CHAPTER 12

MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

This chapter reviews the changing approaches to finding evidence for and reconstructing the relationship between the Roman military and the native inhabitants around the Claudian conquest. The different quests to find evidence for a fortress or fort under the town are outlined, though no firm evidence exists. The chapter concludes by examining how the evidence we have would have been interpreted had Calleva been in northern Gaul or Germania, concluding that the evidence at Silchester unproblematically fits in with patterns discovered there.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

Since Stukeley drew Silchester in the shape of an imagined Roman fortress (fig. 3.1), the military aspect of the town’s foundation and existence has been pondered. While some antiquaries may have imagined a fortress, others, such as Horsley, saw it plainly as ‘a very considerable place, perhaps a capital’ and ‘a large Roman city’ (Horsley 1732, 458). The duality of town or camp was resolved by the time of Joyce’s excavations — all the houses and mosaics made that clear — and the town’s polygonal shape was interpreted as evidence of a British origin to the town. Nonetheless Joyce saw the hand of the Roman legions in its overall layout and design; and while he did not write on this in his formal reports, he pondered upon it in lectures to local societies which were then reported:

Silchester was supposed to have been originally a British settlement or camp, from its form, but it was occupied, undoubtedly, at an early date by the Romans. The internal portion of the town was subdivided into rectangular forms … From the fact of there not having been found tiles in Silchester inscribed with the name of any legion, it had been doubted whether it was ever occupied as a military station, but [Joyce] believed it had been so occupied, and gave his reasons for thus thinking. He did not doubt, however, but that commerce was carried on there, because at that time it was one of the most important centres of enterprise in the country. (Joyce 1865)

The Antiquaries, however, took a different view. Mill Stephenson, who had been the superintendent on site during the entire campaign, concluded in his mind that the lack of any firm evidence meant that Silchester was evidently not a military station (Anon. 1918, 18). Despite the Antiquaries’ conclusion, and probably because they never wrote a synthesis of their work, it was left to others to create a vision of the town’s foundation and development, and within early twentieth-century academia Haverfield was the leading light. In his Romanization of Roman Britain, he saw colonies as playing a leading inspirational role, but he also outlined two further models:

Often, native provincial markets or other centres of life grew so far Romanized that they were held to merit the rights and status of a Roman municipality, and the wisdom of the Roman government in recognizing such progress was well repaid by the development of fresh centres of Roman civilization. Often, the legionary fortresses attracted traders, women, veterans and others to settle outside their gates but under the shelter of their ramparts, and their canabae, or ‘bazaars’, to use an Anglo-Indian term, grew not seldom into cities, worthy of municipal position. (Haverfield 1915, 15–16)

It was the second model, the development of the town around forts, which took hold and became a mainstay of twentieth-century archaeological thought. Wherever excavation took place, evidence for forts would be sought under Roman towns.
The core notion was that urbanism and civilised living were inspired by the example of the Roman legions. This might be through the emulation of the model towns or colonies settled by retired legionaries (Richmond 1946, 57); or perhaps through military guidance being provided in the construction of bathhouses based on military types in the Rhineland or shops looking like military barracks (Verulamium: Frere 1972, 10–11); or fora looking like military principia (Wroxeter: Atkinson 1942, 345; Silchester: Boon 1974, 109–10). Frere’s Britannia synthesised this narrative brilliantly, as did Wacher’s grand survey of Roman Towns in Britain (Frere 1967; Wacher 1974).

In the mid to late 1980s the notion of explicit military involvement was questioned by Blagg (1984) and Millett (1990, 65–103). This shift in interpretation came to be a common trend. Features within towns such as Verulamium, which Frere once imagined as evidence of early underlying forts, were reinterpreted (Frere 1983, 5; Niblett and Thompson 2005, 146–9). Fulford was less than convinced by Millett’s rejection of military and state assistance in the design and creation of towns; in his review of The Romanization of Britain Fulford restated many of the earlier perceived examples of evidence (Fulford 1991). But over the decade Fulford also shifted his ground. While at first he had interpreted the early timber building under the Basilica at Silchester as a military principia building (Fulford 1993, 21), once more of the plan was revealed and by the time it came to the final publication he had shifted his position to interpret it as a ‘possible headquarters building beneath the basilica’, and reproducing his plan of its reconstruction as a principia-shaped courtyard building in the centre of the town, with a via praetoria leading south from it (Fulford et al. 2013, 6; see also Fulford et al. 2011, 6–7; Fulford and Clarke 2011b). Given this uncertainty in interpretation, it is probably worth spending a little time examining the evidence for Claudian military occupation or otherwise.

