly established for some six weeks until the Emperor and his reinforcements arrived. Much equipment, including elephants, had already been assembled (presumably on the Gaulish coast) ready to reinforce the expedition if required<sup>2</sup>. It seems likely that some or most of these supplies would have been transferred to the expedition's base camp before Claudius' arrival so as not to delay him.

## The Westminster Crossing

The contention, based on the layout of the Roman roads around London, that the invasion army established a crossing of the Thames at a posited ford at Westminster, has been widely accepted<sup>3</sup>.

Watling Street, which links the crossing to the invasion supply depot at Richborough, bypasses *Londinium* and meets, at Westminster, the road leading from *Verulamium*. The 19km (12 mile) long straight stretch of Watling Street between Greenwich and Springhead is aligned on the point of the Lambeth bank of the Thames opposite Westminster Abbey and Thorney Island, a little upstream from Westminster Bridge. Between Greenwich and Lambeth the Roman road appears to have swung south to avoid Deptford Creek – the route seems to consist of three straight sections: Greenwich–New Cross, New Cross–somewhere (along the line of, or parallel to, the Old Kent Road) near the Elephant and Castle, and from that point to the Thames<sup>4</sup>.

A recent detailed study of the structural, stratigraphical and environmental evidence from 1st century AD sites on both banks of the Thames in the area of the City/Southwark crossing shows that the south bank was intertidal marsh land; of the seven eyots so far identified close to the south bank, only the three which carry the two Roman roads leading to the bridge area, and *Bermond's Ey* appear to have been generally safe from flooding at high tide<sup>5</sup>. The spot where the Thames "forms a lake at flood tide"<sup>6</sup> may therefore now, with some confidence, be identified as the south bank of the river at Southwark; this militates against an early crossing point in the area of the City (Fig. 1).

The hypothesis of a ford at Westminster is also reinforced by a recently published map, which in depicting "the extent of alluvium minus areas shown by the Dept. of Greater London Archaeology to have been gravel eyots higher than the surrounding silt"<sup>7</sup>, clearly shows that the only place in the area with 'dry' land on either side of the Thames was in the area of Westminster Abbey. Further support comes from a map of 1593 (and from later ones), which annotates some steps on the Lambeth bank as the *Stangate Stayres*<sup>8</sup>, and from a reference of 1357 to a *Stangate road* in the area<sup>9</sup>; the present-day roads called *Stangate* and *Stangate Street* lie to the north-north-east of the stairs (Fig. 1). The name *Stangate* brings to mind the Roman road running south of and parallel to Hadrian's Wall. While it is uncertain whether this crossing point can be equated with the ford described by Dio<sup>10</sup>, the possibility that the Romans built some form of a bridge here should not be lightly discounted.

## The Plautian Base Camp

Using the consensus on the Westminster crossing, it seems reasonable to expect to find nearby the large advanced base camp of Plautius. There would be good tactical sense in building it on the south

1. Dio *Histories* 60.20.5 - 21.2.

2. *ibid* 60.21.2

3. E.g. SLAEC *Southwark Excavations 1972-74* (1978) 25; P. Marsden *Roman London* (1980) 13-14.

4. For a similar view see I. D. Margary *Roman Roads in Britain* (1967) 55 fig. 2.

5. G. Milne, R. W. Battarbee, V. Straker and B. Yule 'The River Thames in the mid 1st century A.D.' *Trans London*

*Middlesex Archaeol Soc* 34 (1983) 27-9 and fig. 7.

