

Britannia

Roman Britain from Caesar to Arthur

3 The Rebellion of Boudica



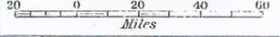
Roman Britain about 410.

1. 2. Routes of Caesar's expeditions to Britain (55-54 B.C.)

— Roman roads.

Names of native tribes thus: Brigantes

Scale 1:5 000 000



The Roman Empire at the death of Claudius AD 54

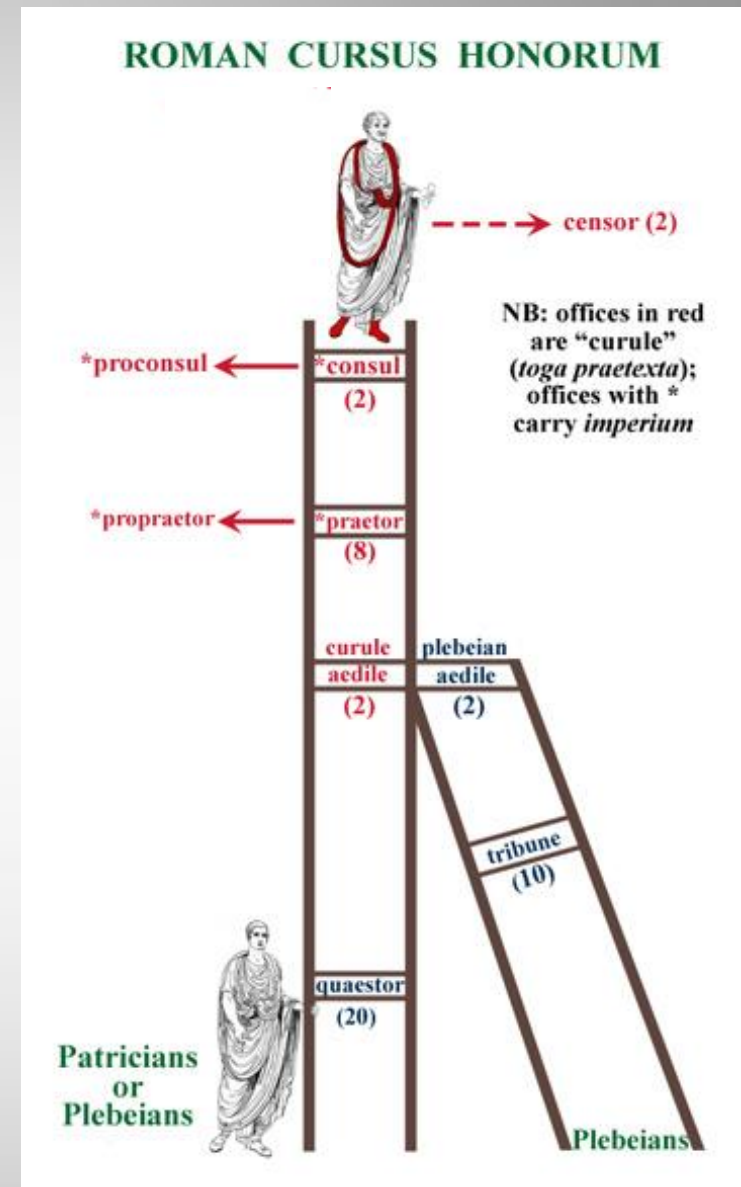


For the first two centuries, the Roman Empire pretended that it was still a Republic. Emperors ruled in partnership with the Senate (embodying the wealthy and powerful nobility).



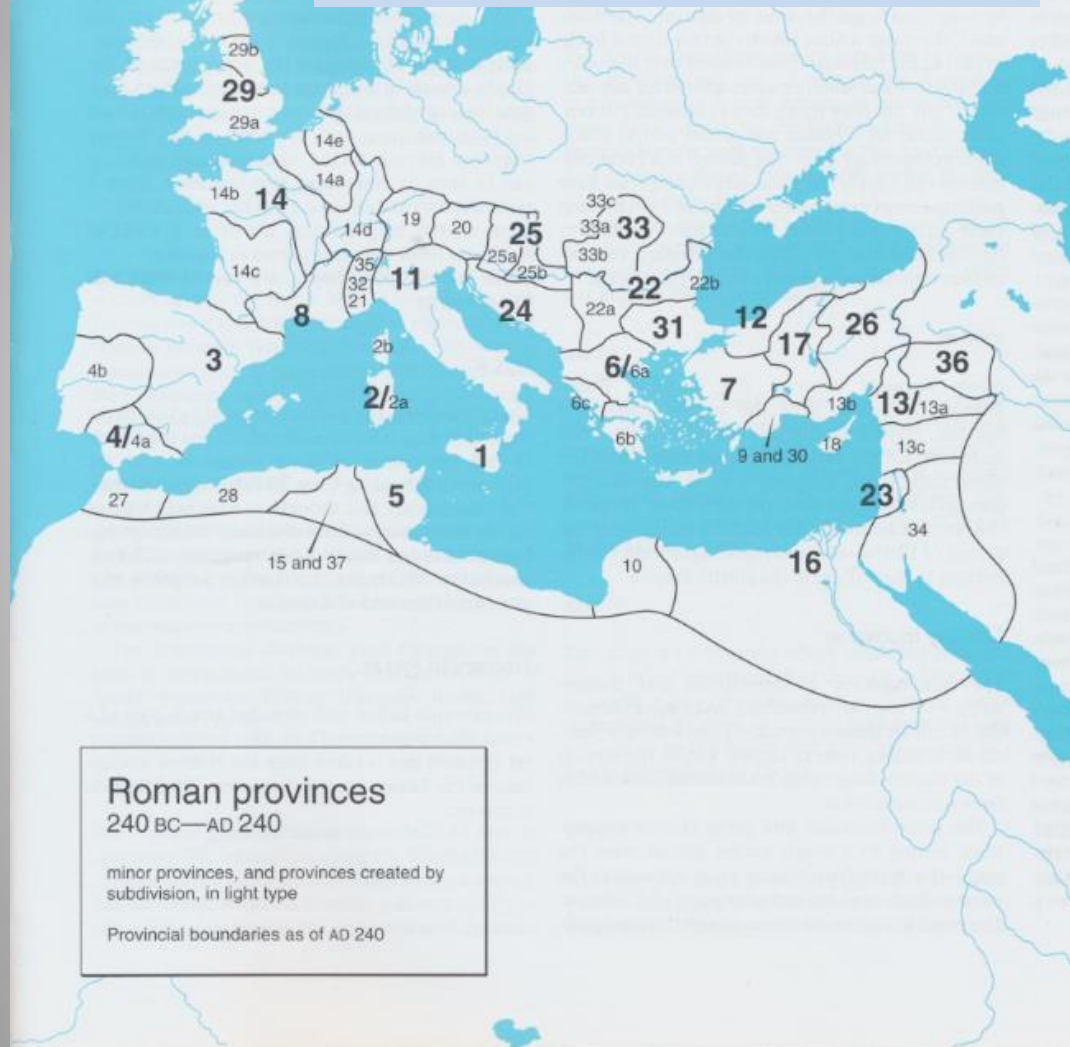
The Senate was allowed to supervise and manage “peaceful” provinces without a garrison of legions. The Emperor managed the rest.

EMPIRE	Min. age
Military tribune	20
Quaestor	25
Aedile or Tribune	27
Praetor	30
Prefect	
Propraetor	
Proconsul	
Commander of a legion	
Consul	32
Praefectus urbi	
Propraetor	
Proconsul	



The Empire still made use of the old "Cursus Honorum" (sequence of offices) to provide its magistrates. Ambitious men would begin as Quaestors in their 20s, ascending to Aediles and Praetors as they matured. The best or luckiest became Consuls, and veterans of that office could be appointed Proconsuls, governing Rome's provinces.

Britannia, like the other major provinces of the Empire, was the size of a kingdom, and its Governor had the power of a monarch (though Romans never used the title “king” for themselves). That power was supervised by the Emperor in Rome.



