

Letters

MAPPING LONDINIUM

RESPONDING TO CRITICISM of a publication for which one has been responsible is at best a hazardous course of action and one that is open to misinterpretation, but I am reluctant to let the comments of your reviewer of *Londinium — A descriptive map and guide to Roman London* (*LA* vol 4 No.7 p.195) stand as an accurate evaluation of this novel and indeed pioneering — and now very popular — publication.

By all means use the map to 'cover your damp patch', the bargain price (95p — 'expensively produced?') and the quality of paper used for this self-covered sheet should make it an admirable if rather didactic wall-covering, but to use it thus would be to use the publication in only one of its intended ways, albeit the only one that occurred to your reviewer.

But to turn to the individual criticisms that form the body of the review; the attempt to provide some indication of contour relief for the City area in the Roman period was not easy due to artwork production costs and technical problems encountered in printing gradations of colour over a base map with a partial pre-existing tone. The conventional method of showing contours could not be used, since the lengthy but important task of compiling a detailed contour map of the Roman city (i.e. the ground surface as it was in AD 43) remains a task yet to be completed (see P. Marsden 'Mapping the birth of *Londinium*' *Geographical Magazine* 44 No 12 (1972) 840-845 for an initial attempt). The completion of such a map is essential if we are to understand in full the exploitation of the site on which *Londinium* was built and its topographical development. Hopefully our attempt will have called attention to this required research.

The key on the map to the surviving evidence is *not* that complicated with three basic categories (1 presumed; 2 recorded; 3 extant), though the availability of one colour only (a technical limitation) to do this job, required one or two variations to this basic division. The south-west internal turret of the fort is still extant (just!) and it certainly requires to be marked in solid magenta colour in a 2nd edition. So too will the internal turret on the city wall at Tower Hill when it finally emerges again into full public view. The other criticisms of the main map? . . . the superfluous word in the caption to the Bucklersbury mosaic, correction required and due thanks to your reviewer for pointing this one out.

I am sorry that our attempt to portray for the first time in pictorial fashion some sense of the history of the discovery of Roman London caused such displeasure. The 'Pretty little chart' has been well-received in other quarters. The main introductory text (for that was its purpose) might well have been expanded, but with published books on Roman London abounding . . . and more on the stocks to come! . . . this was both unnecessary and outside the concept of the publication. Unless you wish it to do so this text does not imply a 1st century date for the tombstone of *Vivius Marcianus* which is mentioned, as an example, in two sentences briefly explaining funerary practices. The stone was discovered in 1669 evidently during the rebuilding of the church of St Martin Ludgate by Wren. The precise find spot is uncertain (*Parentalia* p.266 has 'in the *Vallum* of (Ludgate)'), but the likelihood of the stone being in its original position as a funerary monument is minimal. The majority of funerary monuments from London (and other Roman towns in Britain) survive because they were in-

corporated as building material in later developments in the city defences. It may be suggested that the *Marcianus* stone was re-used in a late Roman refashioning or post-Roman rebuilding of the gate or even in the fabric of the medieval church of St Martin, the west wall of which shares the same alignment as the Roman city wall of c AD 200. For the suggested 3rd century date for the stone, see R G Collingwood and R P Wright *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* (1965) No 17, arguing from the inclusion of the wife of *Vivius Marcianus* in the dedicatory inscription and the act of *Septimius Severus* giving soldiers the right to form a legal marriage from AD 197; for a recent discussion of this complex subject see B. Campbell 'The marriage of soldiers under the Empire' *J Roman Studies* 68 (1978) 153-166. For the second point in the text, your reviewer might note that with the establishment of a tetrarchic system of rule by *Diocletian*, *Constantius* became junior emperor (Caesar) with *imperium* in AD 293, becoming senior emperor (Augustus) in AD 305 on the former's abdication.

The map has proved extremely popular since its introduction a little over a year ago. The sight of many people using the map in the streets of the City reinforces the point that the duty of the Museum (here in happy collaboration with Ordnance Survey) is not only to service the specialist but also to make results available for all to enjoy.

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SAXON POTTERY FROM MUCKING

YOUR READERS may have gained a wrong impression of progress with the early Saxon pottery from the multi-period Mucking, Essex, crop mark sites excavations, from *Densem* and *Seeley's* very useful interim of the Rectory Grove, Clapham, Saxon pits.

I refer especially to these comments:—'second phase at Mucking (late 5th to early 7th centuries) and 'an absence of middle Saxon wheel-made wares indicates a pre-650 AD date . . .'

Although *Myres* has commented on Mucking's early pottery (*Antiq. J.* 1968, 224-6) and *Evison* on it later in *Wheel-thrown pottery in Anglo-Saxon graves* figs 18 and 19, pottery phasing must obviously await completion of processing; while the Clapham assemblage is far too small to base dating on the *absence* of anything.

Processing of the large Mucking assemblage should be considerably simplified once the data are on computer. For example, distribution plots of artefacts are proving especially helpful with phasing and associations; more so when finds are numerous. The plot of RB tiles based on fragments from 1,452 contexts makes a graphic comparison with the total site plan.

The number of contexts containing Saxon pottery (found in the fills of huts, pits, postholes, ditches, wells and graves) probably exceeds 7,000, so that conclusions or generalisations which may emerge from the study of this material could be very significant for all early Migration sites — but it must be processed first.

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