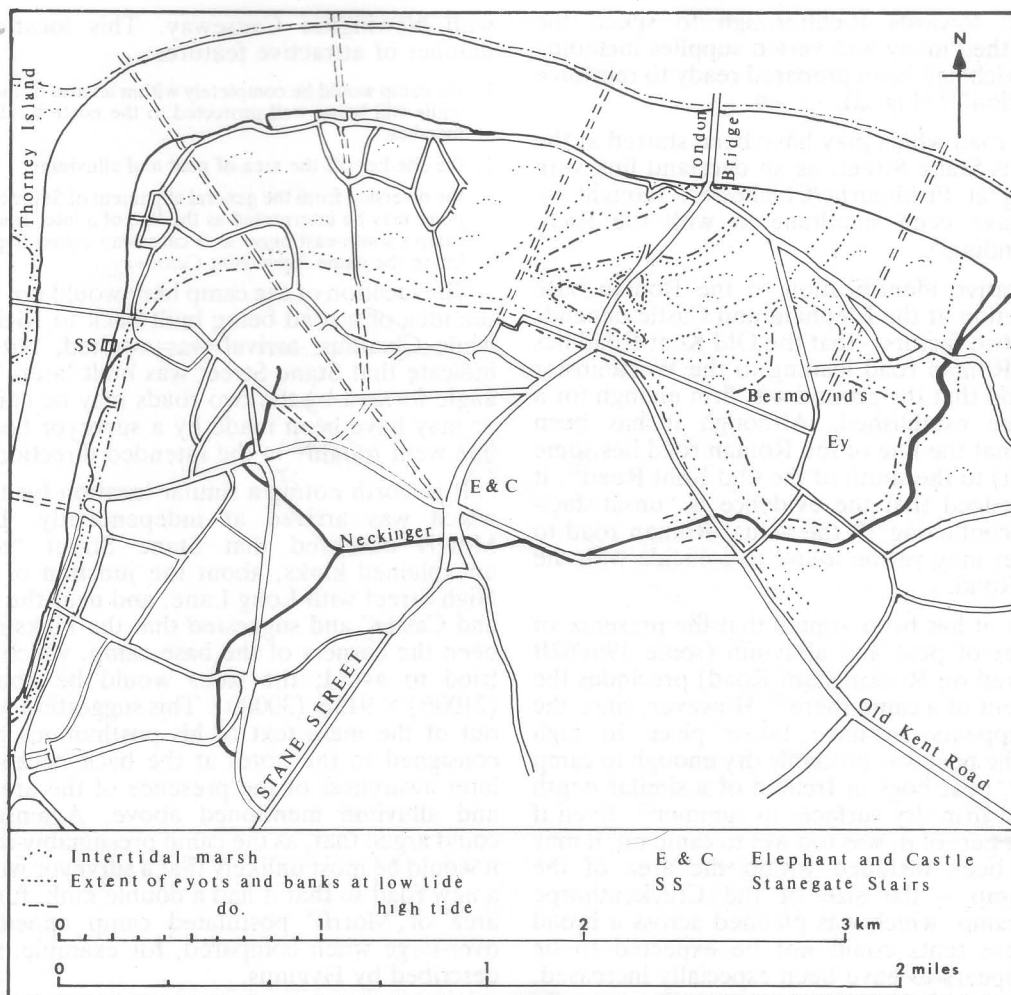
6. Dio *op cit* 60.20.5.

7. A. Vince 'New light on Saxon pottery from the London area' *London Archaeol* 4 (1984) 434, Fig. 2.

8. P. Glanville *London in Maps* (1972) pl. 4.

9. O. Manning and W. Bray *The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey* 3 (1814) 478.

10. Dio *op cit* 60.20.5.



**Fig. 1: The topography of northern Lambeth and Southwark in the 1st century AD. The roads are based on an anonymous map of c 1740-50 in the British Museum<sup>11</sup>, with some modern roads and bridges added to make it easier to find places; marsh after fns 5, 7, 12, 38, *op cit* fn 3, p.11; eastern course of Neckinger after a variety of maps.**

bank where not only would the Thames act as a barrier against surprise attacks from the north, but also the opportunity could be taken of the protection offered by the River Neckinger. According to a map of c 1740-50 this river formed a rough 'Y' shape with the long arm running east-west<sup>11</sup>. A study of the Thames during the Flandrian indicates that the course of the Neckinger was probably the same in the Roman period<sup>12</sup>. More importantly, it is recorded that on arrival in Britain Claudius first joined the army and then crossed the Thames<sup>13</sup>; a camp on the south bank would not preclude the

retention of a ford/bridgehead on the north bank, perhaps on Thorney Island.

Further support for locating the base camp east of the Westminster crossing may come from the meeting here at a right angle of the extended mean lines of Stane Street and the Old Kent Road (between Albany Street and Billington Road, a distance of 2.4km/1½ miles). During the wait for Claudius, it is reasonable to expect that Plautius' troops would not only be engaged in consolidating the Roman gains with forts<sup>14</sup>, but also in construct-

11. Glanville *op cit* pl. 29.

12. P. D. Nunn 'The Development of the River Thames in Central London during the Flandrian' *Trans Inst British Geography*

N.S. 8 (1983) 187-213.

13. Dio *op cit* 60.21.4.

14. *Ibid* 60.21.1.

ing a road towards Richborough to speed the passage of the "many and varied supplies including elephants which had been prepared ready to reinforce the expedition"<sup>15</sup> (Fig. 2).

Another road which may have been started at the same time is Stane Street, as an overland link with the landing at Fishbourne/Chichester, thought by some to have been simultaneous with the Richborough landing<sup>16</sup>.