Roman provinces
240 BC—AD 240

minor provinces, and provinces created by subdivision, in light type

Provincial boundaries as of AD 240

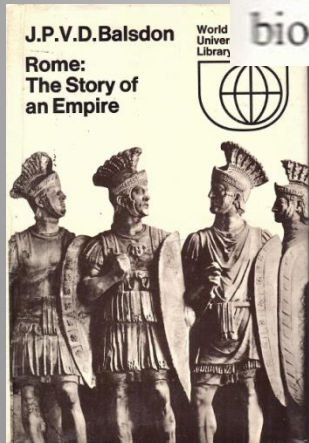
- 1 Sicily
- 2 Sardinia (and 2a)
- 2b Corsica
- 3 Near Spain (subsequently Spain)
- 4 Far Spain
- 4a Baetica
- 4b Lusitania
- 5 Africa
- 6 Macedonia (and 6a)
- 6b Achaea
- 6c Epirus
- 7 Asia
- 8 Gallia Narbonensis
- 9 Cilicia (Republican)
- 10 Cyrene (subsequently Cyrene and Crete)
- 11 Cisalpine Gaul
- 12 Bithynia (subsequently Bithynia and Pontus)
- 13 Syria (and 13a)
- 13b Cilicia (Imperial)
- 13c Phoenicia
- 14 Caesar's Gaul
- 14a Gallia Belgica
- 14b Gallia Lugdunensis
- 14c Aquitaine
- 14d Upper Germany
- 14e Lower Germany
- 15 Numidia (Republican)
- 16 Egypt
- 17 Galatia
- 18 Cyprus
- 19 Raetia
- 20 Noricum
- 21 Maritime Alps
- 22 Moesia
- 22a Upper Moesia
- 22b Lower Moesia
- 23 Judaea (subsequently Palestine)
- 24 Dalmatia
- 25 Pannonia
- 25a Upper Pannonia
- 25b Lower Pannonia
- 26 Cappadocia
- 27 Mauretania-Tangier
- 28 Mauretania-Caesarea
- 29a Upper Britain
- 29b Lower Britain
- 30 Lycia and Pamphylia
- 31 Thrace
- 32 Cottian Alps
- 33a Upper Dacia
- 33b Lower Dacia
- 33c Dacia Porolissensis
- 34 Arabia
- 35 Pennine Alps
- 36 Mesopotamia
- 37 Numidia (Imperial)

When Rome acquired a new province, it was given an assigned “constitution” and code of laws—the “lex provinciae.” This was administered by its Governor.



In some situations, colonials could appeal successfully to Rome against abuses by their Governor. At other times, Governors could get away with abuses of power.

As in all empires, there were good governors and bad. There were men like Verres in Sicily in the late Republic, and Marius Priscus in Africa at the end of the first century AD, who did not shrink even from condemning innocent men to death, as long as the bribe was sufficiently heavy. On the other hand we can follow the administration of two governors of unquestionable integrity, Cicero and the younger Pliny, from their letters, and we have the biography of Agricola, a far more gifted administrator than either.





As the legions pushed on to the west and north, the south and east of Britannia settled into a civilian way of life.

Why Rome?

For millennia, historians have debated the reasons for Rome's success in creating a long-lasting empire. Here are some of the most often mentioned items.

—Military effectiveness: the Roman Army was the most disciplined and efficient of all, and could incorporate conquered peoples into its ranks.

—Political effectiveness: at first incorporating all of Italy, then bringing conquered provinces into the empire by coopting their ruling elites into the Roman system.

—Economic expansion: empire produced wealth in the form of taxes and exploitation of economic resources, used to pay for the armies and government (and lifestyles of the ruling elite).

Rome became the most powerful state in the world by the first century BCE through a combination of **military power, political flexibility, economic expansion, and more than a bit of good luck**. This expansion changed the Mediterranean world and also changed Rome itself.

—Political effectiveness: at first incorporating all of Italy, then bringing conquered provinces into the empire by coopting their ruling elites into the Roman system.





In place of distaste of the Latin language came a passion to command it. In the same way, our national dress came into favor and the toga was everywhere to be seen. Step by step they were led to things which dispose to vice: the lounge, the bath, the elegant banquet. All this in their ignorance they called civilization, when it was but a part of their servitude.

—Tacitus, Agricola

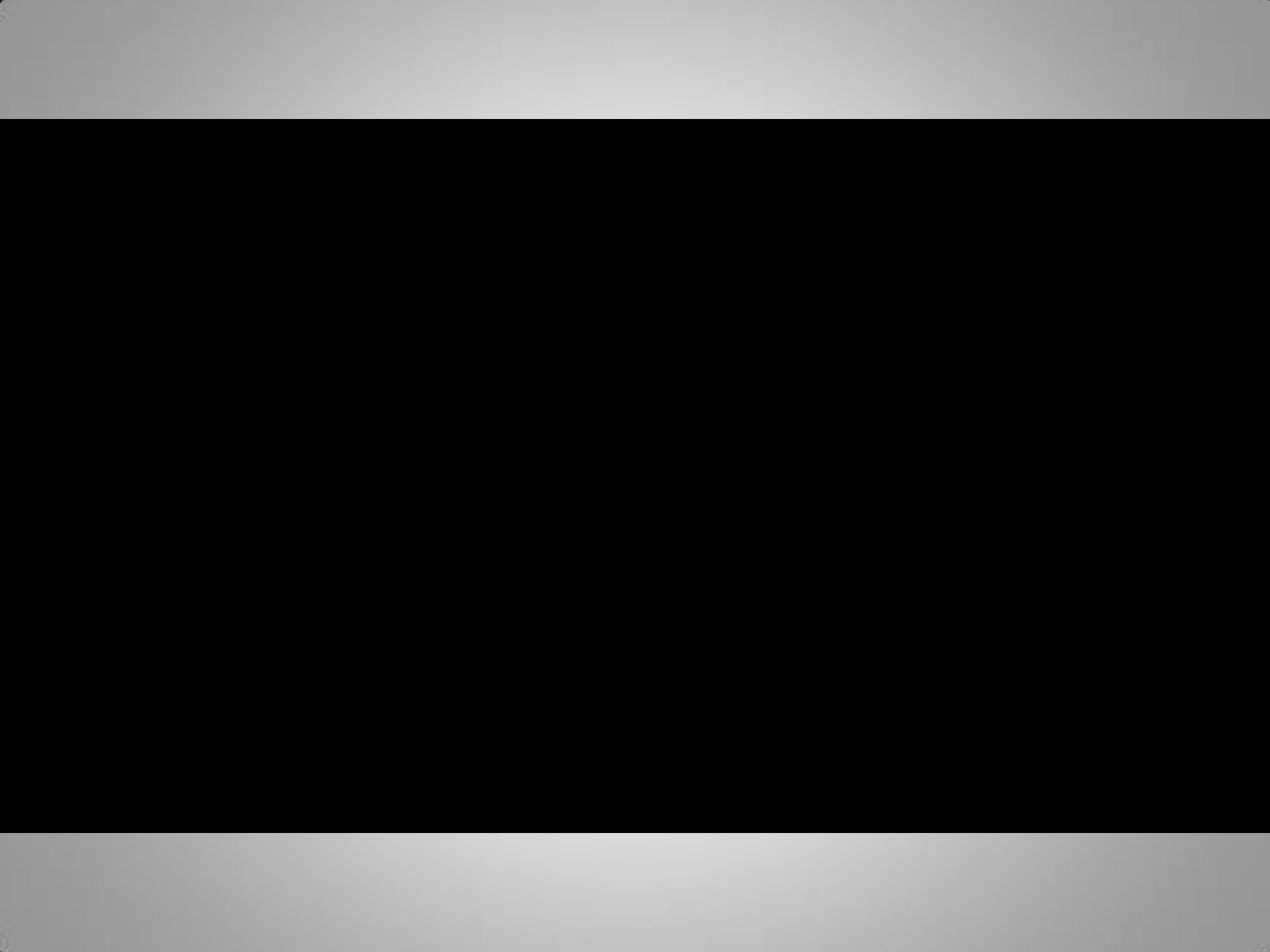
The Roman Empire at the death of Claudius AD 54



For four centuries, the gateway to Roman Britain....