SEARCHING FOR THE FORTRESS

The interplay between military design and town planning had been picked up as a theme throughout Boon’s writing. He saw the layout of the town as reflecting that of a Roman camp: ‘the Forum was intended to stand, like the headquarters of a legionary fortress, at the end of a “via praetoria”’ (Boon 1969, 44; see also Boon 1974, 55). Boon’s evidence for military connections went further: there was no doubt about a military presence in his mind based on the identification of the military finds from Reading Museum (Boon 1969, 44–5 and fig. 5). Subsequently this corpus of artefacts has grown with more finds from the Basilica site (Boon 2000) and more recently from the Insula IX excavations (Fulford et al. 2013, 5).

For Webster, the doyen of the forts-into-towns paradigm, Boon’s corpus of finds was conclusive: ‘there is now sufficient military equipment from Silchester to postulate a fort here’ (Webster 1970, 183; see also Webster 1958, 89); but where exactly? Prior to the Basilica excavation, Webster noted the finds from Boon’s Inner Earthwork backfill and concluded the Plautian conquest-period fort, which he believed must exist, was in the north-eastern part of the town. He imagined that the presence of this no-longer-visible fort might provide an explanation for the distortion in the road system in the north-east, where the main east–west road deviates off its path to head for the East Gate. Perhaps the fort was there, adjacent to, but outside the Iron Age oppidum? While Webster never drew a plan, fig. 12.1 shows a fort positioned in this location. This could be viewed as similar to the fortress at Colchester being constructed adjacent to the Late Iron Age Sheepen area.

This is where hypotheses remained for a while until Fulford began his explorations at Silchester. While he was excavating the Basilica (1977, 1980–86), he was also engaged in publishing his earlier work on the defences which Sommer then reviewed for Germania (Sommer 1986). Here Sommer gave the hypothetical fort clear form and structure. Inspired by Boon’s description of the military-style street-grid (Boon 1974, 55), he imagined a legionary fortress taking up a
block of c. 370 x 460 m (around 17 ha) within the centre of the town in a fashion not dissimilar to the fortress at Wroxeter being a precursor for the development there. He hypothesised a principia building under the Forum, with the via praetoria coming in from the west. He also ventured to suggest that the early timber Amphitheatre might be associated with the fortress (fig. 12.1; Sommer 1986, 642–3). Sommer’s interpretation was influenced by the concurrent Basilica excavations. Fulford had already discovered the timber buildings under the Basilica and had been pondering their function. In an early interim (at which point provisional dating suggested they were closer to the Neronian period than the Claudian), he was already wondering if they might not be a forerunner to the Forum-Basilica, a residence for Cogidubnus, or, indeed, a principia building from a Boudican-period garrison (Fulford 1985a, 56–7).

We will examine the structural evidence for the timber building shortly, but Fulford’s interpretation of it began to crystallise in Fulford 1993; here he built on Sommer’s suggestion, firmly favouring the interpretation of the building as a principia. Sommer’s imagined fortress had the principia facing west, with the via praetoria running out that way. However, this could not stand as Fulford’s western-range building did not have a break in the middle which a principia required, nor did it have a shrine in the middle for the military standards; so Fulford’s conception of a possible fort was rotated round 90 degrees with his via praetoria running south (fig. 12.1; Fulford 1993, 23, fig. 5). Unfortunately neither the via praetoria nor via decumana in this arrangement headed for the existing gaps in the Inner or Outer Earthworks to the north and south, though his via praetoria did head for a curious dogleg in the road south to Winchester. He hypothesised the east–west road leading out of the Lesser West Gate to Old Sarum was the via principalis, though in this case it would mean the principia was unusually set back from the road.

Even within the same volume where the idea was proposed, Philip Crummy questioned it on metrological grounds. In an analysis of the spatial layouts of towns and fortresses, Crummy noted that the non-colonial sites (Caerwent, Verulamium, Caistor St Edmund and Silchester) had streets which were generally more widely spaced than in fortresses, which militated against a classic fort layout underlying the Silchester grid. Though he also noted that, if anything, his analysis would have suggested that if there were a fortress underlying Silchester, then the 300-foot strips would suggest the principia building would have faced east or west, and not south as Fulford proposed for his Period 4 structure (Crummy 1993, 115–16).