The tentative identification of the Roman base camp's location at the Elephant and Castle depends heavily on two factors – that the Old Kent Road lies above the Roman road leading to the Westminster crossing, and that the ground was firm enough for a camp to be established. Although it has been suggested that the line of the Roman road lies some 150m (500ft) to the south of the Old Kent Road<sup>17</sup>, it is acknowledged that the evidence is "unsatisfactory" and "conflicting"<sup>18</sup>; the actual Roman road to Westminster may yet be found to coincide with the Old Kent Road.

Secondly, it has been argued that the presence of a large area of peat and alluvium (some 19m/62ft deep, centred on Rockingham Road) precludes the establishment of a camp there<sup>19</sup>. However, since the invasion appears to have taken place in high summer<sup>20</sup> the peat was probably dry enough to camp on – today, peat bogs in Ireland of a similar depth can provide firm dry surfaces in summer<sup>21</sup>. Even if the peat, or part of it, was too wet to camp on, it may well have been included within the area of the Roman camp – the size of the Crackenthorpe marching camp, which was planned across a broad gully where tents could not be expected to be pitched, appears to have been especially increased, as compared with its fellow camp at Reycross, to allow for this feature<sup>22</sup>.

A more serious objection to the camp being located here is that its southern corner would overlie a length of the Neckinger, assuming that the course of the river has not changed and that the camp was of a large size. The size of the camp has been taken as 1620 R feet × 2320 R feet, which is that quoted for a force of three legions with a very wide range of support troops, perhaps totalling some 40,000 men<sup>23</sup>.

An alternative would be to move the postulated position to the north-west, still using the Old Kent Road as its axis, until the south-east side coincides

with Newington Causeway. This location has a number of attractive features:

1. the camp would lie completely within an arm of the Neckinger while still being well protected to the north by the intertidal marshes.
2. the site lies off the area of peat and alluvium.
3. the diversion from the general alignment of Stane Street at this point may be interpreted as the line of a later track using the camp's south-east *agger* as a causeway across boggy ground, hence the name *Newington Causeway*.

The location of the camp here would not prejudice the idea of a road being built back to Richborough while Claudius' arrival was awaited, but it might indicate that Stane Street was built later. The right angle formed by the two roads may be coincidental or may have been made by a surveyor because the line went roughly in the intended direction.

It is worth noting a similar location for the camp, which was arrived at independently. Dr. John Morris observed that Stane Street "took two unexplained kinks, about the junction of Borough High Street with Long Lane, and near the Elephant and Castle" and suggested that the kinks may have been the corners of the base camp, which the road tried to avoid; the sides would be about 650m (2100ft) × 915m (3000ft). This suggestion was edited out of the main text of his posthumous book and consigned to the notes at the back because of the later awareness of the presence of the area of peat and alluvium mentioned above. Against it, one could argue that, as the camp presumably came first, it would be most unlikely that a surveyor would align a new road so that it had a double kink; further, the area of Morris' postulated camp appears to be over-large when compared, for example, with that described by Hyginus.

It is not possible to estimate for how long the Plautian camp remained in existence, but it would seem reasonable to assume that as the legions marched on, some form of stores base of reduced size would have been retained, perhaps even on Thorney Island.

### A possible settlement at Westminster

A map of Roman finds around *Londinium* shows a number of concentrations which may be interpreted as settlement areas, including one at Westminster with, *inter alia*, two buildings<sup>24</sup>; subsequent excavation on the west side of Westminster Hall has produced fragments of Roman brick from two areas,

19. J. Morris *Londinium: London in the Roman Empire* (1982) 355, note 1.

20. Dio *op cit* 60.19.3.

21. *Pers. comm.* V. Martin, Bord na Mona (The Peat Board), Dublin.

15. *Ibid* 60.21.2.

