

CHAPTER 17

CALLEVA: HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL NARRATIVES

PROBLEMS WITH NARRATIVES

Calleva Atrebatum is entirely absent from the historical record save for its name appearing in the texts of the Antonine Itineraries and Ravenna Cosmography, on the coinage of Eppillus and on inscriptions from the site (*RIB* 69–71). Nowhere is it mentioned in any of the narrative sources of the period.

The temptation to associate the fragmentary archaeological remains with the even more fragmentary historical record of the province has always existed, and always will as we try to find ways of making sense of the past by creating stories from it. We might chuckle quietly at the antiquarian beliefs that Constantius was buried here, that the site witnessed Constantine the Great's elevation to the purple, and that Arthur drew the sword from the ogham stone and was crowned here (see Chapter 2); but each association was based upon an interpretation of the evidence that seemed appropriate at the time. This section examines the long-term development of *Calleva*, and how the site has been situated within narrative history. It takes the story up to the Norman Conquest and a bit beyond when literary sources finally start to shed light upon the Domesday village now re-christened Silcestre. Each part deals with successive historical periods. Readers will note how variable and fluid interpretations are, which says a lot about the quality of the evidence leaving scope for multiple interpretations. This, in itself, demonstrates how problematic turning archaeological evidence into a traditional historical narrative is, but an attempt should be made nonetheless.

THE *OPPIDUM* AND HISTORY

Chapter 11 examined the evidence for the *oppidum* from the archaeological point of view. Here we examine its incorporation into historical narratives. Once Silchester was securely identified as *Calleva Atrebatum*, at the very end of the nineteenth century, it was not long before the town became associated with Commius. He was first appointed or recognised as king of the Gallic Atrebates by Caesar (*BG* 4.27), then given additional dominions to rule in Gaul before being sent over, as a diplomat, to Britain to pave the way for the invasion by Caesar (*BG* 4.21). While that mission failed when he was taken captive, he did redeem himself in negotiating Cassivellaunus' surrender the following campaign season (*BG* 5.22). However, the Gallic revolt saw Commius torn and he switched sides (*BG* 7.75); he escaped the defeat at Alesia to become a thorn in Caesar's side until finally surrendering to Marc Antony, shortly after a failed assassination attempt on his life (*BG* 8.23, 48). In coming to terms with Caesar's general he expressed the wish to be sent somewhere he did not have to set eyes upon Romans. Soon after this coins bearing the word COMMIOS, the first legend to be seen on British coins, drawn from a design in Belgic Gaul, start to appear in Central-Southern Britain. The two have long been assumed to be one and the same (Creighton 2000, 59–64). Three people claimed on their coins to be his son, and their issues are found in a broad swathe across Central-Southern England. The three were named Tincomarus, Eppillus and Verica. This area includes Silchester on its northern edge. Then shortly before the Claudian conquest a new coin series became dominant in the vicinity, which bore the names of members of a different dynasty to the east, those of Epaticcus and Caratacus, brother and son of Cunobelin respectively.

Hawkes and Dunning (1930, 293–4) associated the arrival of Commius and his followers with the distribution of bead-rim ceramics and tacitly related Silchester to his arrival, though they acknowledged the imprecision of dating then available. Within a few years Cotton was able to say that traditionally Silchester was thought of as being founded by Commius (Cotton 1947, 140). But it was the discovery of the Inner Earthwork and the excavations in the 1950s that provided more material evidence around which to spin a new story. Boon masterfully wove together all the threads of evidence from the collections in Reading Museum with his own excavations to create a deeply-historically-aligned narrative, where every earthwork and ditch could be associated with a specific historic event (Boon 1969, 21–45). Each phase related to the imagined dynastic history of Commius and his three sons: Tincomarus (then known as ‘Tincommios’), Eppillus and Verica. In Boon’s Period 1 the settlement of Commius and his eldest son Tincomarus was represented by the early enclosures of the Frith, the Rampier Copse Enclosure and the Flex Ditch promontory. In Period 2 Eppillus revolted against his now-ruling elder brother and then built the Dicker’s Farm Dyke to protect himself against the rump of Tincomarus’ kingdom to the south-east. This is when the major imports started to arrive: the Arretine, Terra Nigra and Terra Rubra. Period 3 marked the ousting of Eppillus and/or his successor brother Verica by the Catuvellauni led by Epaticcus. Boon believed the metal residue on the coin moulds reflected Catuvellaunian coinage, so was indicative of their ascendancy at the site. Epaticcus followed by his nephew, the resistance leader Caratacus, then ruled here. Their stay was represented by the occupation around the South Gate and the new Oldhouse Lane dyke, looking out onto ‘the shrunken realm of Verica’ (Boon 1969) (this is explored in more detail on p. 303, FIG. 9.1).

In marked contrast to Boon, Fulford, in his earliest engagement with Silchester examining the defences, eschewed constructing a historical narrative in his conclusions (Fulford 1984). But his subsequent excavation on the Basilica site provided him with a rich assemblage of material in clear stratigraphic sequence to construct a story around. Alongside this Timby re-assessed some of Boon’s assemblages, enabling Fulford to re-date the Inner Earthwork, moving it back in time to the later first century B.C. so it could be added into the story. Initially, in interims before the chronology settled down, Fulford continued to display a reluctance to speculate too much (Fulford 1985a, 56), but that did not last. Within a couple of years he was associating construction events with the starts and ends of reigns. The Basilica site Period 1 he ascribed to a Commian foundation, while what were later to be named Periods 2–3 he equated to the reigns of Tincomarus and Eppillus, linked to the arrival of more imports (Fulford 1987a, 277). This is the version that still appears in Cunliffe’s textbook of the Iron Age (Cunliffe 2005, 172). By the time Fulford was closer to full publication his articles associated the site firmly with Eppillus Rex (based on the coins inscribed CALLEV), describing it as a royal residence:

... but whether this was the case with other Atrebatian leaders is uncertain, although probable. Since there is no archaeological evidence for a break in occupation or for a major change in the character of the occupation, it is likely that *Calleva* was a ‘royal’ residence from 20/10 B.C. ([Tincomarus] onwards). On the assumption that Verica was ejected from *Calleva* before he fled to Rome in A.D. 41 and that the settlement had been subsumed within the paramount kingdom of Cunobelin and his successors in the A.D. 30s, it is likely to have remained the residence of a leading man and his retainers, despite the absence of conclusive numismatic evidence. (Fulford 1993, 19)

The synthesis in his final report clearly separated out an archaeological narrative from consideration of the historical context. Here, again, he saw Tincomarus and Eppillus as based at Silchester, but then he was cautiously ambiguous about whether the area had come into the hands of Epaticcus and Caratacus, noting that the underlying networks evident in the archaeology ‘seem to have remained in place and no discernible disruptions can be detected in the relations of *Calleva* with its nearer and more distant hinterland’ (Fulford and Timby 2000, 560). The narrative instead focused more on material, processes and trends than on specific individuals and pseudo-history. Compare, for example, this to Wachter’s take on Silchester. Wachter saw the town as associated with the ‘Atrebatian prince, Eppillus, who rebelled against his brother, [Tincomarus]’, until Catuvellaunian expansion overwhelmed him and it became an *oppidum* of

Epaticcus then Caratacus. He also saw the Inner Earthwork as being built by the Catuvellaunian princes in response to the Roman forces landing in Kent (Wacher 1995, 272).

We have yet to see how Fulford will consider the wealth of early information from Insula IX, but it will certainly inform a major revision in understanding the early settlement.