The geophysical survey, reported here, clearly shows no playing-card-shaped fortress defences exist. Given the Iron Age Inner Earthwork shows within the town, despite four hundred years of occupation material above it, it is inconceivable that large military ditches would not appear. No hint of the hypothesised via praetoria or via decumana exists either, though it would be more possible for these not to have been revealed in the geophysics. So while the classic fortress model must be abandoned, could the hypothesised principia building lie within a less regimented layout? In later plans Fulford has dropped the via praetoria and via decumana showing his principia building simply situated within the Inner Defences (Fulford et al. 2013, 6; see also Fulford et al. 2011, 6–7; Fulford and Clarke 2011b).
Fort layout was still evolving in the Julio-Claudian era, with many sites such as Haltern and Vindonissa constructed in less-than-rectangular enclosures. At Silchester the Inner Earthwork already existed, and though it would have required the wiping away of already dense occupation, as revealed under the Basilica and Insula IX, could space have been made for a fort within this area? These defences enclose an area about twice the size of a normal legionary fortress, so certainly there was space. But wherever we see a fortress or fort in a non-rectangular enclosure (e.g. Augustan Haltern, or Claudian Vindonissa and Hofheim), or nestled within a pre-existing enclosure (e.g. Hod Hill), the principia building is still more-or-less aligned with the prevailing axis of the enclosure. Here at Silchester the Period 4 building is at 45 degrees to the defences and Iron Age roads, which would make it exceptional.

Driving all this speculation has been the Basilica site Period 4 building; but is it a principia building at all? What are the various interpretations that have been provided for it?

A POSSIBLE PRINCIPIA BUILDING

The Period 4 buildings discovered under the Basilica were exceptional. They were large compared to many Roman structures and formed part of a major re-orientation of the entire town from its previous axes at about 45 degrees to the cardinal points, to that of the Roman orthogonal grid. While initially dated to the Neronian period, later analysis suggested a recut had been missed and the buildings actually had a Tiberio-Claudian terminus post quem.

The excavation revealed a north-south range, and also to the north the start of a separate east-west range. Early interim reports also referred to a southern east-west range (e.g. Fulford 1993, 20). The supposed presence of a southern building had enabled Fulford to consider these three created an enclosed courtyard complex; this in itself opened up the possibility of seeing this phase as a proto-Forum or principia. But did this southern range exist at all? The key evidence was the interpretation of a foundation trench, F1455 (see fig. 5.31). Was it part of a southern range heading off to the east, or was it just the southern wall of the western range? The final structural report concluded the latter; dismissing any evidence for a southern range, it only referred to two buildings (Fulford and Timby 2000, 37–44), but despite this the range continued to appear in reconstructions and discussion in the synthesis of the report, even though the primary evidence on which it was based had now been reinterpreted (Fulford and Timby 2000, 565–6).

Fulford has floated four possible interpretations of these buildings:

1. **A palace of Cogidubnus**: the building was the first sign of a re-orientation of the town along a cardinal axis, in which case it could be seen as a major political statement, part of re-planning the town ‘with the official encouragement of a client king to press ahead with a building programme in Roman style, our building may be regarded as [Cogidubnus’] Callevan residence’ (Fulford 1985a, 56).

2. **A military store building**: another kind of courtyard building was military stores ‘which consist of ranges of small rooms, sometimes fronted by a verandah facing into the courtyard. In their proportions the longer sides are between one third as much again to twice the length of the shorter (von Petrikovits 1975, 84–7, fig. 20). On the face of it the comparison between a large store building and our Silchester structure is good, but the location of such buildings is always peripheral within the fort’ (Fulford 1993, 21).

3. **A principia building**: ‘Given the central position of our building in relation to both the natural topography and the layout of the native oppidum, the interpretation as a principia seems more likely’ (Fulford 1993, 21). The principia building was also favoured by Fulford on the basis of date: ‘with a later Claudian date, it is more likely that [the building] would relate to the development of a civil town either as part of a Cogidubnian kingdom or as caput civitates Atrebatum. A military interpretation at that date would seem implausible. An earlier Claudian date reverses the situation’ (Fulford 1993, 21).

4. **A proto-Forum**: the interpretation simply as a direct precursor to the later Forum-Basilica, with the porticoed series of units being shops with some used for metal-working (which militated against a principia), won in the final report; however, as referenced above Fulford has continually gone back to wonder about the principia alternative.
FIG. 12.2. The Period 4 building and comparative examples of various principia (after Fulford and Timby 2000, fig. 27; Frere and St Joseph 1974, 18; Fox and Ravenhill 1972, 74; von Schnurbein 2000, 32).
The interpretation as an early Forum-Basilica has been the most widely adopted (Millett 1990, 78; Niblett 2001; Wilson 2006a, 22). However, some have highlighted the difficulty in interpreting the remains (Wacher 1995, 272–4; Mattingly 2006, 270), and White preferred a military fabrica interpretation, while also noting there was ‘no good evidence’ for the courtyard building reconstruction (White 2001, 618), an observation echoed by Esmonde Cleary’s review (Esmonde Cleary 2001).

The likelihood of the two buildings being part of a principia building can be investigated by examining possible parallels. A series of earlier, contemporary and later examples is shown in Fig. 12.2. The key defining traits of principia are their tripartite plan ‘with a courtyard surrounded by colonnaded ambulatories, a lofty cross-hall and a rear range of rooms housing the regimental shrine, strong room and offices’ (Johnson 1983, 104).