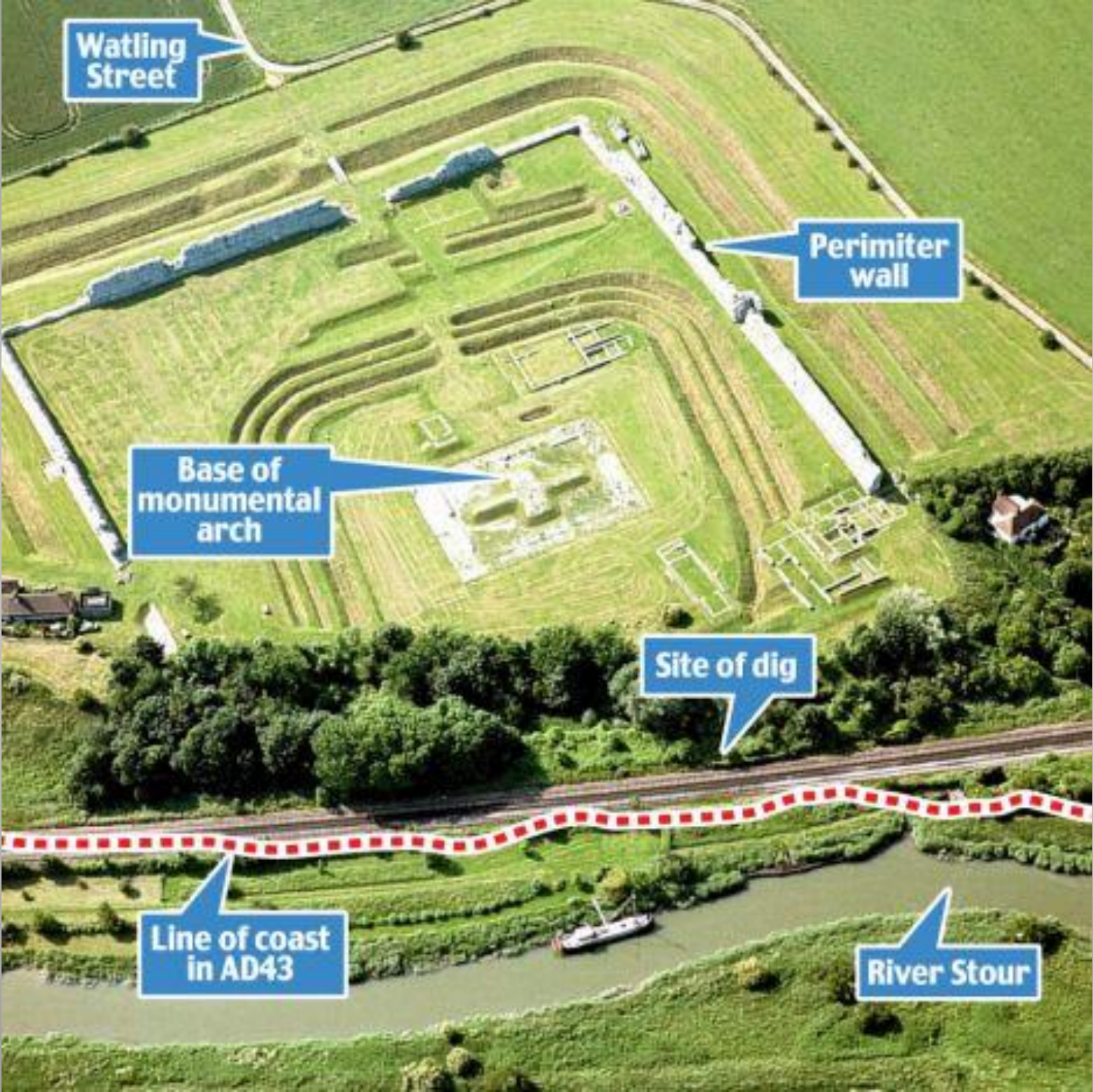


Richborough (Rutupiae)









Watling Street

Perimeter wall

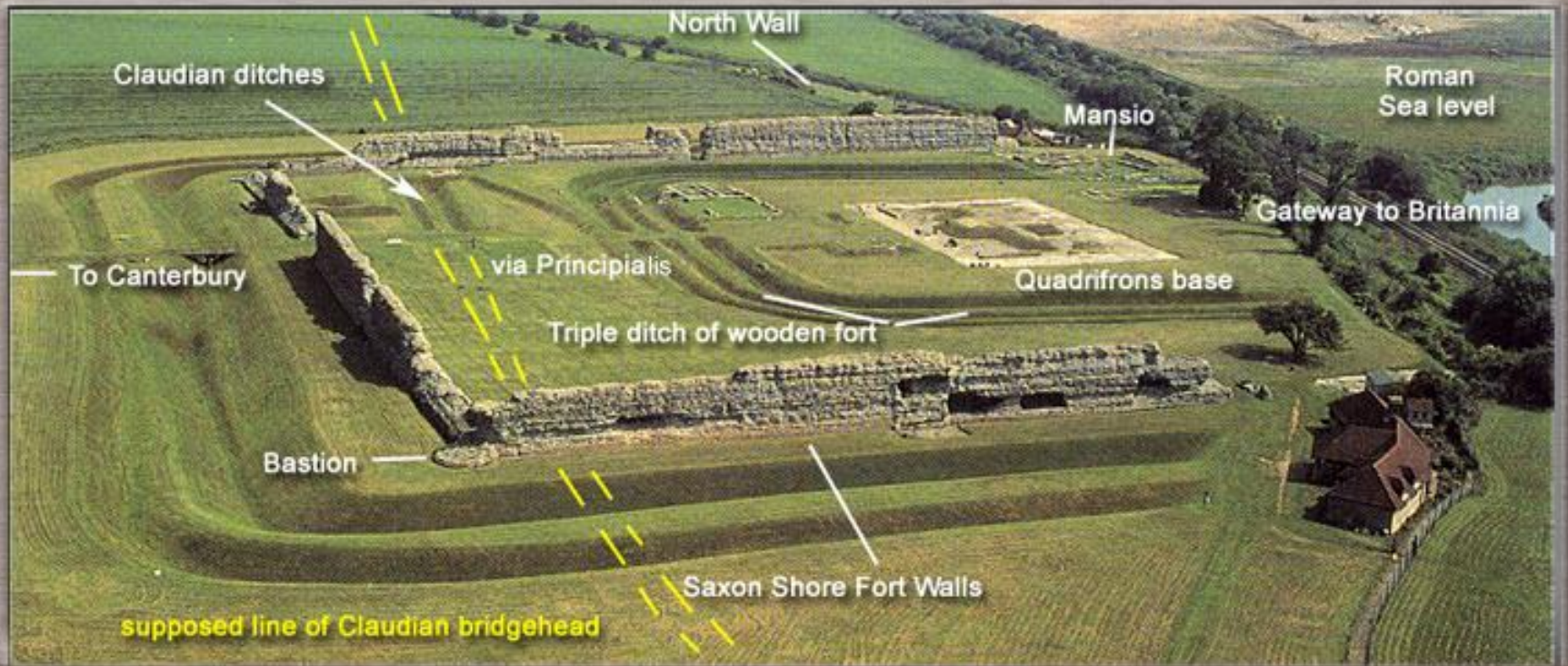
Base of monumental arch

Site of dig

Line of coast in AD43

River Stour

For four centuries, the gateway to Roman Britain....



Richborough (Rutupiae)

The Roman Empire at the death of Claudius AD 54





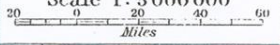
Roman Britain about 410.

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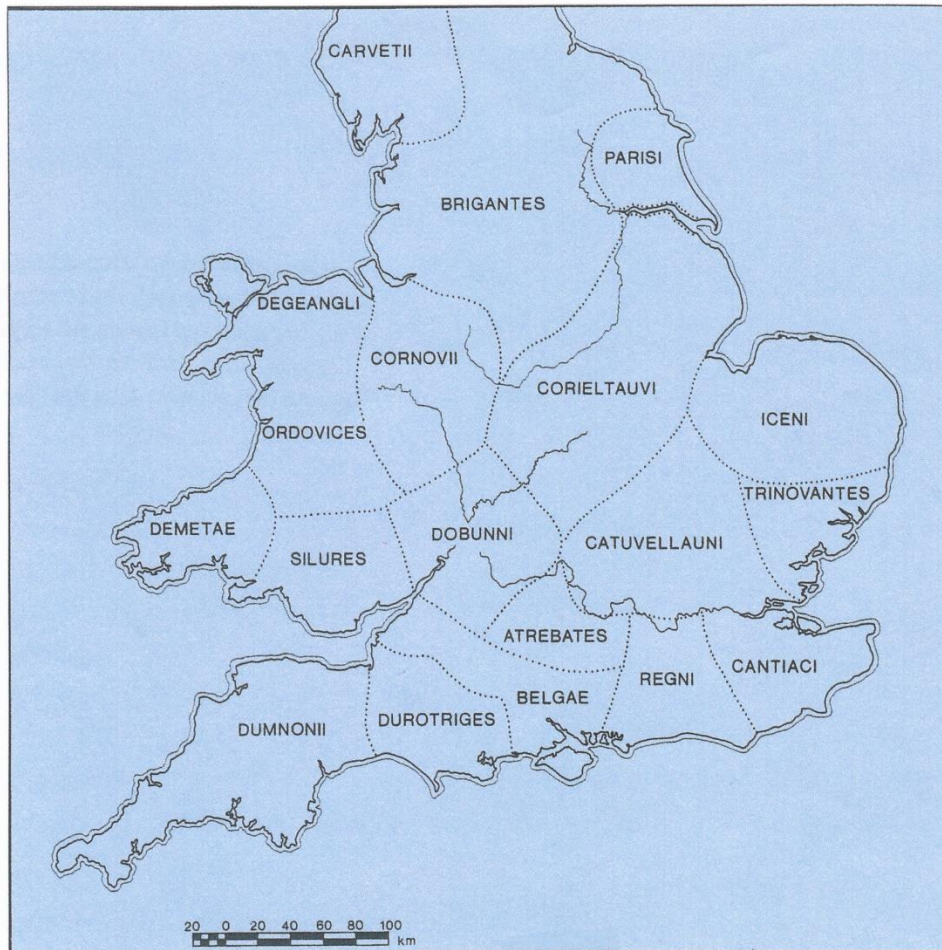
Names of native tribes thus: Brigantes

Scale 1:5 000 000





Continuing questions:
 —where to draw the line?
 —how much of Britannia was worth conquering?