ALTERNATIVE VIEW

Boon's beguiling and historically-specific narrative had at its heart a belief that we actually understand what happened in Late Iron Age Britain; that we know the relationship between the three apparent sons of Commius; that we believe in 'the Atrebates' as a tribe or entity in opposition to 'the Catuvellauni'; and that *oppida* were indeed the royal bases of these dynasts.

The relationship between the three sons, as in the relationship between almost any three males of the same generation in a ruling dynasty, is liable to have been problematic. Our actual 'historical' knowledge is limited to the following. Tincomarus is quite possibly the same individual named as one of the suppliants (*supplices*) to Augustus (*Res Gestae* 32). Stylistically his coinage included some virtually identical to his father's in a semi-abstract design, before his coins took on far more classical imagery. The other two 'brothers' only have classically designed coins, so they are assumed to be later. Verica was reported to be in Rome at the time of the Claudian conquest having fled there (Dio Cassius 60.19), so he comes at the end of the story, though we have no idea who forced him out, whether it was external forces or internal rivalry. This leaves Eppillus who is conventionally imagined as reigning in between them, and about whom historical sources tell us nothing, except that he inscribed some of his coins with the name 'CALLEV'. However, plenty of variant histories of the siblings have been created from examining coin distributions. Some of the brothers have been imagined as concurrent, battling against each other (Bean 2000). All this says more about the scope for arguing the evidence in a variety of ways than necessarily about the accuracy of any one of the scenarios. Boon's narrative above is a classic example of the elaboration of our limited evidence.

At the heart of many of these narratives is the concept of the tribe, of the Atrebates and Catuvellauni battling it out and competing for dominance, with the latter generally prevailing at Silchester. The distributions of 'Atrebatian' or 'Catuvellaunian' coinage are useful shorthands, but these labels give an artificial solidity to notional tribal structures which are largely a creation of our own epistemology. They come from a retrofitting of the second-century A.D. *civitas* map derived from Ptolemy to the Later Iron Age landscape. Having imagined these territories were long-established and timeless, individual coin types were allocated to one or another throughout the twentieth century based on where they were found. This created entire Atrebatian and Catuvellaunian coin series in a circular argument. The coins must belong to tribe X because they are found there; and the definition of the tribal area is the distribution of the coinage. This, ultimately is the procedure used by Mack (1953), Allen (too many papers to mention), Van Arsdell (1989) and to a certain extent, more recently by Cottam *et al.* (2010). It is also the reason why others have tried to avoid 'tribal' names in their works altogether (Haselgrove 1987; Hobbs 1996; Creighton 2000).

There are elements of justification in calling them regional groups as there are often strong stylistic similarities within each area, but too little attention was paid to those coins which did not fit in neatly. Two individual coin types, virtually identical, and possibly sharing dies, could end up being allocated to different 'tribes' because they were found in different areas, while on any other criteria they might have appeared to have been produced by the same authority. Leins has explored this well in his thesis (Leins 2012, 41–4). Without the overarching later *civitas* names applied, the rule of Commius and the early dynasts seems to suggest they had a reasonably tight control over gold. By way of contrast, numerous local silver issues seem to have existed which did not circulate particularly far. Leins paints a picture of small-scale perhaps peripatetic production for local leaders, merchants and/or for specific temples; but he also saw centralisation gradually taking place reaching its peak under Cunobelin. Overall he perceived individuals were gradually exerting their influence and power, or at least their coins were providing utility and gaining greater acceptance.

The relevance to Silchester comes in its location, which lies towards the northern edge of the finds of the Southern dynastic series (a more neutral term to describe 'Atrebat' coinage), but in the very Late Iron Age the area appears to have come under the influence of the coinage of Epaticcus, brother of Cunobelin. Boon talked of conquest here, and this kind of narrative of a takeover through Catuvellaunian expansionism is common, forcing Verica out so he had to flee to Rome (though we know of no details of his departure to Rome).

Yet there are two mismatches between this overall story from broad coin distributions and the coin detail. First, while Eppillus, one of three who claimed to be Commius' son on his coinage, minted coins with the name CALLEV on them, the highest density of his coins comes not from Hampshire, but further to the east in Kent. Secondly, Boon noted a relative absence of Commian dynastic coinage from *Calleva*, and this has always been a concern. Boon's first hand-list of 23 Iron Age coins from the site included not a single coin of the Commian Southern dynasty, though there were plenty of the Tasciovanian Eastern dynasty present and others from areas to the west and Gaul (Boon 1954a); so going on to consider this as being their town is somewhat curious. By 2000 his updated hand-list of 66 Iron Age coins included only five of the Commian dynasty; but this did not include any of Commius himself, nor of Eppillus, the only person to appropriate the name of the town on his coins. All we had were four of Tincomarus and one of Verica. By way of contrast, far more came from the Tasciovanian Eastern dynasty (though only one of Epaticcus) and a wide variety of communities across Britain and Gaul. Indeed the variety of coinage is an unusual aspect of the assemblage (Fulford and Timby 2000, 165–70). Historical narratives have cast Silchester as founded by Commius and dominated by his sons until Epaticcus of the Eastern dynasty took over the area and cast Verica out, in which case it is troubling that the key players are represented by so very little from the site. It will again be interesting to see if the Insula IX finds reinforce this deficiency making the standard narrative even more problematic and awkward.

Instead of trying to construct pseudo-histories of an eternal confrontation between Cunobelin and his neighbours, we could equally imagine Cunobelin as the high king or paramount king of Britain (*Britannorum rex*: Suet., *Gaius* 44), exerting his power and influence not directly but through associates further afield, such as some of the eleven kings that were said to have surrendered when Claudius arrived (*CIL* 6.920).

So what kind of narrative are we left with? Fulford saw continuity in the network of contacts visible in the material remains throughout his Basilica Periods 2–3, with objects always coming from both the southern area and the Thames Valley. There will undoubtedly have been political tensions and rivalries, but unless fine-grained stratigraphic information leads us to see radical switches in procurement zones, it is going to be tricky to tell that story from the archaeological evidence. But what we *can* see is the establishment of this new centre, initially as an open settlement on the gravel terrace (FIG. 17.1a). Within a generation the Inner Earthwork was constructed and the enclosed space began to be planned and streets laid out. Its finds display a strong connectivity with the major powers of central and eastern Britain, as well as with the expanding Roman world (FIG. 17.1b). We can talk of authoritative power, cultural influences, new ways of being, but we cannot be sure of exactly who constructed particular defences or buildings or when, the data cannot sustain it.

THE CLAUDIAN INVASION AND COGIDUBNUS

In A.D. 43 the Roman legions came to Britain, but this time stayed. Silchester did not figure in any of the accounts of the event, but obvious questions to ask would be about the ferocity of impact upon and the disruption to the local population; the duration, if any, of the military occupation (see Chapter 12); and the nature of the governance of the town and how it related to the Great King of the Britons, Tiberius Claudius Cogidubnus, though his name might actually have been Togidumnus (Tacitus, *Agric.* 14.1.28; for manuscript variants and philological argument see Murgia 1977, 339). Cogidubnus' reign is a moveable feast and it is difficult to know when it started or ended, and reconstructions of events have taken various approaches; similarly the extent of his kingdom has been much disputed (see p. 366).