In terms of size, from the back to the front the hypothetical Silchester principia building would be at least 70 m deep. This would make it considerably larger than almost any auxiliary principia, which are generally much smaller, averaging at 30 x 25 m (Johnson 1983, 104), making an auxiliary unit implausible. The scale would rather suggest a legionary building, and Fulford cited the parallel of the principia building at the fortress of Longthorpe, which is still slightly smaller but comparable in scale (Frere and St Joseph 1974, 18). In Pitts and St Joseph’s (1985, 86) search for parallels to the buildings in the fortress at Inchtuthil, their table of comparative principia suggested an average size in fortresses of c. 70 x 90 m, so comparable to Silchester.

In terms of the ambulatory, all the principia are unitary designs. The courtyards evolved to have only one entrance axially aligned on the shrine, making the legionary eagles both notionally visible from the entrance and also strongly protected. The Silchester configuration of buildings imagines the northern range as the cross-hall, but it is a separate structure which is in contrast to all the parallels, including Longthorpe. A principia building is a single structure protecting the shrine of the unit and the regimental treasury, not a collection of four discontinuous ranges. The Silchester structure would be of exceptional design if it were a principia building.

In a classic principia building the back range or cross-hall is also usually intended to be the imposing structure, higher than the rest of the courtyard buildings; in which case it should have deeper foundations. The foundation trenches of the Silchester building show no difference: the northern range (Building 1) has foundations 0.9 m deep, while the western range (Building 2) was also 0.9 m deep (Fulford and Timby 2000, 37, 39).

In terms of the flanking ranges, Silchester would be unusual in having a series of rooms, though this can be seen in later examples such as Fendoch.

In terms of positioning, if it were a legionary principia building, then it should be on the T-junction of the two principal streets, the east–west via principalis and the north–south via praetoria running south to the gate. There is no independent corroboration or hint of the existence of either of these roads in the geophysics. Also, if it were a principia, then evidence for other military buildings might have been expected in the open-area excavation of Insula IX, particularly barracks or a fabrica, which has not proved to be the case.

In conclusion, the Period 4 building does not have the formal characteristics of a principia building, so one of Fulford’s other suggestions is far more likely for the building and the presence of military material should probably be interpreted in a different way.

SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS: OTHER EVIDENCE

If we do not have a formal rectangular fort, do we have any evidence for temporary camps, a compound or other form of military accommodation?

Large-scale military procurement was interpreted by Maltby as the cause behind a series of cattle deposits. He had himself identified pre-Flavian cattle waste from Fulford’s excavations at the south-west corner of the town, and he recalled the early but poorly-dated evidence from the Antiquaries’ excavations of a large cattle mandible deposit in Insula VI and a pit of horn cores from Insula XXXVI. The size of the cattle bones he examined was not over-large, making Maltby think that these were relatively early stock before breeding resulted in larger animals in the area (Maltby in Fulford 1984, 202; Sommer 1986, 642). Certainly Maltby’s and the Antiquaries’ bone deposits suggested large-scale procurement of meat and hides, though whether directly
by the military or for military supply is a moot point (these deposits are discussed in relation to tanning on p. 414).

What about temporary encampments? Fulford has speculated about tented accommodation within the Inner Earthwork and within Insula IX associated with his interpretation of the Period 4 building as being a military headquarters: ‘… we still lack convincing structural evidence in the form of barrack or other buildings other than the setting out of the north–south and, possibly also, the east–west street. This need not be a problem if significant military occupation was short-term and a move from assumed, temporary, tented occupation (associated with latrine pits) to more permanent accommodation had not been made before the departure of the army’ (Fulford et al. 2013, 5). But if the military were camped outside the Inner Earthwork, are there any traces of possible locations such as Webster envisaged for a temporary camp?

Fulford has wondered about the Claudio-Neronian V-shaped ditch (2.6 m wide, 1 m deep) which pre-dated the early Amphitheatre (Fulford 2003, 101) (Exterior 14, Feature 9, FIGS 6.41–43). This was a long linear feature and can be seen continuing in the geophysics to Wall Lane where it was also captured in the water main watching-brief (at c. 796 m). The ditch contained a mass of Claudian and Claudio-Neronian wasters, which Timby considered to be an unusual group sharing some characteristics with pottery of a similar date from the military assemblage at Kingsholm (Glos.) (Fulford 1989c, 88–9). However, at 1 m deep, it is not significant enough to be a military ditch beyond a temporary marching camp. If projected north-north-east, it does potentially align with one of a pair of linear features continuing down the hill which may be a trackway with side-ditches (Exterior 11, Feature 3, FIGS 6.32–34). It does seem to be about the right size for a roadside ditch, although the trackway would have been cut off by the construction of the North-East Annex earthwork, as well as covered by the Amphitheatre bank (a replacement road to the north-north-east is discussed in pp. 335, 404).