Map showing the *civitates* into which Roman Britain was divided. These administrative districts were based on Roman understanding of the pre-Roman tribes. As such, they fossilized the geography of the province as at the time of the invasion.

Forties AD

-  Client kingdoms
-  Roman occupation



Brigantes

Cartimandua

Iceni

Prasutagus

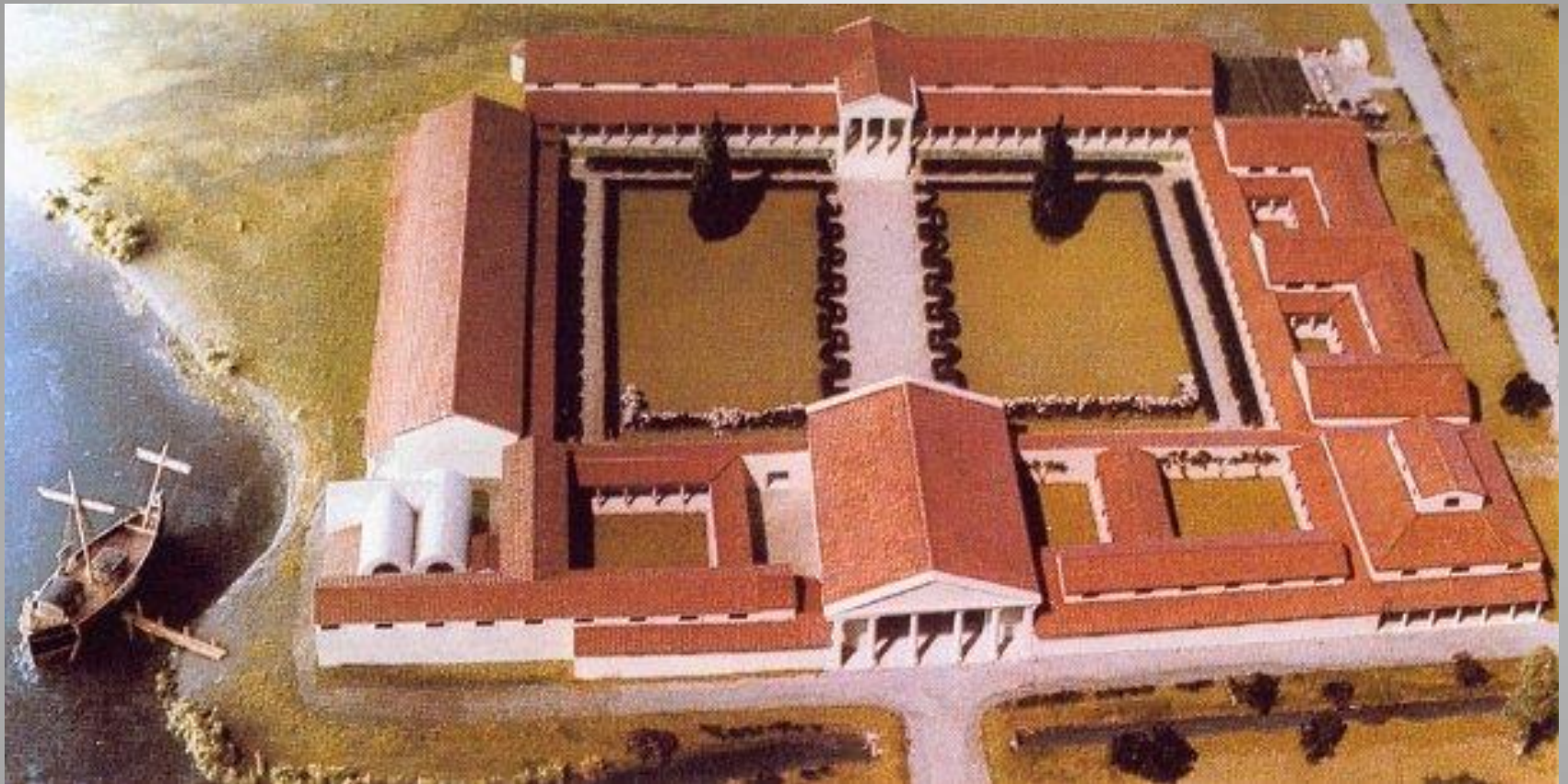
Cogidubnus

Atrebates

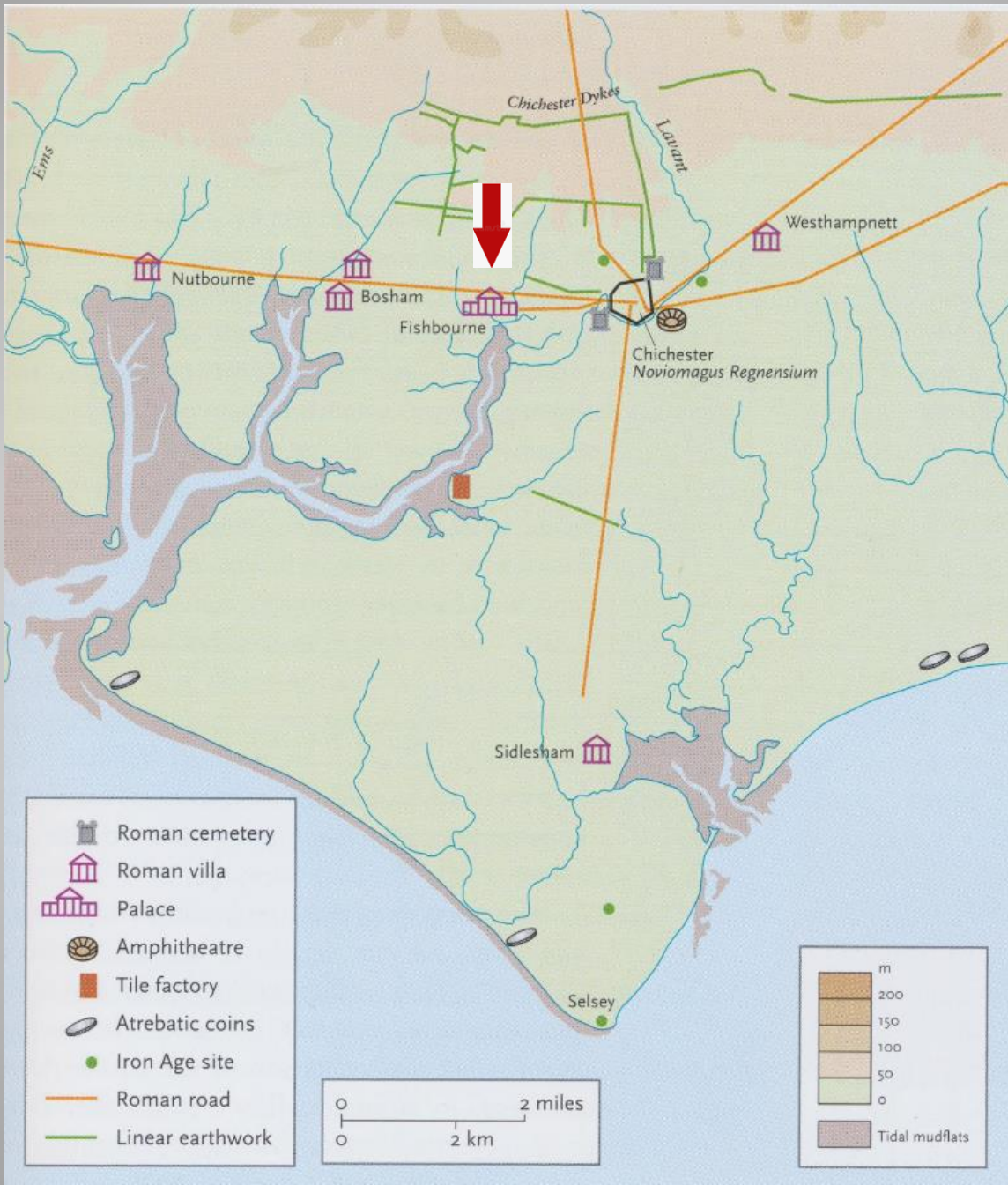
The most successful of the “client kings” was Cogidubnus of the Atrebates (or was it Togidubnus? The first two letters are missing on an inscription providing his name!). He was allowed to take the name “Tiberius Claudius Cogidubnus.”