The initial Claudian invasion rapidly marched through southern Britain to Colchester. It probably bypassed *Calleva* entirely, even though, as Boon observed, the restoration of Verica had been mentioned as a *casus belli*. Nonetheless, the Roman presence would have been felt reasonably rapidly. Boon imagined things as being relatively straightforward. The Atrebatian kingdom of Verica was restored in A.D. 43, probably under Cogidubnus, and lasted down to his death, perhaps in A.D. 77–8. He called this the regnal period and associated with it the construction of the Inner and Outer Earthworks (Boon 1969, 37–9; 1974, 42–3).

Fulford's work, re-dating the Inner Earthwork, moving it earlier into the Iron Age, necessitated a change to this version. He inserted a Roman military phase immediately after the conquest based upon his early identification of the Period 4 building on the Basilica site as a *principia* building. The imagined fortress was positioned to 'take control of a major native centre and one possibly to be associated with the continuing resistance of Caratacus' (Fulford 1993, 21). He envisaged, in this early play with ideas, that the army had re-used the Later Iron Age Inner Earthwork, the previous occupants being sold into slavery or swept aside to make way for a vexillation or the entirety of Legion II Augusta. This could have lasted until the Inner Earthwork was infilled, which Boon had dated to the late Claudian period. The army could have then moved on and the *caput civitatis* could have been granted to Cogidubnus (Fulford 1993, 25). This interpretation altered as post-excavation progressed. In his final report on the Basilica the interpretation of the Period 4 structure as a *principia* building had ebbed, meaning Cogidubnus' influence on the site could have started earlier; Fulford even considered there could have been an early palatial complex built for him (Fulford and Timby 2000, 565–9). Soon the Insula IX stratified material will need to be added to the story.

Archaeologically, around the time of the conquest the north–south road was constructed with the large timber buildings on the Basilica site aligned to it. This could be a proto-forum or shops (see p. 411). Early on the inner core of the town appears to have been replanned on a new alignment. Possibly the core was remodelled all in one go, possibly in stages with the proto-forum square to the east of the road first, then extending to the construction of Fulford's hypothesised palace to the west. Whatever, the whole Iron Age interior of Silchester was not wiped away in one go, but just a modest area on top of where a major palisaded enclosure had previously been (FIG. 17.1c).

NERONIAN TILES AND PALACES

While there has never been any direct evidence for Cogidubnus at Silchester, the emperor Nero has been presenced by the discovery of the 'Nero' tiles produced close by at Little London; and these need to be woven into the story. How that has been done depends on when Cogidubnus is thought to have died.

In Greenaway's conception the imperial tilery related to an initial building boom under Cogidubnus, with the tiles representing official support given to him to create the early town (Greenaway 1981, 291). Fulford initially disagreed with this, believing the Neronian tiles could not be taken as evidence of support for Cogidubnus because of Nero's track record of confiscating client kingdoms rather than assisting them with projects within (Fulford and Timby 2000, 568). However, this stance was reversed significantly in a series of papers where he went on to hypothesise the existence of a palace for Cogidubnus to the west of the Forum site. He wondered if this hypothetical building might have been a gift to the king from an emperor, thankful for his loyalty during the Boudican revolt. The evidence for its existence came from the Antiquaries' excavations around the western side of the Forum, and in his own in Insula IX, re-used masonry architectural elements had been recovered suggesting a monumental pre-Flavian building had once existed in the vicinity. Several Neronian stamped tiles have also come from the area. Fulford envisaged a Cogidubnian palace almost as large as the proto-palace at Fishbourne (Fulford 2003; 2008, 6–7) (see pp. 397–8); however, it is curious that the hypothetical Cogidubnian palace should subsequently have been so completely demolished and excised from the townscape. Fulford's new excavations in Insula III (2013+) will help untangle this puzzle.

THE BOUDICAN REVOLT

Boon surmised that the Boudican revolt's only impact on Silchester was the construction of additional defences in response to the threat, perhaps those which he called his secondary Outer Earthwork (FIG. 9.1; Boon 1974, 46). Silchester, after all, was a long way from the Iceni and not one of the three cities mentioned by Tacitus (*Ann.* 14.31–3) where unambiguous thick black stratigraphic horizons have been found as testament to the destruction. Nonetheless, in interims Fulford has played with the idea that Boudican destruction deposits can also be found at Silchester. In 2002–3 a section was excavated half-way along the east–west road on Insula IX and at its base traces of burning were found which at the time were explained as ‘a layer of burnt material which represented the remains of a building destroyed to make way for it. The pottery from this horizon dates to about AD 40–60’ (Clarke *et al.* 2005, 3). Later, however, when similar traces of burning of the same date were found under a section where the east–west and north–south roads crossed, the story changed to be evidence of the Boudican revolt reaching Silchester (Fulford *et al.* 2011, 10–11). There is no trench-wide burning remotely comparable to the London, Colchester and *Verulamium* conflagrations. A burnt horizon clearing the way immediately before a new street was constructed above should not be unexpected nor require special explanation. Burning was seen, for example, immediately beneath the construction of Grim’s Bank (O.A. 2005a, 10). It will be interesting to see how the idea develops by the time of the final report. As he himself said, ‘the linking of archaeologically defined events with those recorded by Roman historians is fraught with difficulty’ (Fulford *et al.* 2011, 11). As said above, he has also considered his palace might have been an imperial gift to Cogidubnus for his loyalty during the revolt.

Archaeologically we can see that at some time shortly before or after the revolt, Silchester was graced with the construction of the Amphitheatre. It looks as if at some point part of the Inner Earthwork was filled in and extended to the north-east, perhaps incorporating the Amphitheatre if the ditch on its eastern side is related, as well as the Temple area around Insula XXX. Public Baths were constructed, built on top of the bank of the former Inner Earthwork and draining into its ditch (though dating evidence is sparse). At the time the baths may have been outside the original extent of the new grid, nestled down at the head of the slight valley carved into the gravel plateau. The street-grid itself was extended with wider insulae being added to the north and south, perhaps at the same time though we only have dating evidence for the street on the north side of Insula IX (FIG. 17.1d).

FROM KINGDOM TO *CIVITAS*

Boon imagined Cogidubnus dying around A.D. 77–8 and the kingdom then being incorporated into the now fully-fledged province. His thinking was influenced by Eric Birley, who had argued that the appointment of two juridical legates, C. Salvius Liberalis *c.* A.D. 81 and L. Javolenus Priscus, *c.* A.D. 84, related to the legal niceties this entailed. Tacitus did not mention the death of the king in his biography of the governor Agricola, making many think that this must have happened before Agricola’s governorship started in A.D. 77–8 (Birley 2005, 268–72, 468). Boon envisaged the creation of *civitates* *c.* A.D. 84–6 (Boon 1969, 38–9).

In this context Boon saw the Flavian construction of the street-grid (as he then envisaged it) as signifying and marking out the creation of the *civitas* of the Atrebates (Boon 1974, 53), an idea in which he was followed by Wachter (1995, 275–6) and Greenaway (1981, 291), who also saw the period as one of other new constructions, such as the first Forum and the demolition of the portico of the Public Baths as a new road ran through its frontage.