A temporary additional military encampment adjacent to the town could provide a context for the creation of the North-East Annex which it is argued enlarged the Inner Earthwork to enclose the rest of the gravel spur on which Silchester was located. Chronologically this could be conquest-period, if one imagines the Amphitheatre was built later nestling into the corner of it; or it could post-date the Amphitheatre, if one imagines the Amphitheatre being incorporated and used as part of the defences. But there are no geophysical features within the enclosure suggestive of a temporary camp, such as latrine pits, so the only evidence would be irregularly-shaped defences.

Another possible location for temporary tented accommodation comprises the three parallel ditches to the north-west of the town (LP 3700 and 6200, Exteriors 8 and 9). This would be on the basis of a weak analogy with the rectangular tented area hypothesised behind the Triple Dyke at Camulodunum (Hawkes and Crummy 1995, 59, 178). While there is the lack of a clear defensive perimeter which makes this hypothesis unlikely, there was a rhythmic signature in the earth resistance survey which could be suggestive of serried ranks of tents (FIG. 16.2); but an alternative hypothesis for what these features represent is explored in Chapter 16.

In conclusion, evidence for a fort is lacking at Silchester. The hypothesised principia building does not formally look like any other principia, so probably is not one. No other military building types have been observed. There are no rectangular or trapezoidal shaped earthworks providing evidence for a fort’s fossa, apart from the Inner Earthwork itself which is too early in date and would have been the size of two legionary fortresses in any case. This lack of a fort or fortress at Silchester makes it no different to Verulamium; it should not be seen as a problem. Nonetheless, the presence of military metalwork makes it clear there was certainly a military presence in the early Roman period, as well as some later on too, so an explanatory context is still needed for this.

THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT

The quantity of military finds accumulated over the years is significant. Equipment was recorded by Boon from the Reading Museum collections and the Basilica excavations (Boon 1969, 44–5 and fig. 5; 2000), and has been added to by the material from Fulford’s Insula IX excavations. A recent preliminary analysis by Rimmell of the Insula IX material assessed there were 30 first-
Given these finds, what character and chronological emphasis do they have? For the Insula IX finds we await the full report, but from the Basilica excavation the finds congregate in Period 3 (c. a.D. 40–50/60) and particularly Period 5 (c. a.D. 85–125/50), with a significant dip during the supposed principia phase (c. a.D. 45–85). The Flavian deposits had more than the previous two periods combined. However, archaeology always needs to contend with the possibility of residuality, so we probably cannot read too much into this, and it will be interesting to see if a similar patterning appears in the Insula IX sequence. However, it is worth observing that the emphasis appears to be Flavian rather than the Claudian conquest period, though military equipment is present from early on, with a smattering of later material as well (e.g. third-century arrowheads: Boon 1957, fig. 11.8; Davies 1977, 264). Boon’s assessment of the early metalwork was as follows:

The character of this material is very much the same as might be expected from the debris of a legionary metal-working shop at Caerleon or any other fortress. There are fragments of the rather flimsy fittings of the segmented cuirass, known as the *lorica segmentata* – buckle- or strap-end plates, hinges, washers and rivets, one or two rosettes – and strap-union links, etc. … Here, in fact, are the very dregs of the armourer’s box of scrap. (Boon 2000, 583)

This characterisation mirrored his assessment of the earlier material in Reading Museum, where he identified a lot of material as both legionary and non-legionary (Boon 1969, 44–5; for discussion of first-century segmental cuirass: Boon 1974, 67).

**REDEFINING THE QUESTION**

**MILITARY EQUIPMENT ON NON-FORT SITES IN THE JULIO-CLAUDIAN ERA**

Roman military material culture found without a fort still requires an explanation. The interpretation of early military material, and indeed deployment, in Gaul and elsewhere has been a similarly intransigent problem. Despite many years of developer-led archaeology Caesarean-Augustan forts in Gaul still appear to be as elusive as ever, though recent surveys are starting to collate the evidence that exists (Poux 2008; Reddé 2014, 122).

At Basel, an *oppidum* was established perhaps just before the Gallic Wars. The conquest of the Alps around the A.D. 10s saw the presence of abundant military equipment on the site, but again there was no obvious fort.

At the foot of another Helvetian *oppidum*, at Vindonissa, another settlement developed, Windisch-Breite, which has seen significant quantities of military equipment unearthed, but again no classic fort buildings. This pre-dated the arrival of Legion XIII in a.D. 14–16. The presence of a native Gallic auxiliary regiment was considered the most likely explanation here (Hagendorn 2003, 110; Reddé 2014, 125–6).