16. E.g. G. Webster *The Roman Invasion of Britain* (1980) 95; P. Salway *Roman Britain* (1981) 83.

17. Margary *op cit* 55; R. Merrifield *Roman London* (1969) 61 and *London – City of the Romans* (1983) 119.

18. Merrifield *op cit* (1983) 119.

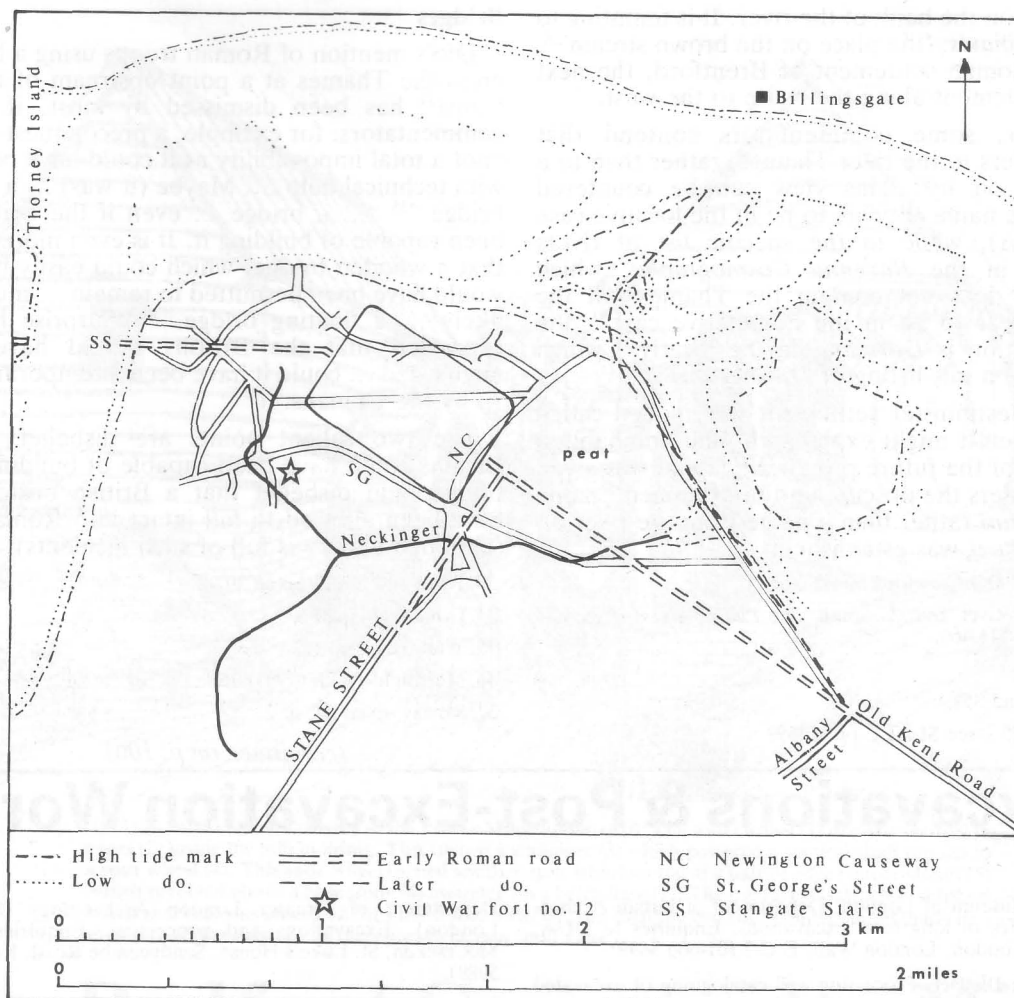


Fig. 2: Posited alternative location of the Plautian camp with only the nucleus of the mid-18th century road system shown (see Fig. 1). Note the relationship of the camp's sides with St. George's Street and the Civil War Fort No. 12, and also with Newington Causeway.

one from a gully<sup>25</sup>. Because the concentration lies on the generally accepted early route to *Verulamium*, the spot may well have been the earliest Roman settlement in the London area and was probably established close to, or on, the site of the postulated ford/bridgehead. It may also be possible to suggest the Roman name for this settlement.

A string of four unidentified place names (nos.

22. I. A. Richmond and J. McIntyre 'The Roman camps at Reycross and Crackenthorpe' *Trans Cumberland Westmoreland Archaeol Soc* 34 (1934) 60.

23. Hyginus *de Munitionibus Castrorum* 21.

24. Dept. of the Environment, Greater London Council and Museum of London *Time on our side? A survey of the archaeological needs of Greater London* (1976) map 6.

75-78) in the *Ravenna Cosmography*, which follow on a line from *Rutupis* (Richborough) via *Burobrabis* (Rochester)<sup>26</sup>, may belong to the lower Thames valley, with *Landini*, the first of the four, being a corrupt form of *Londinium*<sup>27</sup>. Because the sequence runs thus: *Durobrabis*, *Landini*, *Tamese*, *Brinavis* and *Alauna*, it is possible to place *Tamese* to the west of *Londinium*. *Tamese* ('on the Thames') is an appropriate name for an early Roman

25. P. S. Mills 'Excavations at Cromwell Green in the Palace of Westminster' *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol* 31 (1980) 21-2.

26. I. A. Richmond and O. S. Crawford 'The British Section of the *Ravenna Cosmography*' *Archaeologia* 93 (1949) 18.

27. R. Canham 'Ravenna Cosmography' *London Archaeol* 1 (1970) 179.



settlement on the bank of the river. It is tempting to identify *Brinavis*, 'the place on the brown stream'<sup>28</sup>, with the Roman settlement of Brentford, the next known settlement along the route to the west.