More recently, in Fulford’s latest construction of events, this transition from kingdom to province has been imagined to have been brutish and unpleasant. Fulford and Clarke recently imagined deliberate destruction upon the death of the king, that it was imperial policy to annexe client kingdoms upon the death of a ruler; in this context they saw the deliberate demolition of Fulford’s hypothetical palace of Cogidubnus and a deliberate removal of all traces of the royal town. They then saw the re-use of masonry elements from the earlier building and the

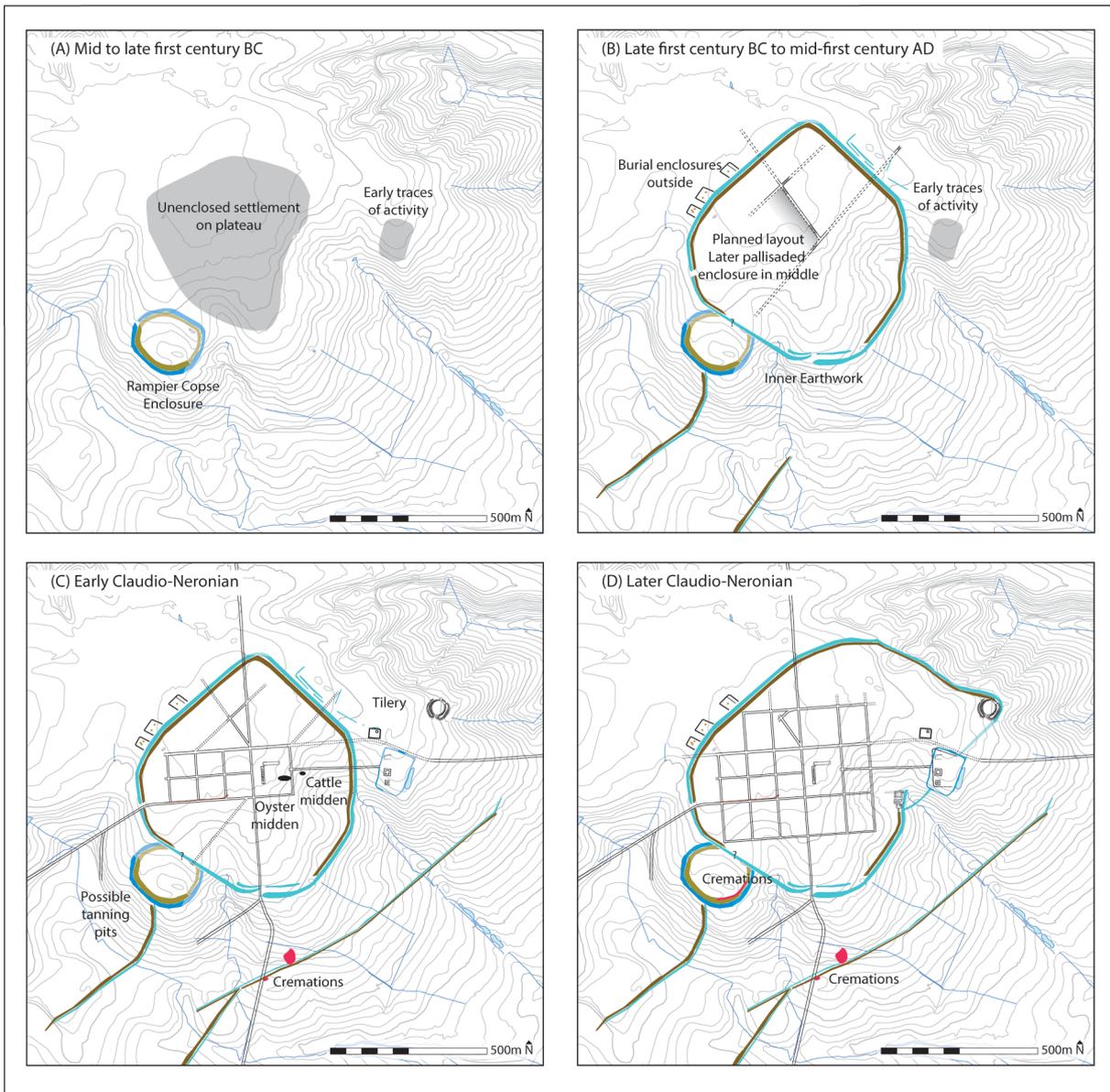


FIG. 17.1. The early development of *Calleva*.

construction of houses aligned with the old lanes rather than the new orthogonal streets as displays of passive resistance to the new order (Fulford and Clarke 2011b, 18). This would seem to be a remarkable end to the kingdom of someone whom Vespasian would have known when he was legate of II Augusta in A.D. 43–7; someone who might have survived the Boudican revolt and supported the Flavians during the year of four emperors (A.D. 69), resulting in Tacitus noting him for his loyalty (Tacitus, *Agric.* 14.1).

The review within this volume sees the buildings on the old lane alignment to the north of the hypothetical palace as being merely an artefact of the gradual evolution of the street-grid.

THE MATURITY OF THE *CIVITAS*

CHARTERED STATUS, PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND DEFENCES

In the early twentieth century the stone Forum-Basilica had mistakenly been associated with Agricola and a Flavian programme of Romanisation by urbanisation, but Fulford’s excavation

showed that phase was actually Hadrianic (Collingwood and Myres 1936, 192; Esmonde Cleary 1998, 36). However, the diminution in Roman historical sources after Tacitus meant that there were fewer pegs to hang archaeological evidence onto over the following centuries.

For want of historical events, building programmes in cities have often been associated with changes in status. Just as the creation of the *civitas* was once seen to be a stimulus towards the establishment of the street-grid at Silchester, in London Frere (1999, 197) amongst others wondered if the Flavian and Hadrianic fora there had marked London's elevation to *municipium* and then *colonia*. If that were the case, could the timber and stone at Silchester mark similar events? Fulford's timber Forum (Period 5), constructed around A.D. 80–90, had some architectural embellishments, notably the wall-plaster, which linked it to the developments at Fishbourne. Otherwise, the use of timber suggested to him that the absorption of the kingdom into the emperor's *patrimonium* had meant that the *civitas* started life with no reserves left to build one in stone (Fulford and Timby 2000, 573). He therefore saw its replacement in stone in the Hadrianic–early Antonine period as a clear political statement by the city of their new-found wealth and success, as the previous timber building was unlikely to have needed replacement by then (Fulford and Timby 2000, 573).

Wilson (2006a, 12) explored the idea of associating early defences with towns gaining chartered status. While he dismissed the Outer Earthworks as Iron Age, this volume has suggested they are later first century; in which case, following his argument, Silchester would be a contender to have been an early *municipium* (though second-century Ptolemy gives no indication of that in his *Geography*). In the same volume, Fulford questioned this entire approach. For him the possibility that two 'unplanned' small towns, Carlisle and Ilchester, could be *civitas* capitals meant that status and public buildings, layouts and defences could not easily be correlated (Fulford 2006, 69–70).

Eventually the town was encircled with a new set of earthworks and a ditch, replacing the Outer Earthwork and focusing on a much smaller area. The changing historical interpretations of town earthworks have already been discussed, but the protection of the cities in the light of Clodius Albinus stripping the province of troops in order to fight Septimius Severus in A.D. 193 is the most commonly invoked historical context (Boon 1974, 66; Fulford 1984, 235; Frere 1984, 69).

Undoubtedly historical events and legal frameworks will have impinged in some way on what happened at Silchester; the only trouble is that the lack of precision in archaeological dating and the dearth of literary sources make the association of archaeological features and historical events exceptionally problematic. Nonetheless, what we can point to is a sustained period of public-building activity throughout the first to mid-second century (Table 17.1).