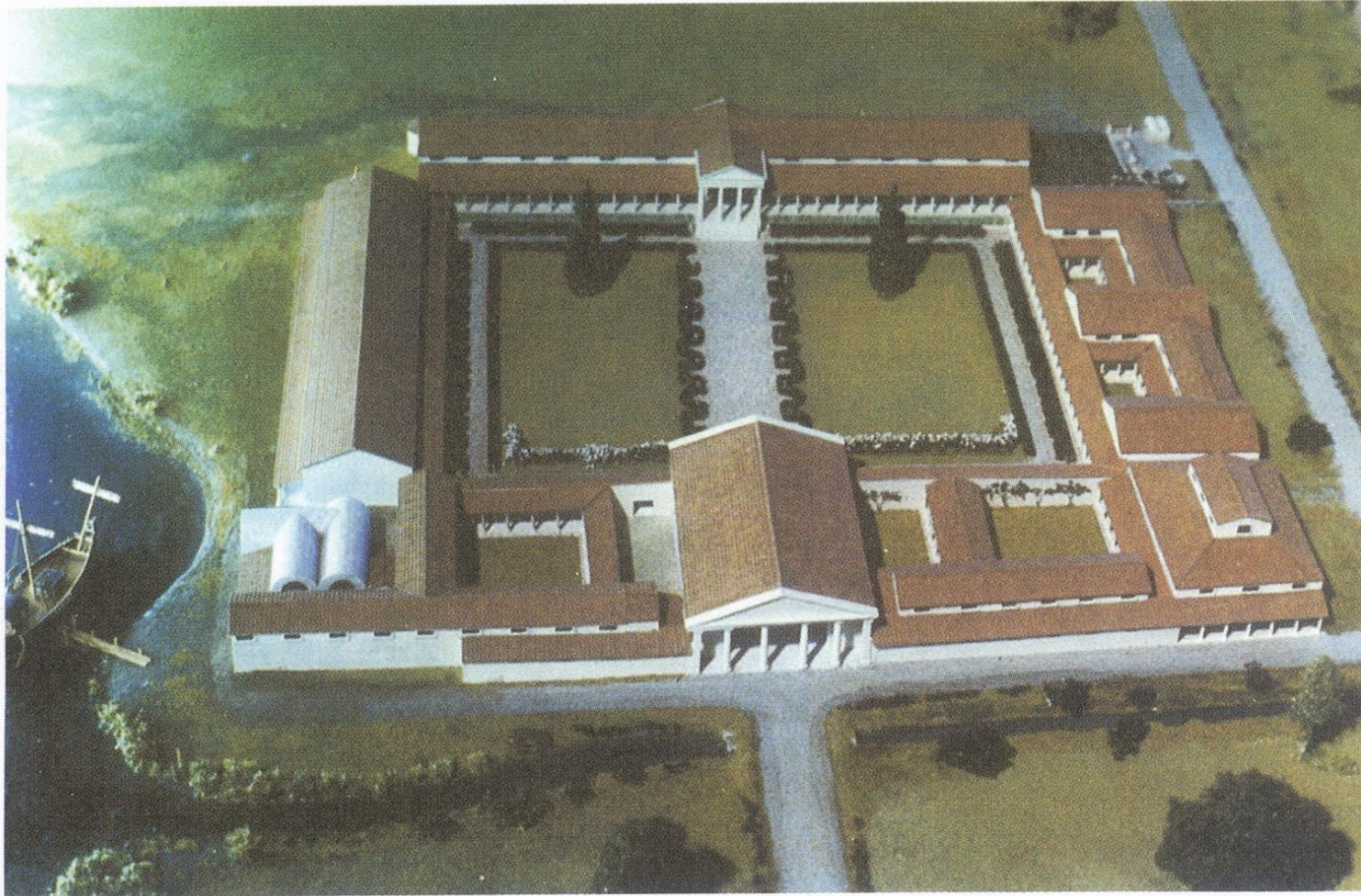
He was unswervingly loyal to Rome during his long reign, and the huge palace at Fishbourne may well have been his residence.



Fishbourne is the largest Roman palace north of the Alps....larger than today's Buckingham Palace.



26. The palace at Fishbourne (West Sussex), as it may have looked in about AD 75. (Fishbourne Roman Palace/Sussex Archaeological Society)

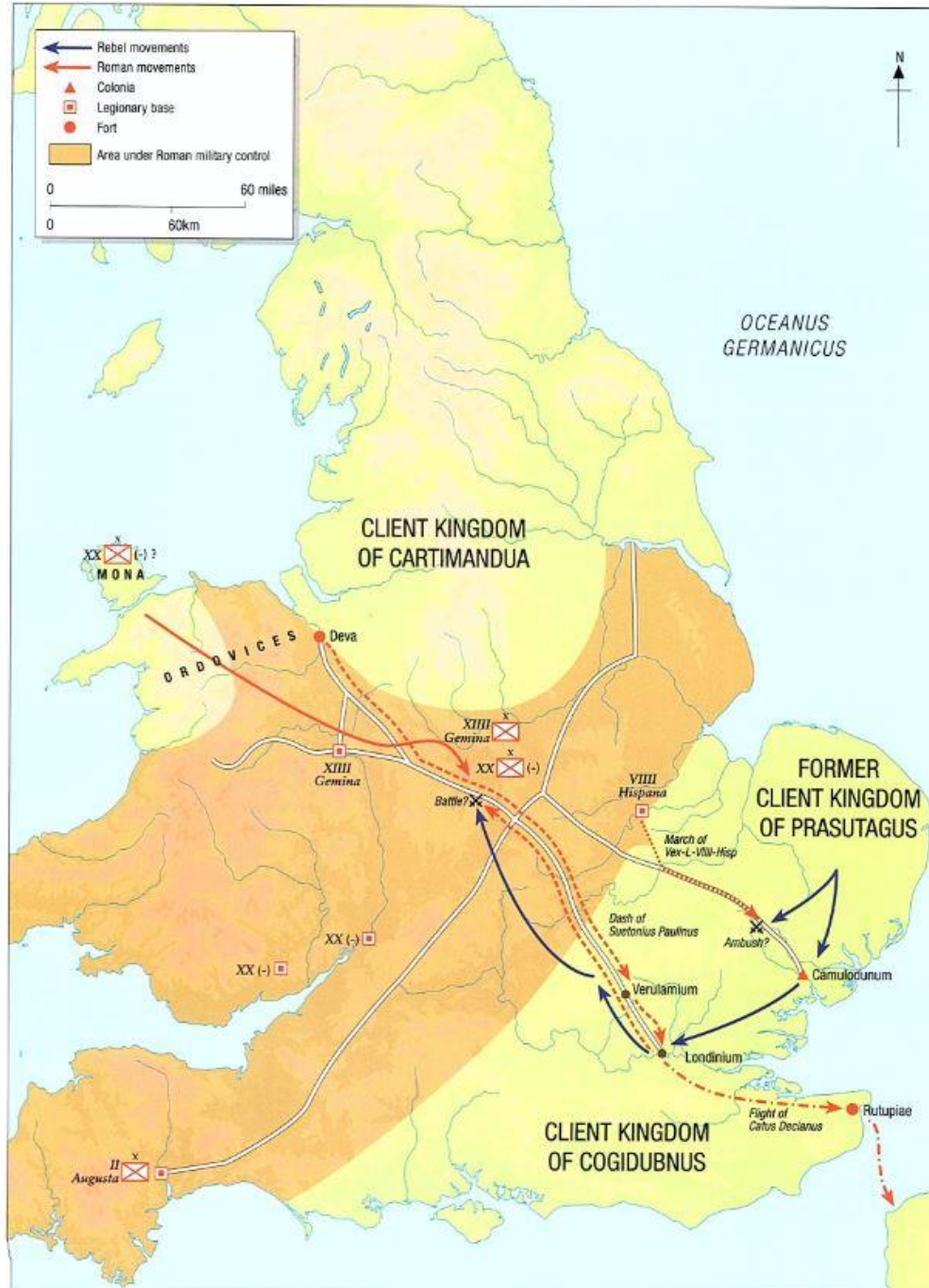


Cogidubnus' loyalty was to be essential to the maintenance of Roman rule in Britannia.....