However, some commentators contend that *Tamese* refers to the river Thames, rather than to a settlement on it<sup>29</sup>. This view can be countered because the name appears to be in the locative case (of *Tamesis*), while in the specific list of rivers elsewhere in the *Ravenna Cosmography*, which admittedly does not contain the Thames, all the names appear to be in the nominative case<sup>30</sup>; the only exception is *Durolavi* (in the locative) which seems to be a mis-listing of *Durolevum*<sup>31</sup>.

If the Westminster settlement was indeed called *Tamese*, then it might explain why the uninhabited later<sup>32</sup> site of the future provincial capital was given by its founders the obscure and unexplained<sup>33</sup> name of *Londinium* rather than a name from the river on whose banks it was established.

## Bridges

Dio's mention of Roman troops using a bridge to cross the Thames at a point upstream of the main thrust<sup>34</sup> has been dismissed by most, if not all, commentators: for example, a preconquest bridge is "not a total impossibility as it could have been built with technical help .... Maybe (it was) ... a pontoon bridge."<sup>35</sup> "... a bridge ... even if the Britons had been capable of building it. It is even more unlikely that a wooden bridge, which could easily be burnt, would have been permitted to remain ... much more likely ... a floating bridge."<sup>36</sup> "Surprise has been expressed that the Britons should have left it unguarded ... could it have been a temporary bridge ... by the Romans."<sup>37</sup>

The two salient points are disbelief that the Britons could have been capable of building such a bridge, and disbelief that a British bridge would have been allowed to fall intact into Roman hands (although history is full of such incidents).

28. Richmond and Crawford *op cit* 26.

29. A. L. F. Rivet and C. Smith *The Place-Names of Roman Britain* (1981) 466.

30. *Ibid* 212-3.

31. *Ibid* 213 and 351.

32. c AD 50-55 - see SLAEC *op cit* 593.

33. Rivet and Smith *op cit* 397-8.

34. Dio *op cit* 60.20.6.

35. Webster *op cit* 102.

36. Merrifield *op cit* (1983) 25.

37. Salway *op cit* 84, n. 2.

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# Excavations & Post-Excavation Work

**City**, by Museum of London, Department of Urban Archaeology. A series of long term excavations. Enquiries to DUA, Museum of London, London Wall, E.C.2 (01-600 3699).

**Croydon & District**. Processing and cataloguing of excavated and museum collection every Tuesday throughout the year. Archaeological reference collection of fabric types, domestic animal bones, clay tobacco pipes and glass ware also available for comparative work. Hon. Curator, Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society Ltd., Museum Building, Croydon Biology Centre, Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon, Surrey. (01-660 3841 or 22 43727).

**Hammersmith & Fulham**, by Fulham Archaeological Rescue Group. Processing of material from Sandford Manor and Fulham High Street. Tuesdays, 7.45 p.m.-10 p.m. at Fulham Palace, Bishop's Avenue, Fulham Palace Road, S.W.6. Contact Keith Whitehouse, 86 Clancarty Road, S.W.6. (01-731 0338).

**Inner and North London Boroughs**, by the Museum of London, Department of Greater London Archaeology (Inner/North London). Several rescue sites in various areas. (01-242 6620).

**Kingston**, by Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society. Rescue sites in the town centre. Enquiries to Marion Shipley, Kingston Heritage Centre, Fairfield Road, Kingston. (01-546 5386).

**North-East London Boroughs**, by Passmore Edwards Museum. Enquiries to Pat Wilkinson, Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, E.15. (01-534 4545).

**South-West London Boroughs**, by Museum of London,

Department of Greater London Archaeology (South-West London). Excavations and processing. Enquiries to Scott McCracken, St. Luke's House, Sandycroft Road, Kew. (01-940 5989).

**Southwark and Lambeth**, by Museum of London, Department of Greater London Archaeology (Southwark and Lambeth). Several sites from the Roman period onwards. Enquiries to Derek Seeley, Port Medical Centre, English Grounds, Morgan's Lane, SE1 2HT. (01-407 1989).

**Surrey**, by Surrey Archaeological Unit. Enquiries to David Bird, County Archaeological Officer, Planning Department, County Hall, Kingston, Surrey. (01-546 1050 x3665).

**Vauxhall Pottery**, by Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society. Processing of excavated material continues three nights a week. Enquiries to S.L.A.S., c/o Cuming Museum, 155 Walworth Road, S.E.17 (01-703 3324).

**West London Boroughs**, by West London Archaeological Field Group. Enquiries to 273A Brentford High Street, Brentford, Middlesex. (01-560 3880).