Archaeologically we can see the town continuing to evolve. More elements of the old Inner Earthwork fell into redundancy and were filled in and replaced. The street-grid appears to have been extended again crossing the old Inner Earthwork both to the north-west and south. However, the three large burial enclosures to the north-west remained protected within this expansion in a large block of their own (FIG. 17.2e). Both this expansion and the construction of the first unambiguous timber Forum took place around A.D. 80–90 or a little later. At some stage in the second century there appears to have been another call for defences; the Sandy's Lands earthwork was constructed with a small stone revetment showing a nice façade to the west, though it is unclear if this was ever fully completed, or that defences to the eastern side of the town were extant at that stage at all. The Sandy's Lands bank protected the major burial enclosures, but in doing so cut off the road leading to the cremation cemetery on that side (FIG. 17.2e–f). However, shortly thereafter the area seemed to be deemed worthy of protection by a much smaller earthwork with the construction of the North-West Annex (FIG. 17.2g). Meanwhile in the east, at some stage the two temple and possible burial enclosures of Insulae XXX and XXXVI were monumentalised by encircling them with a stone wall, a treatment the enclosures to the west never had.

If the remains further to the north-west of the town are those of a circus (which is by no means certain, see p. 427), then it would make sense if it was constructed later than this, since it is positioned between the north side of this earthwork and the gravel terrace edge. If so, this would make it second century or later, so potentially similar in date to the Colchester example.

TABLE 17.1. CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS AT SILCHESTER

Foundation (unenclosed settlement)	<i>c.</i> 25–15 B.C. (or a bit earlier)	see p. 342 FIG. 17.1a
Inner Earthwork	late first century B.C.	see p. 343 FIG. 17.1b
Core Roman street-grid	Claudian	see p. 392 FIG. 17.1c
Cogidubnus' palace (Fulford's hypothesis)	early Neronian?	see p. 397
Amphitheatre, timber 1	<i>c.</i> A.D. 55–77	see p. 220 FIG. 17.1d
North-East Earthwork Extension	<i>TPQ c.</i> A.D. 55–77	see p. 325
Public Baths	?pre-streets in this area	see p. 308
Street-grid extension	early Flavian	see pp. 325, 392
Timber Basilica Forum (Period 5)	A.D. 80–90	see p. 106 FIG. 17.2e
Outer Earthwork Sandy's Lands (possibly not completed)	post-A.D. 80–130	see p. 327 FIG. 17.2f
Amphitheatre, timber 2	<i>c.</i> mid-second century	see p. 220
North-West Annex	?	see p. 327
(?)Corvées working on Hadrian's Wall	Hadrianic	see Fulford 2006
Amphitheatre, masonry 1	Hadrianic to early Antonine	see p. 220
Masonry Basilica Forum (Period 6)	Hadrianic to early Antonine	see p. 107 FIG. 17.2g
Clad Gully Outer Earthwork	?	see p. 327
Town Rampart	A.D. 180–200	see p. 298
Amphitheatre, masonry 2	<i>c.</i> A.D. 250	see p. 220
Town Wall	A.D. 260–80	see p. 300
Major re-metalling of roads	later third century	see p. 393 FIG. 17.2h

THE THIRD AND FOURTH CENTURY

The third century saw the construction of the Town Gates in stone and eventually the embellishment of the Town Rampart with the addition of a wall in the mid-to-late third century (FIG. 17.2h; for narratives associated with this see pp. 298–300). Beyond that our lack of dating evidence for the plan established by the Antiquaries restricts what we can say.

The third century is when, in the lack of widespread dating evidence, we imagine the town to have been at its zenith. Encircled within an impressive Town Wall, it was now complete with all its public buildings. This is the stage of development that most artistic representations of Silchester choose to illustrate. The Great Plan with its palimpsest of buildings provided the foundation on to which others built. Alan Sorrell was perhaps the earliest to understand the impact visual representations could have, and he took exceptional care in the creation of his images. His painting of Silchester was designed in the 1970s through intense dialogue with Jill Greenaway, who by then had taken charge of the Silchester collections at Reading Museum from George Boon (Perry and Johnson 2014; Sorrell 1976). His images represent the town at its height, though even that idea includes within it the concept of fourth-century urban decline which the Insula IX excavations have put into question. All other overviews of the town have followed suit, reconstructing the town based on the basis of the multi-period Great Plan. One of these was the 1995 model built for Reading Museum (Greenaway 2013), which was a far more challenging reconstruction as the 'unknowns' could not be hidden behind smoke as Sorrell had been able to do. More recently English Heritage commissioned a new visual reconstruction overview. This was undertaken by Ivan Lapper, choosing to bask the site in sunshine rather than Sorrell's twilight, though otherwise the view was of exactly the same perspective. Reconstructions or imaginings of the Iron Age or Early Roman town have always been on a smaller scale focusing on specific buildings as so much less is known of the overall layout of the town in earlier periods.

The fall of the British Empire of Carausius and Allectus in A.D. 296 was the next occasion to pin archaeology on the historic framework. Joyce associated the burning of the Basilica (and the

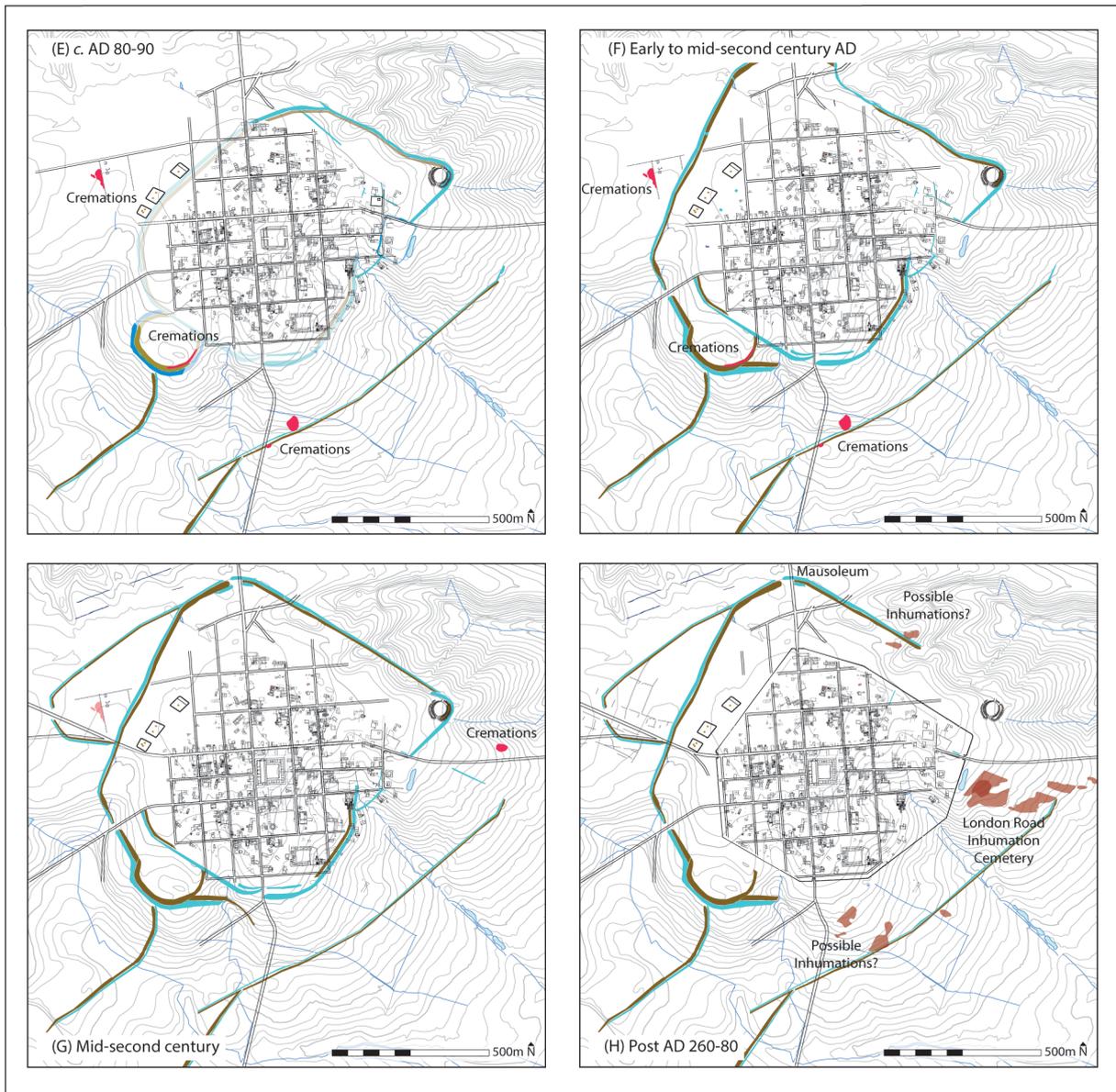


FIG. 17.2. The later development of *Calleva*.