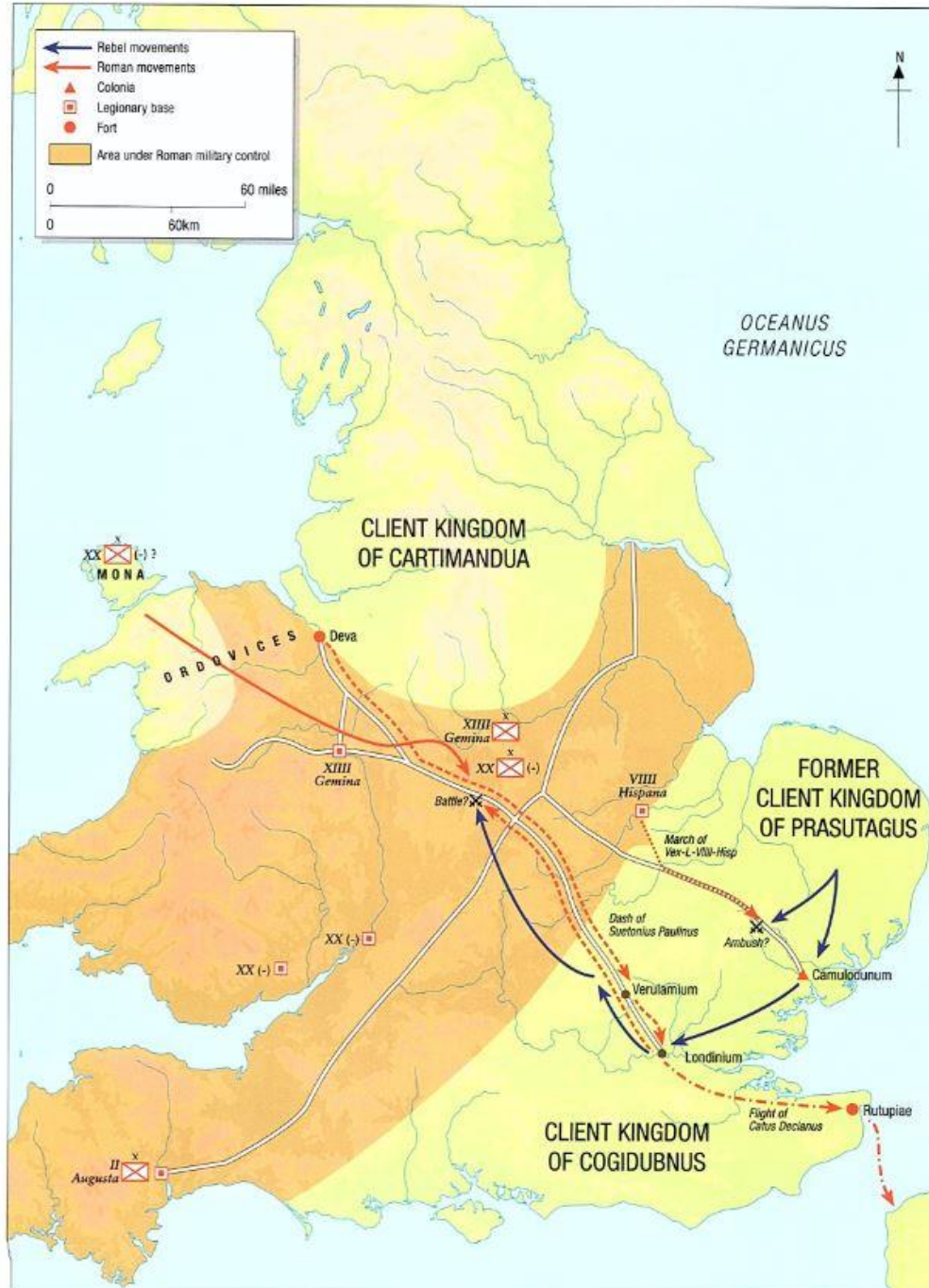


....when the rebellion of the Iceni under Boudica broke out in AD 60.

The Boudiccan rebellion



The Boudiccan rebellion



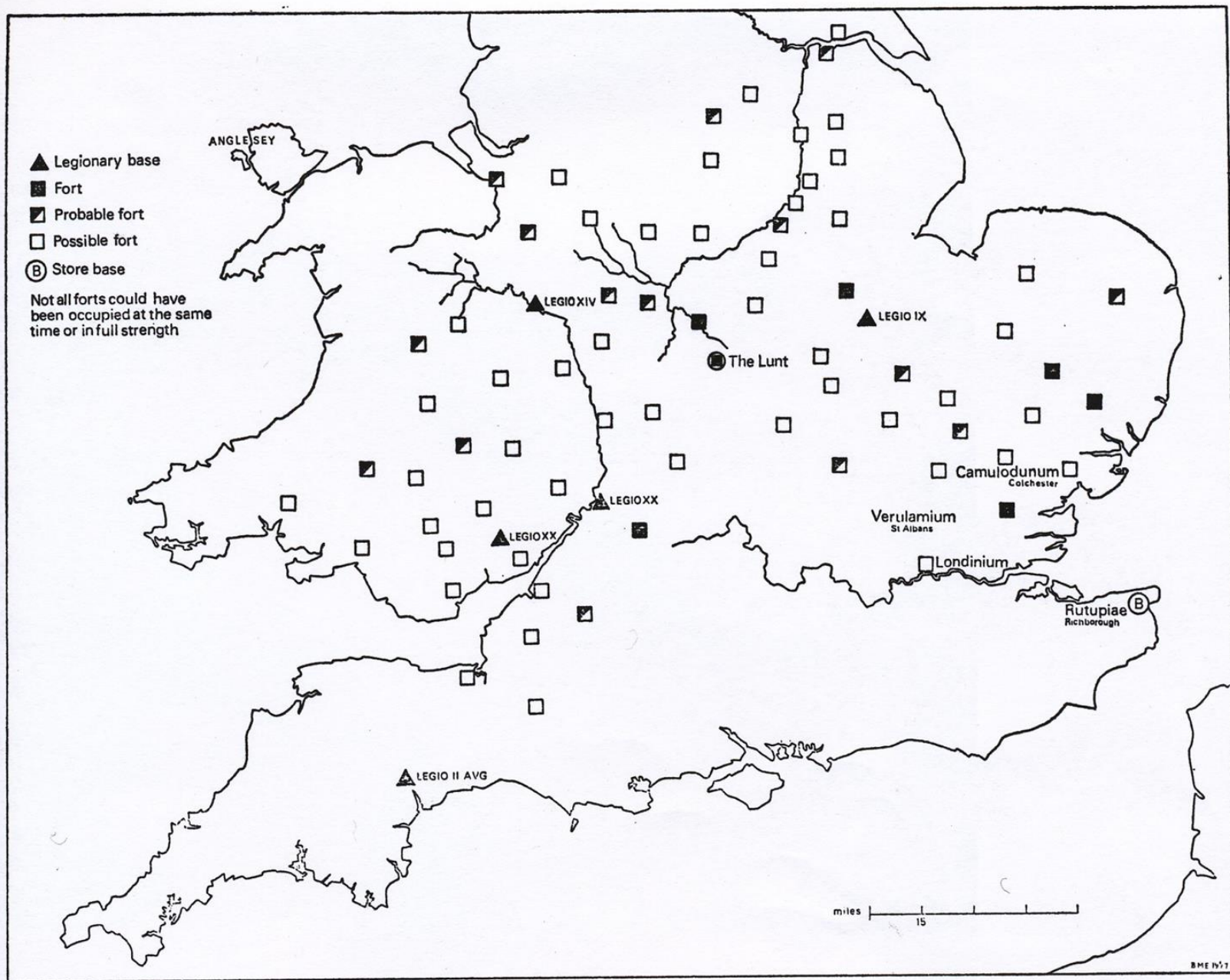
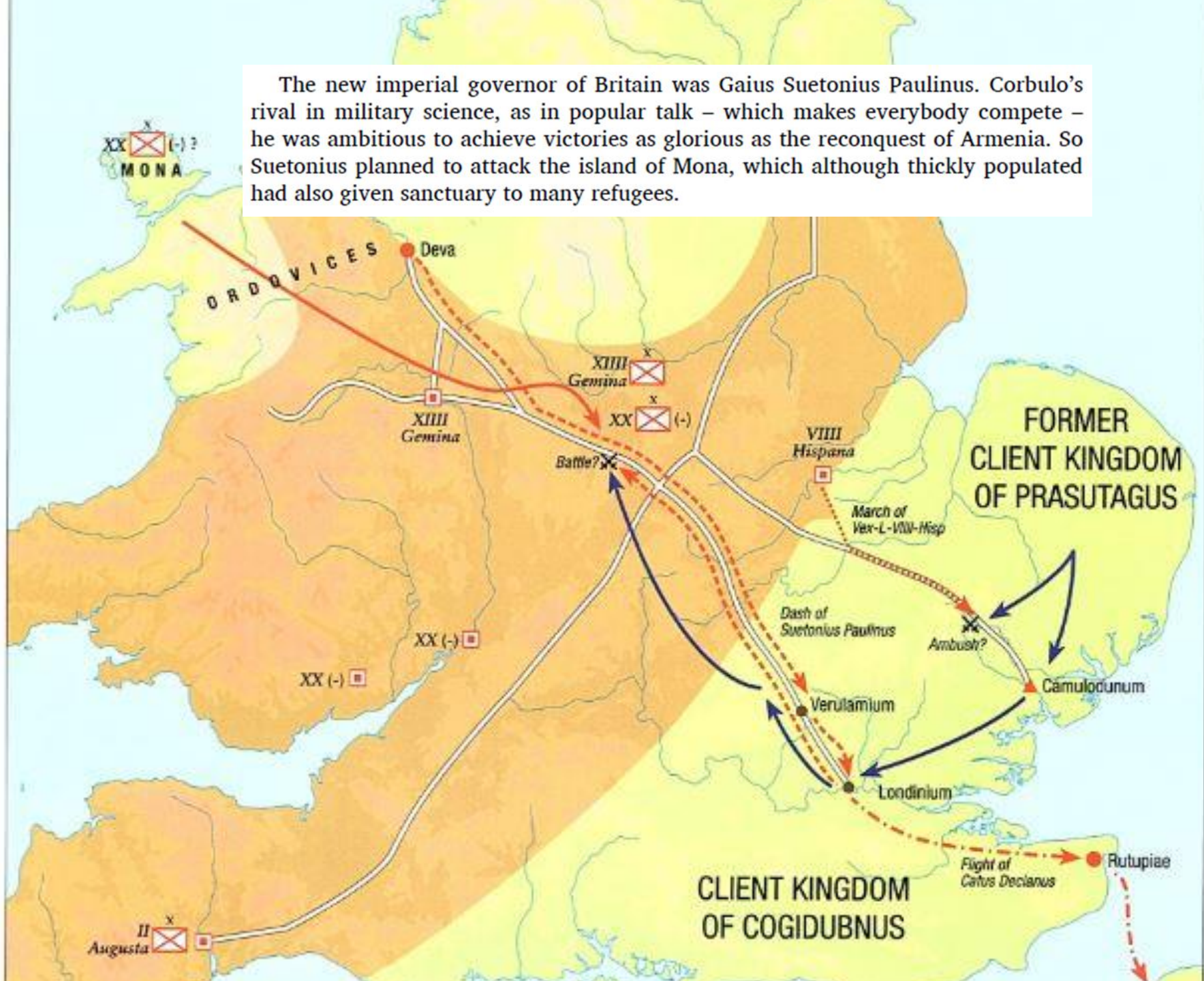
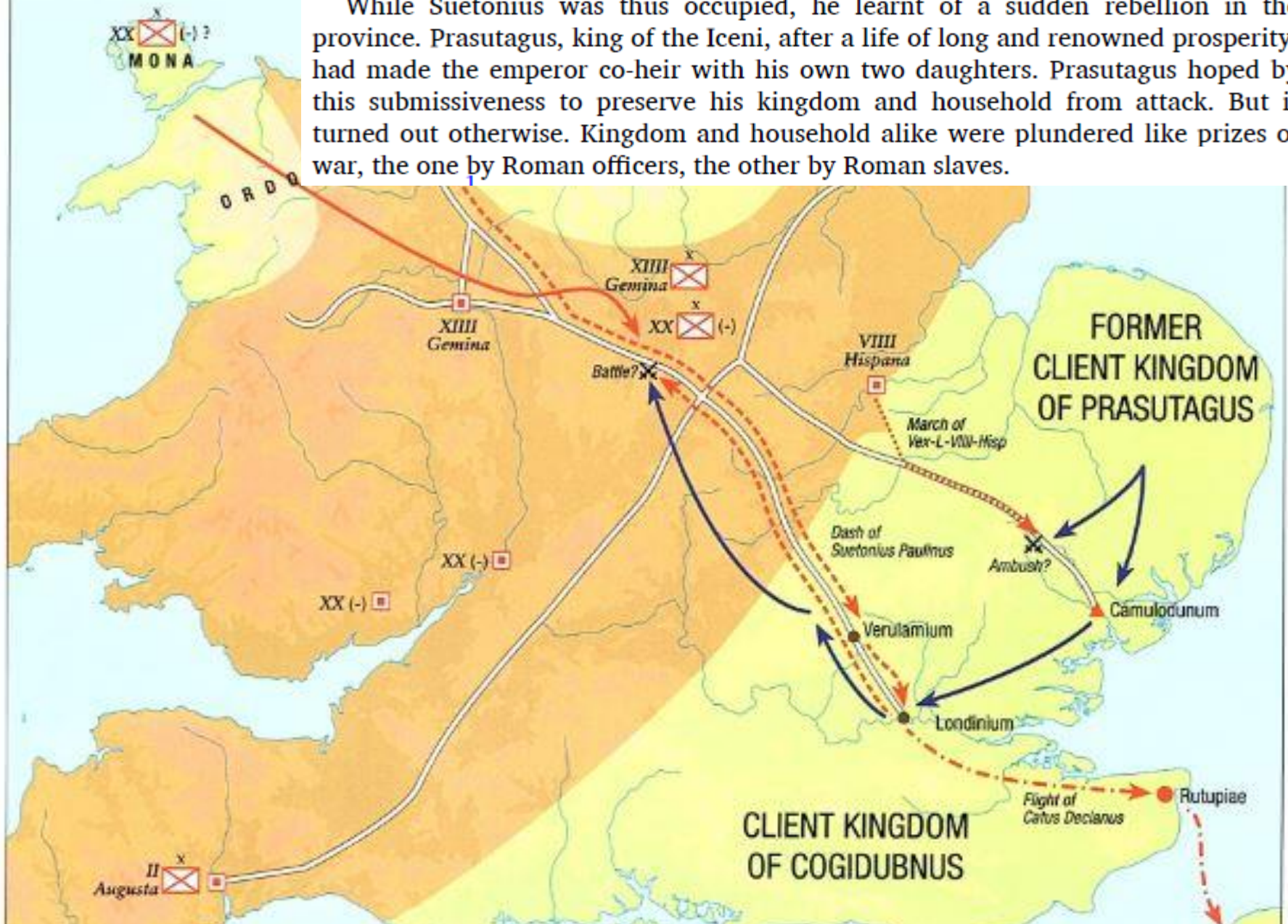