Perhaps the best case in point, where the evidence has looked nothing like a normal fort, is the *oppidum* of the Treveri at the Titelberg. Here large-scale geophysics showed the *oppidum* had been subdivided partitioning off to the west a rectilinear area. It was initially believed this had the potential to be a Caesarean or post-Caesarean military camp; but while the subsequent excavations revealed plenty of new military material, it was combined with building types that would be unfamiliar to Claudian or later Roman military archaeologists (Metzler 1995; Metzler and Gaeng 2009, 519–28).

Given the present state of knowledge, the interpretation of these structures is not easy, especially given the absence of any comparisons in Gaul. Military equipment proves the presence of legionaries, probably of *auxilia*, and Roman cavalry. The associated material seems to indicate that this presence relates to the final stages of the occupation of this bounded area of the *oppidum*; how should we interpret the important Gallic ceramic assemblage, the large number of potin coins and many amphorae from the first half of the first century BC? According to the plan of the buildings, it seems clear that we are not in the presence of a conventional military camp. Could it be an enclave of Mediterranean traders established in
Excavation, as always, seems to raise more questions than answers; but the possibilities of protected Roman traders, a military enclave reusing buildings, or indeed a logistics base for the army, are all highly apposite in considering the Roman military equipment at early Silchester.

Early military equipment is not uncommonly abundant in urban contexts. From the new *ex nihilo* Helvetian town of Avenches (Switz.) comes a corpus of over 267 objects (Voirol 2002), and from the small town of Oberwinterthur (Switz.) an area of 15 houses produced 35 harness pieces (Deschler-Erb 1996). Another place where it is possible to see an albeit slightly exceptional early town in detail, without the later Roman and post-Roman layers, is Waldgirmes (Germany), where a *de novo* settlement was created around a.d. 4, 90 km to the east of the Rhine. It was constructed complete with a forum resplendent with a gilded bronze equestrian statue, presumably of Augustus, and at least four other statues. Even though the presence of a forum displays the civilian character of the settlement, the quantity of military material signified the presence of troops; but it was still a town, not a fort, and the interior buildings did not contain classic military structures, though one building to the west might be a solitary barrack-like structure with the centurion's quarters hived off. Many of the buildings along the main east–west street in front of the forum had porticoes added to them along their front suggesting the importance of trade and shelter (Becker et al. 2003; von Schnurbein 2003; 2010; Rasbach 2014; Becker and Rasbach 2015). We can conclude that it was not unusual for urban sites to have a military presence of some sort in the conquest and immediate post-conquest period, without there being a fort.

**THE CREATION OF AUXILIA (FROM PERSONAL, TO TRIBAL, TO REGIONAL)**

In the examples above the material could variously relate to detachments of legions or to the auxilia. Given the nature of Rome’s inclusion of native forces into their army, and given that Silchester was probably part of the friendly kingdom of Cogidubnus around the conquest if not before, it is probably worth spending a moment to consider how the native troops were incorporated into the Roman forces. During the conquest many Gauls fought alongside Caesar, and afterwards many individual Gallic aristocrats committed to the Roman side, bringing with them their dependents. We have few details of what happened next, or how local forces were regularised, but we get hints of the process. Caesar reported during the Civil Wars how two nobles of the Allobroges had been militarily useful to Caesar, and he had bestowed on them lands taken from the enemy, honours and money. Unfortunately they fell from grace as their troops complained to Caesar that their pay was being top-sliced by the nobles (Caesar, *Bel. Civ.* 3.59). The money for the new native units was being paid through the Gallic nobles in charge rather than through a Roman paymaster, thereby empowering individuals of the established elite. We see this kind of pattern in the early names of some of the auxiliary cavalry, seemingly a direct continuation of the kind of *comitatus* existing up to the Gallic Wars: the *ala Augusta Gallorum Petriana*, *ala Gallorum Aectorigiana* and *ala Longiniana Gallorum*, all named after the cognomen of their leader (Birley 1978). It is possible this continued with the *ala Indiana* (later posted in Britain); this cavalry unit was named after Iulius Indus, a Treveran sent by Tiberius to combat the revolt of another Treveran, Iulius Sacrovir, in a.d. 21 (Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.42). However, the majority of the auxilia within Gaul were units that were named after individual tribes. Reddé has pointed out how in Gaul the tribally named units, such as the *cohors I Menapiorum*, tended to come from an arc of communities close to the German frontier that were *liberae* and *stipendiariae civitates* according to Pliny the Elder’s list of the legal status of the *civitates* in Gaul (*NH* 4.106–9), as opposed to *foederatae civitates* (Reddé 2014). In addition, there were also troops raised under the transnational ethnic identities of *Gallorum* or *Aquitanorum*.