*The Council for British Archaeology produces a monthly Calendar of Excavations from March to September, with an extra issue in November and a final issue in January summarising the main results of field work. The Calendar gives details of extra-mural courses, summer schools, training excavations and sites where volunteers are needed. The annual subscription is £5.50 post-free, which should be made payable to C.B.A., 112 Kennington Road, S.E. 11. (01-582 0494).*

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Professor Grimes has postulated that the line of a pre-Roman trackway, *Old Street*, ran from Old Ford on the River Lea to Putney on the Thames<sup>38</sup>, which might therefore seem a possible candidate for the site of Dio's bridge; the distance from Putney to Westminster crossing is 7.5km (4½ miles). At Putney (non-tidal in the Roman period) the distance between the two low water tide levels at the likely crossing place by Spring Passage<sup>39</sup> is about 115m (380ft)<sup>40</sup>.

The hillfort defences, chariots, ploughs and timber buildings mentioned in ancient sources and found by archaeology clearly indicate that the late Iron Age Britons were skilled in woodworking. Therefore there seems to be no technical reason why the Britons should not have been able to emulate their cousins in the La Tène area (north-west Switzerland) who in the 2nd century BC built two wooden bridges across the River Zihl; one has been dated by dendrochronology to between 120 and 116 BC. This bridge at Cornaux, 3km (1.9 miles) downstream from La Tène itself, was 115m (380ft) long (by coincidence, the same distance as the hypothetical Putney/Fulham crossing) and 3.5m (11.5ft) wide<sup>41</sup>.

### Elephants

Although the reference by Dio to elephants being among the equipment held ready to reinforce Plautius does not necessarily imply that the animals were actually transported to Britain, they may well have been.

There is an interesting reference to elephants being in Britain by Polyaeus, a 2nd century Macedonian rhetorician, who compiled eight books of *Stratagems* and dedicated them to the Emperors Marcus and Verus in AD 162. The collections covered a wide variety of periods and peoples, but the veracity of the individual items is variable. Among a number of stratagems attributed to 'Caesar', Polyaeus mentions that he had one big elephant which was used to force a crossing of a large river (presumably the Thames) in face of opposition from "*Casoellaunus* (?Cassivellaunus), King of the Britons" who had assembled a large army of cavalry and chariots. The elephant, which was protected by iron plates, had on its back a tower containing archers and slingers. As the elephant

entered the river, the Britons fled without fighting, their horses apparently terrified by the sight of the animal<sup>42</sup>.

C. E. Stevens has noted that "the standard histories of Britain and of Rome do not trouble even to dismiss this story ..., surely because there is not a word about an elephant in Caesar's own *Commentaries*". However, his own attempt to sustain the evidence is far from convincing<sup>43</sup>.

A more realistic approach might be to assume that there has been confusion or conflation and that the 'Caesar' concerned was Claudius. The presence of Cassivellaunus could then be seen as an erroneous embellishment by Polyaeus in trying to identify the 'King of the Britons' – Dio, who last mentions Caratacus at the battle of the Medway, states that Claudius crossed the Thames and defeated in pitched battle the tribesmen who had gathered to confront him<sup>44</sup>. It is possible to consolidate the evidence by envisaging that Polyaeus' elephant led the Roman army under Claudius across the Thames from Lambeth against the British skirmish lines of cavalry and chariots who then fell back upon their main body of infantry.

Many commentators, ancient and modern, do not think that Claudius actually fought a battle<sup>45</sup>. But the apparently senseless six-week or so wait of the victorious Roman army on the south bank of the Thames must surely have given the Britons fresh heart and an opportunity to regroup. For the battle of the Medway to have lasted two days gives some measure of the quality of the resistance encountered by Plautius, and the later apparent timidity of the Romans at the Thames may well have been interpreted by the Britons as the result of a Pyrrhic victory at the Medway.

While it is impossible to locate the battle described by Dio, if it took place in central London, rather than, say, east of the river Lea on the way to *Camulodunum*, then the Trafalgar Square area might be as suitable a place as any.

Some questions remain: how many elephants were (apparently) brought to Britain? if the Polyaeian anecdote can be attributed to the Claudian invasion, why did only one elephant cross the Thames? how many men did this elephant carry?