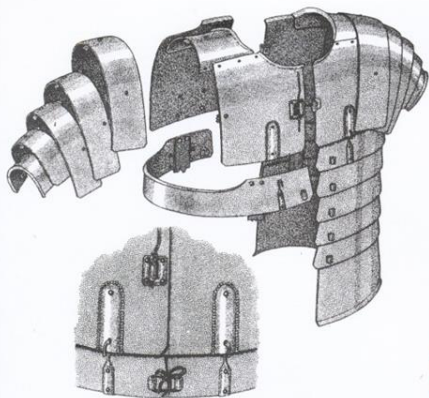
Fig. 4 Military dispositions under Suetonius Paullinus

The new imperial governor of Britain was Gaius Suetonius Paulinus. Corbulo's rival in military science, as in popular talk – which makes everybody compete – he was ambitious to achieve victories as glorious as the reconquest of Armenia. So Suetonius planned to attack the island of Mona, which although thickly populated had also given sanctuary to many refugees.



While Suetonius was thus occupied, he learnt of a sudden rebellion in the province. Prasutagus, king of the Iceni, after a life of long and renowned prosperity, had made the emperor co-heir with his own two daughters. Prasutagus hoped by this submissiveness to preserve his kingdom and household from attack. But it turned out otherwise. Kingdom and household alike were plundered like prizes of war, the one by Roman officers, the other by Roman slaves.





1st Century AD Legionary

A common soldier of c AD 75-100 is shown here. His helmet is of the type known as "Imperial-Gallic" and his armour is of the segmented style which came into service around AD 30-40. The *scutum* now has straight sides.