In the years between Caesar and Claudius, the various southern British dynasties appear to have had close relationships with Rome, and I have argued elsewhere that they were, in all
probability, client or friendly kings (Creighton 2000, 80–125, 174–215; 2006, 14–45). Given the interchange in this era, it is highly likely that occasionally Roman forces may have been present alongside Rome's friendly kings, and that British obsides may have spent time in the Roman army, adopting some of their trappings themselves. Commius himself had his retinue which would have come with him to Britain after he had surrendered to Marc Antony; his retinue had a history of fighting long and hard both with and against Caesar. All of Commius' successors would similarly have had their own forces; indeed Adminius when he was banished by his father, Cunobelin, fled to the Continent accompanied by a small troop (Suet., Gaius 44). Archaeologically these might be indistinguishable from Roman cavalry or early auxiliary infantry. Within Britain, sites like Fishbourne provide evidence for 'Roman' military material culture on pre-conquest settlement sites which could be interpreted in such terms. Many friendly kingdoms on the edge of the Roman world developed forces of their own which adopted aspects of Roman military structure, tactics and equipment (Creighton 2006, 46–69). If the Late Iron Age political entity that ruled Calleva on the eve of conquest had forces influenced by Roman military practice, then it is not unlikely this continued into the period of Cogidubnus' friendly kingdom; indeed it is likely that such forces were at some point accommodated within the Roman auxiliary. What historical evidence do we have for this process of incorporation in Britain?

AUXILIARIES IN BRITAIN

Boon observed, in Tacitus' narrative of the first Icenian revolt of a.d. 47–8, how Ostorius Scapula employed socialis copias, usually translated as 'auxiliary troops', but actually meaning allied troops (Tacitus, Ann. 12.31; Boon 1969, 37); perhaps these included men from Cogidubnus' kingdom? Certainly the levy on men was one of the issues that Tacitus places into his litany of complaints expressed by Boudica and Calgacus (Tacitus, Agric. 15, 31). It is likely recruitment began shortly after the conquest, but our solid evidence generally comes from later sources. Certainly one ala Britannica was in existence by a.d. 69 fighting with the forces of Vitellius, but beyond that a lot of interpretation is fluid.

Do we have any evidence for troops from the Cogidubnian kingdom in the naming of auxiliary regiments? If we were to develop by analogy from the situation in Gaul, we might expect communities not too distant from a frontier area, who were civitates liberae or stipendiariae, to be forming divisions under their own ethnic names; but in Britain there is only one obvious example of this, the cohors I Cornoviorum; otherwise all of the units are simply referred to as 'British'. However, unlike the cohors I Hispanorum, cohors IV Gallorum eq or I Aquitanorum, the British regiments are spelt in two distinct ways: the earlier cohortes and alae Britannorum and the later cohortes and alae Brittonum. The meaning of this differentiation is unclear: 'it must remain obscure why the Romans differentiated this with the titulature of the units raised in this island. One possible explanation is that those formed in the original province were called Britanni, while the ones created among the peoples overrun by the Flavian governors Cerialis, Frontinus, and Agricola were called Brittones' (Birley 1979, 101). This view of a north–south distinction is the one that Frere and others have generally held to (Frere 1967, 225). These two different forms can also be found in Latin literary sources from early on. Both Martial and Juvenal use both in the later first century; Martial's are not geographically specific, so do not help us (11.21 and 11.53), but Juvenal uses Brittones twice when arguably talking specifically about the North — once associating Cimbrians and Brittones, and once in a reference to an omen relating to the capture of a British king (Arvirargus), presumably relating to Agricola's campaigning (15.124 and 4.127). Unhelpfully Tacitus did not make any distinctions and called everyone Britanni.

This is relevant when considering the name of Cogidubnus' kingdom. He was referred to as Great King of Britain (R[EG·MA]GNI·BRIT; RIB 91), and he is often imagined as the successor to Verica and his heirs, though their kingdom never had a recorded name. Their coinage is conventionally called Atrebatic, but that is a back-projection from only one of the civitates names that may have been in his dominion which is first recorded in Britain by Ptolemy in the second quarter of the second century a.d. The size and scope of Cogidubnus' kingdom certainly included multiple domains (cf. later civitates) as Tacitus makes clear (Agric. 14), but interpretations have varied
from the more common concept that it just included those of the Regni, Belgae and Atrebates (i.e. the old Southern Kingdom of Commius’ descendants), to incorporating most of southern Britain except for the colony of Camulodunum (Haselgrove 1984, 36). If Cogidubnus’ title was Rex Magnus Britannorum, it chimes with Cunobelin’s title Britannorum Rex (Suet., Gaius 44).