The Romans had formerly used elephants in small numbers (15 to 30) with success in Greece and Asia

38. W. F. Grimes *The Excavation of Roman and Mediaeval London* (1968) 45-6 and Fig. 8.

39. N. Farrant 'The Roman Road System in and around Putney' *Wandsworth Hist* 13 (1975) 4.

40. O.S. maps.

41. M.-R. Sauter *Switzerland* (1976) 139-41.

42. Polyaeus *Stratagems* 8.23.5.

43. C. E. Stevens 'Julius Caesar's Elephant' *Hist Today* 9 (1959) 626-7.

44. Dio *op cit* 60.21.4.

45. E.g. Suetonius *Claudius* 17.

Minor<sup>46</sup>. There are also references to their use in western Europe: in 153 BC Q. Fabius Nobilior's army before Numantia (northern Spain) included ten elephants whose appearance at a pitched battle caused the Celtiberian army to flee; the Celtiberians later recovered and killed three of the elephants<sup>47</sup>. At the final siege of Numantia in 134-33 BC twelve African elephants were used ("together with the archers and slingers usually brigaded with them")<sup>48</sup>. In 121 BC the Allobroges were defeated at Vindalium (Rhône Valley) by Gn. Domitius Ahenobarbus whose army included some elephants<sup>49</sup>. However, in the early 2nd century AD it was noted that the Romans had long since ceased to use corps of elephants in battle<sup>50</sup>.

It therefore seems likely that Claudius' elephants were few, and probably drawn from the animals used in ceremonial processions in Rome<sup>51</sup> rather than actually on the establishment of the army. If, as suggested above, they arrived before the Emperor and were temporarily accommodated in the Plautian base camp in Lambeth, then it is possible that some may have died and been buried there, while others may have been lost en route. Although none of Hannibal's 37 elephants is recorded as being lost in his crossing of the Alps, all except one were soon killed, either in the battle of the River Trebia or through exposure to rain, snow and cold<sup>52</sup>. A similar fate for one or more of Claudius' elephants would seem quite credible.

On the number of men carried, Indian elephants appear to have been capable of carrying a crew of three or four archers or spearmen and a mahout<sup>53</sup>. If the Claudian elephants were the smaller African forest animals, then presumably fewer men would have been carried. Polyænus seems to be wrong when he mentions slingers being carried in the tower because they would not have had the room to cast their shots; perhaps the slingers were part of a 'guard group' assigned to the animal as at Numantia<sup>54</sup>.

## Castles

During the English Civil War of 1642-6 London

protected itself by a ring of forts linked by a bank and ditch. Fort No. 12 lay at the western end of St. Georges Street (Fig. 2) in what is now the grounds of the Imperial War Museum; the location of Fort No. 13, although unknown, is thought to have been near the Elephant and Castle area<sup>55</sup>.

The line of the defences between Forts 12 and 13 is also unknown, but it appears to lie close to the south-west side of the posited camp of Plautius. It is therefore tempting to suggest that the remains of its defences were still distinctive enough to be incorporated, after refurbishment, in the 17th century work.

## 'The Elephant and Castle'

The origin of this name is uncertain despite several appealing suggestions: for example, that the name derives from the Infanta di Castello. Elsewhere in Britain depictions of elephants are known from an early date, for example the 1345 charter of incorporation of the City of Coventry features an elephant with a tower on its back<sup>56</sup>.

The earliest references to the name in Southwark appear to be in Shakespeare "In the South Suburbs, at the Elephant is best to lodge"<sup>57</sup>, a mention of the *Oliphant* inn in the vestry proceedings of the Parish of St. Saviour's, Southwark in 1598<sup>58</sup>, and the grant of land known as 'Elephant Island' to the poor of Newington in 1657<sup>59</sup>. The intriguing fact is that the full name, *Elephant and Castle*, only seems to have been used after time of the English Civil War of 1642-6 when, as mentioned above, Fort No. 13 was built in the area of the Elephant and Castle. This suggests that the addition of 'and Castle' may stem from the presence of the nearby fort. A similar incident occurred in Putney where the *Castle* public house on the corner of Putney Bridge Road and Brewhouse Lane was not listed by that name in a survey of the manor of Wimbledon made in 1617, when it was simply called the *Brewhouse*; six other inns in Putney are however given specific names<sup>60</sup>. The *Castle* appears to have acquired its name from the fort thrown up to guard the bridge of boats built by the Earl of Essex to link Putney and Fulham in

46. H. H. Scullard *The Elephant in the Greek and Roman World* (1974) 178-85.

47. Appian *Histories* 6.46.

48. *Ibid* 6.89

49. Florus *Epitome* 1.37.

50. Arrian *Tactica* 22.

51. Scullard *op cit* 254-9.

52. *Ibid* 161.

53. *Ibid* 240-5.

54. See also *ibid* 246.

55. D. Sturdy 'The Civil War Defences of London' *London Archaeol* 2 (1975) 334-8.

56. E. T. Baldwin *Daily Telegraph* 20 Mar 1959; generally, see G. C. Druce 'The Elephant in Medieval Legend and Art' *Arch J* 76 (1919) 1-73.