burial of the eagle beneath it) with the re-conquest of Britain. This was achieved by Asclepiodotus sailing across the Channel, evading the British fleet off the Isle of Wight, landing, burning his ships and advancing towards London. Allectus' forces left London to meet them, and Silchester was logically imagined as having been on the best route, and therefore close to the location of the final battle before Constantius came to land in Kent unopposed, marched into London and reunited Britain with the Empire (Kempthorne 1914–16, 33). Joyce imagined that the eagle had been buried to save it by a beleaguered *aquilifer*, as Asclepiodotus marched through central southern Britain to meet up with the forces of Constantius I and defeat the rebel Allectus (Joyce 1881b, 364; Boon 1974, 71). This became lore: 'Towards the end of the third century some of the town, including the Basilica, was burnt, possibly as the result of the battle between the rebel Allectus and the Emperor Constantius Chlorus' (Liversidge 1968, 37). The burnt deposit the eagle was found in has subsequently been completely reinterpreted and moved earlier in date to A.D. 125–50, so alas that association has to be laid to rest (Durham 2013, 86); by happenstance this revised date was closer to when Rosemary Sutcliffe had set her fictionalised account of the loss and recovery of *The Eagle of the Ninth* based loosely around the deposition of the find (Sutcliffe 1954).

Fourth-century Silchester once laid claim to stories of the death of Constantius and the elevation of Constantine the Great at *Caer Segont* (Nennius, *Hist. Brit.* 25, *contra* Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 15); this was based on the mistaken identification of the town with *Segontium*, an issue finally resolved at the start of the twentieth century, which saw a loss to the site of these fourth-century historical associations along with later associations with King Arthur.

SILCHESTER AFTER THE ROMANS

THE END OF CALLEVA

The tradition of the country people is, that [the Roman town] was burnt by means of wildfire attached to the tails of sparrows; the roofs of the dwellings, being principally of thatch, readily ignited. For sparrows we have but to read fire-arrows, and the substance of the tradition may be true; at any rate we may conclude that fire destroyed the dwellings, while the sword cut short the lives of the miserable Segontians. (Kempe 1833, 124)

The abandonment of the town leaving the empty fields we see today meant that its end has always caught the imagination. Kempe's tale, reiterated by Wright and Fairholt (1845, 150), articulated how the locals saw it. Kempe, however, preferred creating his own stories based upon the uncovered remains. He evoked the end, describing a body found in the Revd J. Coles' excavation of the *Mansio* bathhouse thus:

When Silchester was stormed, one of its inhabitants had sought refuge in this place, hastily throwing his treasure, for concealment, into the bath; here he fell by the Saxon sword, or was crushed under the falling ruins of the building; a faithful dog, whose skull was discovered near him, had shared his fate. (Kempe 1833, 125)

During the Antiquaries' excavation the discovery of the ogham stone inscribed with Tebicasot's name in Insula IX showed that Silchester clearly had a past that carried on beyond the departure of the Roman legions in A.D. 410. However, the lack of numerous dead bodies suggested the town had more likely been abandoned than the population put to the sword or cut down by the plague (Haverfield 1904).

The study was not put on to a robust footing until Boon's survey of the latest material in the Silchester collections from the excavations of Joyce through to the Antiquaries (Boon 1959; inventory partly updated in Snyder 1996, 41–2; 1997). Boon viewed Silchester as a surviving British enclave, partly protected from its Saxon neighbours by Grim's Bank. He considered a breakdown in Romanised local authority must have occurred to enable a pagan Irishman to be buried within the Town Walls, since he took the ogham inscription to be a tombstone. He argued for the town's survival through the fifth and sixth centuries until the incorporation of the area into the Wessex kingdom, perhaps during the campaigns of Cynric and Ceawlin (*c.* A.D. 552–68) (Boon 1974, 74–82).

Since then the key additional finds have been the recovery of a siliqua hoard from just south-west of the town (LP 2900, Exterior 17), where about a quarter of the coins were clipped, so perhaps dating to a little after A.D. 410 (Fulford *et al.* 1989); the excavations within the Basilica which revealed a curious assemblage of post-Roman red-streaked glass; and most important of all the excavation of Insula IX, including the area where the ogham inscription had been found, where one of the key research aims was the search for post-Roman occupation.

Fulford's excavations in Insula IX have clearly demonstrated that the block was still occupied and active as Roman material culture starts to become more elusive at the beginning of the fifth century. Beyond that, occupation appears to have continued and is represented by a number of pits of indeterminate date and short stratified sequences showing continuing activity around Buildings 1 and 8. How late these sequences should be stretched is always challenging and a matter for debate. Fulford has argued for a longer rather than shorter chronology, based on dividing his later pits into three categories: (1) pits with the latest pottery and Theodosian coins; (2) pits with no Theodosian coins but residual pottery and some earlier curated artefacts; and

(3) stratigraphically late, but only residual material rather than specifically the latest Roman pottery types (Fulford *et al.* 2006, 276). This provides a good relative sequence, though fixing an absolute date to it is a problem. The first group he dated to the cessation of the use of Theodosian coinage, explaining why so many were deposited. Besley considered the coinage would have ceased circulation within a decade or two of its issue in A.D. 388–402, so thought most would have entered the archaeological record by the A.D. 410–20s. But then Fulford dated the second group to *after* the mid-fifth century, though it is not clear why they need to be quite so late rather than post-A.D. 410–20. With his third group of pits being later still his chronology is pushed into the sixth century.

Fulford also considered some of the wells did not show signs of gradual silting so were more likely to have been deliberately sealed, suggesting an abandonment event marking the cessation of occupation in the town, which the buried ironwork deposits of 1890 and 1900 from Insulae I and XXIII, might have been related to.

Of the late finds from Insula IX, the most notable object is the ogham stone, dating to around the late fourth to fifth century. In addition, there are several fragments of North African cylindrical amphora (Bv), which could date any time from the early second to the later sixth century, two armlets, and finally two beads of possible fifth- to seventh-century date from Pit 1866 and Building 8, though neither was unequivocally Saxon (Fulford *et al.* 2006, 78, 127, 130–2).