While Cunobelin has often been imagined as being at war with his neighbours, his brother Epaticcus’ gold coinage, which appears around Silchester, followed the Commian dynasty’s tradition of imagery and legends, using filial titles and a spear and a shield on his horseman rather than the Tasciovanian carnyx. Similarly, Eppillus of the Commian dynasty in Kent adopted Tasciovanus’ carnyx on his coinage. This imagery swapping may have denoted alliance or intermarriage of the dynasties rather than two families at war (Creighton 2000, 104–5). Similarly Cunobelin’s aggression is often blamed for Verica’s flight to Rome, but Dio Cassius does not say that: it is only a modern inference that the cause was pressure from the Tasciovanian dynasty to the north, and not civil strife (Dio Cassius 60.19). Southern Britain may not have been as fractious a place as is commonly envisaged, and Cunobelin could easily have held an overlordship position, like the Bretwalda of early Anglo-Saxon Britain, which passed on to the creation of Cogidubnus’ position.
Given this kind of reading, it is not implausible to imagine that just as the tribes of Gaul raised auxiliaries for Augustus and Tiberius, so early on troops were raised within Cogidubnus’ kingdom, with the titles \textit{ala I Britannica}, \textit{cohortes I–III Britannorum}. At Silchester we should expect to find not only that the town was a centre for the \textit{comitatus} of the Commian dynasty and Epaticcus’ retinue, but also evidence of the recruitment and provision of new forces ready to be fed into the developing auxiliary forces. Just as continental sites in the early generations of post-Caesarean conquest have failed to show forts but are revealing military metalwork and are historically recorded as providing troops, so the same is probably happening here. Even if we cannot see the forts, the ecological infrastructure to support cavalry was in place in the Late Iron Age around Silchester, with the early development of hay meadows to feed the horses as evidenced by pollen from a well from the Basilica site (Keith-Lucas in Fulford and Timby 2000, 533).

The Period 4 building underneath the Basilica may not be the \textit{principia} building of a fort, but it is on a size and scale that was nonetheless impressive. Its alignment related to the new north–south road that cut across the site in what was to become a radical reorganisation of the town creating a Roman orthogonal plan. Perhaps it did have a military function, but not in the classical developed Roman fort way, but more like the ambiguous buildings on the Titelberg and elsewhere. Perhaps White was right in his review of Fulford’s excavation, and the building is more like a \textit{fabrica}, than a \textit{principia} or forum, hence explaining the metal-working there (White 2001, 618). However, personally I prefer an alternative non-military interpretation altogether which is developed below (pp. 410–11).

\section*{AFTER COGIDUBNUS’ KINGDOM}

As time moved on the construction of forts in the province provided the infrastructure for training and housing new recruits and levies into the auxiliary regiments. Nearly all the British auxiliaries went abroad, many ending up on the Danube where the units gradually started recruiting locally.

The final \textit{floruit} of Roman military material on the site is in Period 5 (c. a.d. 85–125/50) on the Basilica site, dating to the construction of the first timber Forum-Basilica, replacing whatever the earlier structure was in the heart of the town. After the friendly kingdom, as James has reminded us, while military bases may have become fixed and gradually transformed into stone, soldiers were not. Significant numbers were sent on detachment away from their home bases: on secondment with the governor or procurator, procuring supplies, conveying messages etc. (James 2001, 82). Once the province had settled down, it is likely Silchester would have had \textit{beneficiarii consulares} stationed within it, as at nearby Winchester and Dorchester-on-Thames (\textit{RIB} 88 and 235), charged with responsibilities spanning the imperial post, taxation and policing; and there may have been \textit{centuriones regionarii} policing the region as in the North of Britain (cf. \textit{Tāb. Vind. I.250}), perhaps billeted or eventually based in the \textit{Mansio}. James noted that the \textit{beneficiarii} had distinctive badges of office, symbolic lances, recalling that Boon had already observed that the symbolic device had been worked into a third-century baldric-plate found at Silchester (cf. Boon 1974, 68, fig. 8.4).

\section*{CONCLUSION}

\textit{Calleva} in origin was probably a settlement of some of the Commian dynasty and their associates, including their protective \textit{comitatus} in support on horseback, Gallic and Roman tradesmen opening up in this new land of opportunity, and all of their associated families, slaves and freedmen. All of these ate and drank in novel alien ways in the eyes of the regional Middle Iron Age population who probably also settled there to provide support and manage the fields. In this scenario, military material culture in the Later Iron Age and earliest Roman contexts could come from Roman troops accompanying Roman traders entering new areas. Equally it could represent the trappings of Later Iron Age forces dressed in a Roman manner, soon to be incorporated into the Roman \textit{auxilia} after the Claudian invasion, the recognition of Cogidubnus’ British Kingdom and the eventual creation of the province of Britannia. There should be no anxiety in the inability to find a classic Roman fort at Silchester; what we find is little different to continental \textit{oppida} and early towns.