57. W. Shakespeare *Twelfth Night* Act 3, Sc. 3.

58. W. Rendle and P. Norman *The Inns of Old Southwark and their Associations* (1888) 327.

59. R. W. Bowers *Sketches of Southwark old and new* (1902) 400-2.

60. K. Bailey 'An Early Putney Street Directory' *Wandsworth Hist* 13 (1975) 8-12.

November 1642<sup>61</sup>; the Putney fort was demolished c 1845<sup>62</sup>.

That an inn standing on or near the (posited) site of Plautius' camp, through which Claudius and possibly his elephants passed, should be called *the Elephant* in the 16th and 17th centuries is a remarkable coincidence. As already suggested, it is credible that the reinforcing elephants arrived before Claudius, that one (or more) may have died there because of the bad weather, and that the beast was buried nearby. If this hypothetical carcass should have been exhumed in medieval or later times, then it should not be surprising to find a local hostelry named after it.

An alternative theory would be to see the inn named after the Indian elephant given to Elizabeth I by Henry IV of France<sup>63</sup>. The reference of 1598 to the *Olipphant* inn (above) also states that it was "formerly known as the Red Hart". This change of name could arise as much from the arrival in London of the Tudor elephant as from the discovery of the bones of the hypothetical Roman beast around that time. Shakespeare's reference to the Elephant inn in the south suburbs can then be understood as a topical allusion in his play which is nominally set in the 'Kingdom of Illyria'.

It is perhaps worth noting that the identification of the elephant found by John Conyers near Battlebridge, Kings Cross c 1690 as a mammoth<sup>64</sup> is not proven. The question as to whether this animal could have been part of the Claudian army, could have taken part in the battle which took place after the crossing of the Thames and could have been

killed by the natives, as were the three elephants at Numantia (above), must remain a matter of conjecture.

### Acknowledgments

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The chapter on 'Elephants' owes a substantial debt to the late Professor Scullard's *The Elephant in the Greek and Roman World*, while the discussion on the 'Elephant and Castle' has greatly benefitted from a folio of references on the name, which has been compiled by the staff of Southwark Reference Library (ref: P929.4).

Finally, I should like to thank Tim Price very much for preparing a new and close translation of the excerpt from Polyaeus; this appears to be the first new published translation since 1848.

## Appendix

Polyaeus *Stratagems* VIII, 23, 5

*A New Translation by Tim Price*

Caesar, while in Britain, was trying to cross a large river, and the king of the Britons, Casoellaunus, along with many horsemen and chariots, was obstructing him. In Caesar's train was a very large elephant, a creature not previously seen by the Britons. He armed this with iron scales, and put a large tower upon it; then, having mounted archers and slingers on it, he ordered it to enter the stream. The Britons were struck with amazement on seeing a beast hitherto unseen and of extraordinary appearance. The effect on the horses hardly needs describing, when – even among the Greeks – horses flee at the sight of an elephant, even when it is unarmed; faced with a fully armed beast carrying a tower and discharging missiles and sling-shot, they could not bear even to look upon the sight. The Britons fled, horses, chariots and all, while the Romans, having terrified the enemy with a single animal, crossed the river unscathed.

## Letters

### COMPUTER GRAPHICS

IN THEIR ARTICLE 'Hard Copy Graphics for Archaeologists' (*London Archaeol.*, 4, no. 2, Spring 1985), Alvey and Moffett state that A4 plotters are available for less than £1000. In fact, rapid developments in this area mean that the situation is far better. Among equipment now available are the following: (prices exclude VAT, and are based on the latest information that I have).

- (a) Penman. 3 pens, size at least A3. Cost £270-£300, depending on computer. (Made by Penman Products Ltd., tel. 0903 209081, telex 946240).
- (b) Parfitt Plotter. 1 pen, size A4. Cost £312. It is possible to buy a drill/router attachment which could be used to cut sheets of balsa wood, or other soft material, to make contour models. This would bring the price to £420. (Parfitt Electronics, 01-348 1973).

- (c) Plotmaster. 2 pens, size to B4. Very high accuracy, and may also be used as a digitiser to enter drawings into the computer. Cost £489 – more expensive than other systems, but more accurate, and has dual role. A larger version will probably be available soon. (Linear Graphics, 0702 541664, telex 995701).
- (d) Plotmate. A4, 1 pen. For BBC micro £299, for other computers £399. (Linear Graphics, as above)

There may be extras, such as cables, and software (programs) providing graphics facilities are generally available at a reasonable price. It would be advisable to check that the machine you favour will work with your computer, though this is unlikely to be a problem.

One of the above machines can act as a digitiser, and be used to enter plans, etc. into the computer. A number of low cost digitiser systems are available, but before buying one make sure it is sufficiently accurate for your needs.

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