So while Fulford states: ‘from this gradually accumulating evidence, it is becoming harder to resist the notion that there was widespread occupation within the town walls in the period between the fifth and the seventh century’, I might be more inclined to resist. Were it so thriving and long-lasting, the total lack of Eastern Mediterranean amphorae and jars (Bi, Bii, Biv, Bvi) and African and Phocaeen Red-Slipped ware would be surprising. This kind of material is known in small quantities from a wide range of sites in western Britain (which have not seen such extensive excavation as Silchester), and larger collections come from sites such as Tintagel, Cadbury-Congresbury and Dinas Powys, as has been pointed out by Fulford (1989a). Such material is seen in Ireland as well, and given Silchester’s post-Roman connections with the West as exemplified by the ogham script, the absence of these wares here is doubly surprising. I would be inclined to underplay the longevity or extent of the continued ‘widespread occupation’. Recent programmes of work with radiocarbon dating in the early Migration period and the judicious use of Bayesian mathematics to model date ranges are proving invaluable in the current reassessment taking place of early Migration period sites (e.g. Bayliss *et al.* 2013), though human bones have tended to be used and the material from the late Silchester pits may have been too unpromising.

However late occupation in Insula IX continued, something certainly did happen afterwards on the site. The Basilica assemblage produced a significant quantity of post-Roman red-streaked glass (Allen in Fulford and Timby 2000, 314); a further fragment also came from the South-East Gate excavation (Price in Fulford 1984, 116). This distinctive type of glass is often found on seventh- to ninth-century Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical sites (Cramp 2001, 70, 75; 2006), but, as Price and Fulford have noted, it is also being discovered at a range of post-Roman sites in the West as well: Wroxeter; Atworth and Box villas (Wilts.); and from the shrine at Uley (Glos.) (Price 1993, 189; Fulford 2012a). Fulford interpreted this as evidence for continuing occupation of the site until the seventh century, rather than as evidence for re-use of the shell of the Basilica. Alas, the excavations of Joyce and the Antiquaries will have scoured out much of the evidence that could ever have informed this debate.

Careful analysis of the nature of the robbing of the Forum-Basilica by Fulford revealed a potential structure to go with this material. While much robbing of the Basilica and the rest of the site was carried out down to ground level, one set of walls of the Basilica was robbed more thoroughly down below the ground surface. Fulford interpreted this as meaning it was later in date (why dig so deep if there was visible masonry elsewhere accessible?). The deeply-robbed walls comprised a potentially significant north–south hall with the colonnade of the Forum attached (Fulford and Timby 2000, 581; Fulford 2012a, 345). This is the possible building which might relate to the red-streaked glass. Close by, just to the south-west, excavations which have just commenced in Insula III have revealed two sherds of chaff-tempered pottery of fifth- to eighth-century date (Fulford *et al.* 2014, 10).

Fulford has developed these threads into a number of possible narratives: first, Tebicatos and his ilk lived on at Silchester, with the Basilica-site hall representing the ‘palace’ of a sub-Roman petty king. The conscious demolition of it could have been an ideological act, exorcising the building and what it represented, upon the incorporation of the area into the Saxon dominions (Fulford and Timby 2000, 581).

A second narrative saw the town as depopulated to make way for a monastery based in the Forum-Basilica upon the incorporation of the area into the kingdom of Wessex. He speculated that this could have been intended to act as a more neutral buffer between the competing kingdoms of Wessex, now focused on Winchester, and Mercia. The problem with this is explaining why a Saxon monastery would not have continued in occupation resulting in later material being deposited; and why, if it continued later, monumental masonry from the Forum-Basilica did not get incorporated into the new build of St Mary’s in the twelfth century (Fulford *et al.* 2006, 281; Fulford 2012a, 347–8). The absence of an ecclesiastical house from the literary record also becomes more problematic as time goes on.

His third alternative narrative was that Silchester was the centre of a surviving Romano-British cult, as exemplified by the cult of St Alban (Gildas, *de Excidio* 10–11; cf. Yorke 2006, 120), and that this was suppressed by the Saxons upon incorporation into Wessex. He cited as a parallel Augustine of Canterbury’s suppression of the cult of Sixtus venerated at an unknown location (*‘in loco quodam’*) (Sharpe 2002, 118, 123–5); so Fulford hypothesised ‘a simultaneous suppression of town and church, *martyrium* or not, at *Calleva* in the period between the late sixth and mid-seventh century’ (Fulford *et al.* 2006, 281–2).

I found the third narrative appealing, though upon further research ‘suppression’ is an odd reading of what Augustine was up to. The historical reference comes in the *Obsecratio*, an annex to the *Libellus responsionum*, which was a set of answers by Pope Gregory to a series of questions which had been sent to him by Augustine in A.D. 601. Concern had been raised about the local cult of a British Sixtus, because collective memories had failed and ‘the elders’ did not know anything of him from their forebears and no miracles were recorded at his burial site. This meant his saintliness was in question. Responding, Pope Gregory sent to Augustine relics of the homonymous Pope Sixtus II, to provide an alternative focus for veneration (Deanesly and Grosjean 1959, 28–32; Brooks 1984, 20; Crook 2011, 47). This is not the language of closure which might result in the clearing of the town and dissolution of a monastery, but of fostering and redirection. We do not know where the cult of Sixtus was: somewhere in Kent (Sims-Williams 1990, 62; Charles-Edwards 2012, 189), but even so, the evidence does not appear to be of the suppression of British Christian cults; so perhaps this third narrative is not as appealing as initially thought. Ultimately, the presence of the red-streaked glass does not necessarily imply an ecclesiastical establishment, and so the first suggestion of the sub-Roman petty king is probably to be preferred. The current Insula III excavations may provide additional evidence to weigh the alternatives.

FROM ROMAN CALLEVA TO ANGLO-SAXON SILCHESTER

The placename evidence seems to imply a clear break between the sub-Roman settlement and the late Saxon name for the village. When the site emerged into history with Domesday, it did so re-christened as Silcestre, followed by a number of variants (Silcestra, Cilcestre, Scilchestre, Sylkchester) until the advent of the Ordnance Survey and printed maps saw the occurrence of variant spellings of all placenames settle down (Grundy 1927, 231). The origin of its name has caused much discussion, dividing into those who think the name is Saxon-derived and a description of the old ruins; and more recently those who think it derives from a British-Latin root, evoking continued memory of the site’s name throughout the Saxon period.

In the mid-nineteenth century Silchester was imagined as meaning the site fortified by Silius (Rickman 1840, 413), but later interpretations tried to disentangle the root of the first element. Davis interpreted *Selcaester* as ‘the dwelling-house city’, based on Anglo-Saxon *sel* meaning a seat/dwelling/mansion, and Anglo-Saxon *ceaster* being a city/town/fort (Davis 1898, 7–9). However, Harrison contended that ‘city of houses’ was almost a tautology, and agreed with Rhys that it was

probably derived from ‘wood’ (Welsh *cell-i*, Gaelic *coil*) becoming *cell*, i.e. *sell* (Harrison 1899). In a reply to Harrison, Davis pointed out that -castor was indifferently assigned to forts and towns, so dwelling-castor was a clarifying prefix and not a doubling up (Davis 1899). Gibbons entered the fray believing that both Davis and Harrison were probably wrong, contending it related to the Saxon word *sēl*, meaning good or pre-eminent (Gibbons 1899). In his work on Anglo-Saxon charters Grundy reported a suggestion he had had from Henry Bradley that Syl-Caester might mean ‘Column Chester’ (Grundy 1927, 231).

Ekwall came to dominate the study of placenames in the mid-twentieth century and believed Silchester derived from Anglo-Saxon *sealh* ‘sallow’, Anglo-Saxon **siele*, **sele* ‘sallow-copse’ (Ekwall 1960, 422; followed by Mills 2011). In contrast to Anglo-Saxon derivation, which was the majority opinion, Richmond and Crawford (1949, 26) thought the *Cil-* of the original spellings might be a survival from the original name, *Cal-*; however, Rivet and Smith thought that unlikely if the town had been abandoned for centuries (Rivet and Smith 1979, 292). This continuity idea has also recently been favoured by Coates who found the *sallow* theory improbable on ecological and philological grounds (Coates 1988; 1989, 149–50).

The discontinuity in the name of the site would have favoured a clear break in occupation; however, it is clear the argument surrounding whether the ‘Sil-’ element is derived from Latin or Saxon is not coming to an easy conclusion.

Archaeologically a small number of Saxon finds have come from across the site, though curiously most of them have potentially been fairly early in date. They include a seventh-century button brooch (Passmore 1934; Boon 1959, 83, C1); a seventh-century (?) glass palm cup (Boon 1959, 83, C3); several seventh- to tenth-century dress-hooks (Boon 1959, 83, C2); and a small Saxon knife of *scramasax* type (St John Hope 1907c, 487). The knife came from the 1906 season from near the spring and Public Baths, but none of the others has a close provenance. In terms of ceramics, an intrusive tenth- or eleventh-century sherd was found within the town in the tail of the rampart west of the South Gate, identified by Hinton (Fulford 1984, 75, 231–2). Collectively this material is not enough to suggest continuity of occupation from the seventh century to the Norman era; however, there may have been a Saxon settlement nearby a little to the south-east of the town. Unusually a couple of pieces of Saxon pottery were found during fieldwalking in LP 4600 (Exterior 22): a ninth-century and an eleventh-century sherd (Ford and Hopkins 2011, 26). The survival of this normally very friable pottery in the plough zone is impressive and might indicate an elusive settlement in the area. No geophysics was undertaken in this field, so it remains to be explored.

Historically Biddle wondered about there being continuity. Examining the way the parish boundaries of Silchester and Mortimer West End project out to form a northern arc around the town, he wondered if these did not reflect continuity from a much earlier estate or *territorium* centred on the town. However, while some Roman towns had a *territorium*, they were not usually of this size. Esmonde Cleary instead considered it might represent the boundary of a late Saxon estate focused on the old town (Biddle 1976; Esmonde Cleary 1987, 131). Unfortunately there are no Anglo-Saxon charters which mention the town’s ruined walls, the nearest charter being for a wood in Tadley in the early tenth century (Grundy 1927, 172–7).

NORMAN AND LATER SILCHESTER

At the time of the Domesday Book, Silchester comprised two estates, each one given to the Bluet and Mortimer families to hold, though the two came to be combined under the Bluets. A detailed summary of the ownership and overlordship of the manor is provided by Page (1911, 52–3). Domesday contained no mention of a church at Silchester, but reporting of churches varied from area to area, so not too much can be read into this.

Not long thereafter the Amphitheatre was re-used. Probably just before the mid-twelfth century a palisade was constructed around the top of the stands and the southern entrance was refurbished to provide a defended enclosure. The arena, sunk 2 m below the surrounding ground level, meant that under normal circumstances this would not have been an ideal location for long-term residency, having poor drainage; but a large aisled hall was constructed within

it nonetheless (Fulford 1989c, 59–65, 175–6). Though the pottery lasts until the fifteenth century, all the sealed ceramic groups were mid- to late twelfth century, so Fulford considered the occupation to be brief (Fulford 1989c, 194) and associated it with the instability of the anarchy of Stephen and Matilda (1135–1154). From 1300 the climate deteriorated, so the lack of drainage within the Amphitheatre may have become more apparent encouraging a shift in the focus of the site.

It is in the late twelfth and thirteenth century that the archaeological evidence elsewhere picks up. First, the Church of St Mary the Virgin was constructed, probably as an aisleless nave in the late twelfth century, with a northern aisle then a chancel added around 1230 (Page 1911; Ditchfield 1929). It is likely that, after the abandonment of the hall in the Amphitheatre, a new Manor House was constructed nearby, usually assumed to have been in the same location as the current Manor House which encapsulates a sixteenth-century frame. Around this point, in 1204, King John licensed Ralph Bluet to construct an enclosure for a deer park (Hardy 1835, 221), the pale of which survives to this day on the slopes below the Church and Manor House.

It is around this date that ceramics start to be found in greater quantity to the south-east of the town, just outside the Town Wall. Hitherto only a single intrusive sherd of tenth- to eleventh-century pottery had been found near the South Gate (Fulford 1984, 75, 231–2), but late twelfth- to fourteenth-century ceramics came from both the excavations at the South-East Gate and also a trench a little to the north-east of this gate. The latter showed possible evidence for a lean-to against the Town Wall, but otherwise there was no structural evidence of buildings; however there was some slight evidence that there might have been a deliberate attempt to fill up and consolidate the Town Ditch in this area (Fulford 1984, 77, 231–2).

This is also the time when other miscellaneous finds from the area start to pick up: a twelfth-century terracotta mask with dark green glaze, used as a lid (Anon. 1864a, 326); a twelfth- to thirteenth-century bronze or latten ball (Maberly 1889–91); a coin of King John from somewhere in Insulae IX–XII; and another of Edward I from an unspecified location (Fox 1895, 469); a plain fifteenth-century latten ring (Maberly 1889–91); the pommels of two swords, one with an inlay of silver and signs of gilding, both said to have been dug up at the site (Anon. 1859); a sixteenth-century knife (Fox 1897) and a Dutch glass vessel dug up from eight feet below the surface near the Amphitheatre (Anon. 1861, 70); a sixteenth- to seventeenth-century small globular *grelot* bell (St John Hope 1907c, 487); and a seventeenth-century Civil War iron rowel spur from near the spring (St John Hope 1903a, 423).

Ford and Hopkins, writing up the University of Reading fieldwalking in the area, identified 89 medieval sherds in their assemblages, many probably from manuring, though they noted two particular clusters. The first was on the slopes just to the east of the town in the Romano-British cemetery areas, predominantly across LP 6346 and 6530, encroaching into 4426 (junction of Exteriors 14, 15, 18 and 19), in areas where there was CBM as well. This raises the possibility that some of the geophysical features here are medieval rather than Romano-British, particularly some of the enclosure within LP 6346. This was interpreted as being evidence for part of the later Saxon and medieval village (though no elusive Saxon pottery was actually found here). This is not unlikely, though it does leave a curious gap between the Manor House, Church and Church Lane, and the pottery cluster which begins about 100 m further down the slope. The second notable concentration of pottery was down in the valley bottom by Silchester Brook in LP 4758 (Exterior 16) which Ford and Hopkins noted was in a similar topographical position to the moated site of Clapper's Farm 1.2 km to the south (Ford and Hopkins 2011, 26, 29).

Ultimately the village around the Church never appears to have been particularly substantive, and at some stage building shifted across to the present-day focus of the parish on Silchester Common to the west.

CREATING HISTORY FROM ARCHAEOLOGY

The sections above show just how problematic the creation of narratives in the absence of specific historical testimony is. Often radically different stories or alternative scenarios have been spun around the same evidence. This does not mean that the exercise should not be carried

out, creating hypotheses about the past and repeatedly challenging them is how we construct our own understanding of the past, so long as informed speculation is presented, valued and recognised for what it is.

The plans accompanying this chapter are similarly prone to change. While Hodge's Great Plan drawn for the Antiquaries provided us with a great overview of the town, it very much lacked a chronological dimension. FIGS 17.1 and 17.2 are offered here as working plans and hypotheses to provide an image of the developing townscape. Each will be prone to new data and interpretations, but they try to create that sense of change that the Antiquaries' plans lacked.