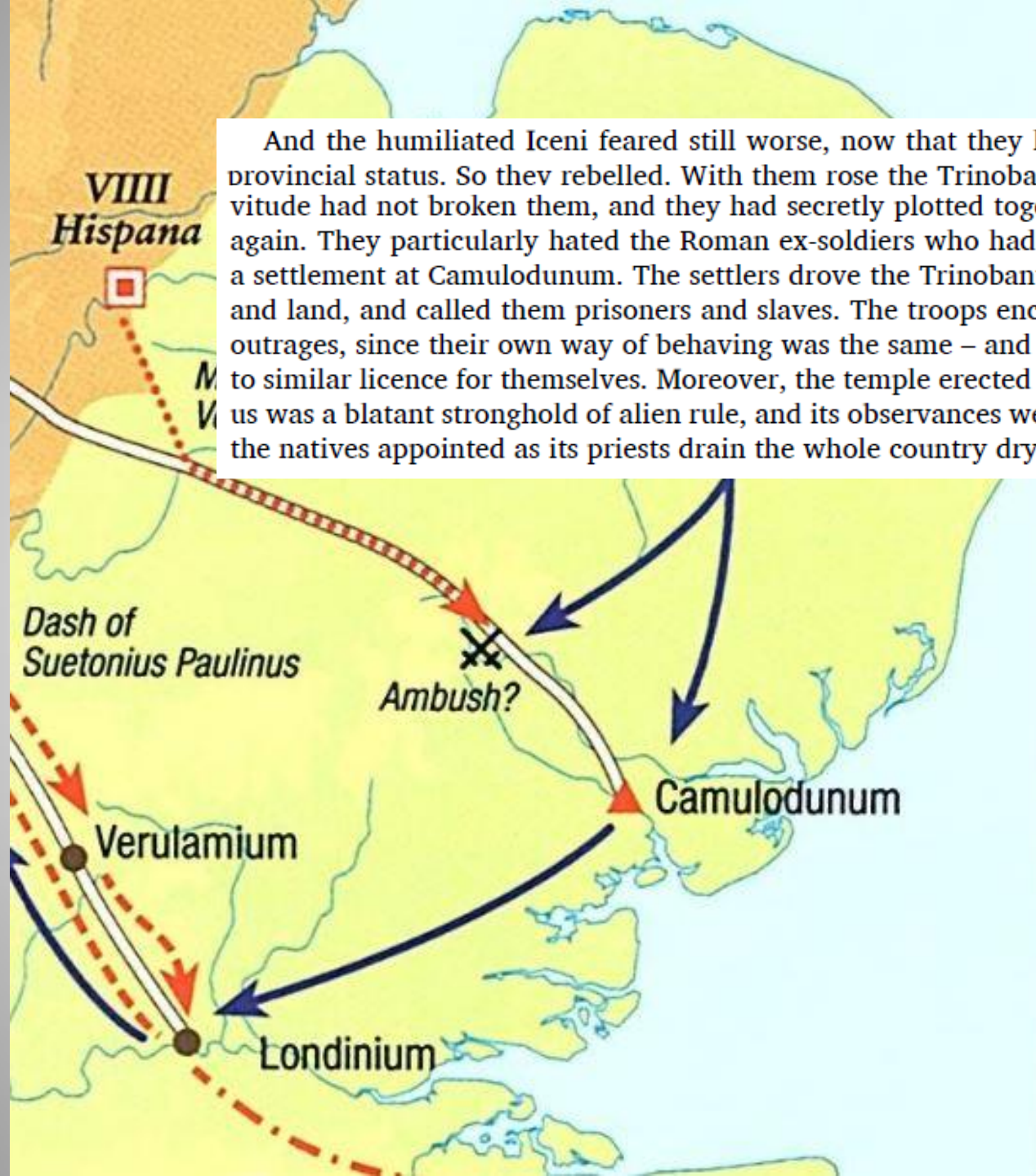
The design is one of those shown on Trajan's Column, and is probably that of a Praetorian guard cohort. The two *pila* are of the weighted variety introduced before AD 80. The *gladius* has been slightly modified and now has parallel sides and a short point. The conventional woollen tunic and *caligae* are worn, together with a scarf to prevent the neck-plates chafing. Scarves quickly became fashionable with the auxiliaries, even though they wore mail armour, not the plated sort. The *cingulum* is still worn, but the belt fittings are now less elaborate. This trend towards simplification was to continue in the second century, with decorated studs disappearing, the *cingulum* growing shorter, and eventually being replaced by *pteruges* and the armour becoming simpler. The legionaries also began to wear breeches beneath their tunics like the auxiliaries. The figure is shown wearing the early type of segmented armour, with elaborate bronze hinges and strap-and-buckle fastenings.

Lorica Segmentata (above)
The drawing shows the simpler "Newstead" type of armour in use from c AD 75-80. The bronze hinges have been replaced by simple rivets, and the belt-and-buckle fastenings by strong hooks. The bottom two girdle plates have been replaced by one wide plate. The individual plates, held together by internal leather straps can be clearly seen. The inset shows the front fastenings in detail. This type of armour was worn until the third century AD or later. It must be emphasised that obsolescence as we know it did not exist in ancient times and earlier styles of armour also remained in service in parallel with this type.

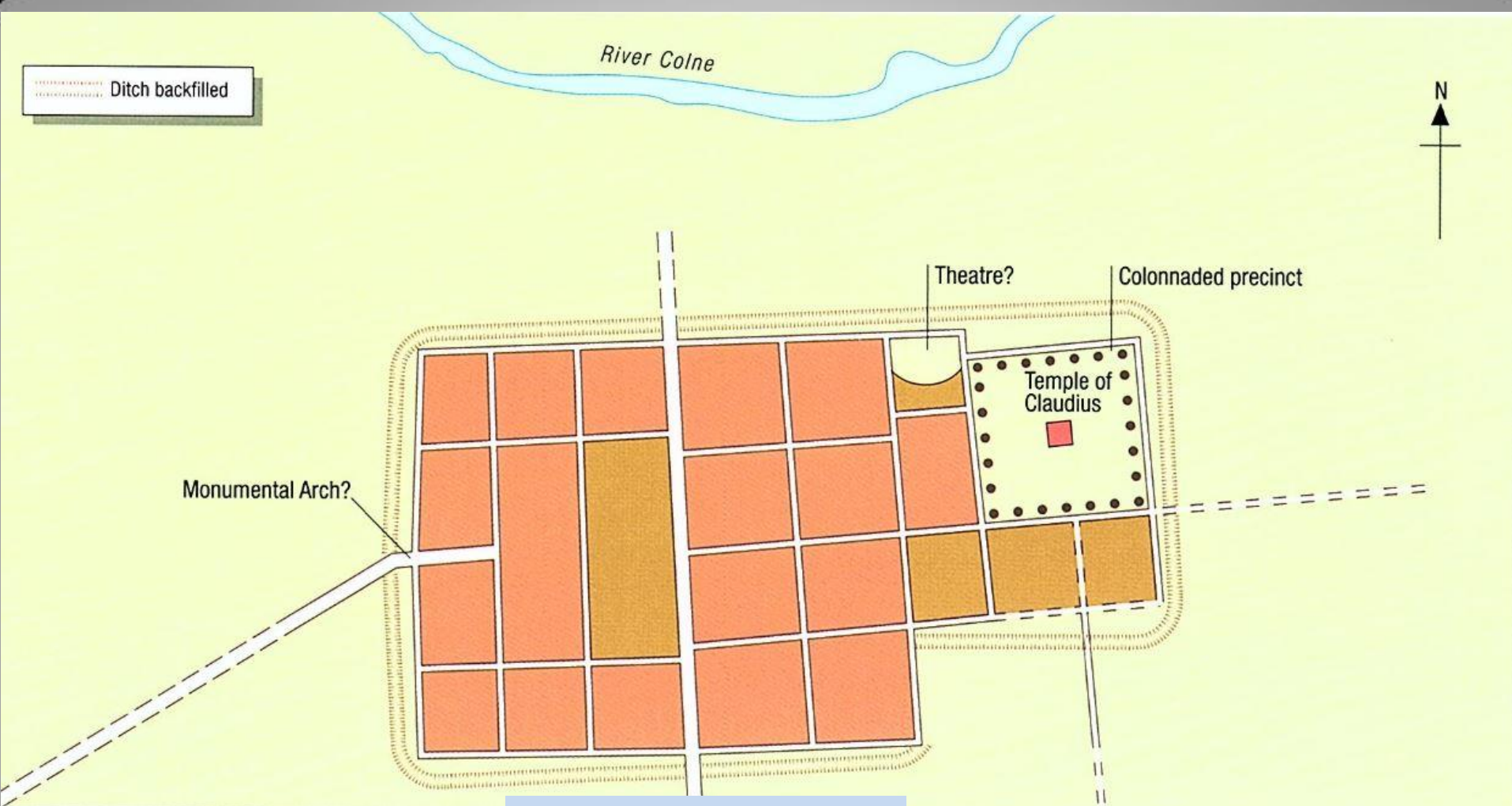




Kingdom and household alike were plundered like prizes of war, the one by Roman officers, the other by Roman slaves. As a beginning, his widow Boudicca¹ was flogged and their daughters raped. The Icenian chiefs were deprived of their hereditary estates as if the Romans had been given the whole country. The king's own relatives were treated like slaves.



And the humiliated Iceni feared still worse, now that they had been reduced to provincial status. So they rebelled. With them rose the Trinobantes and others. Servitude had not broken them, and they had secretly plotted together to become free again. They particularly hated the Roman ex-soldiers who had recently established a settlement at Camulodunum. The settlers drove the Trinobantes from their homes and land, and called them prisoners and slaves. The troops encouraged the settlers' outrages, since their own way of behaving was the same – and they looked forward to similar licence for themselves. Moreover, the temple erected to the divine Claudius was a blatant stronghold of alien rule, and its observances were a pretext to make the natives appointed as its priests drain the whole country dry.



Colchester, AD 60

Suetonius, however, was far away. So they appealed for help to the imperial agent Catus Decianus. He sent them barely two hundred men, incompletely armed. There was also a small garrison on the spot. Reliance was placed on the temple's protection. Misled by secret prorebels, who hampered their plans, they dispensed with rampart or trench. They omitted also to evacuate old people and women and thus leave only fighting men behind. Their precautions were appropriate to a time of unbroken peace.

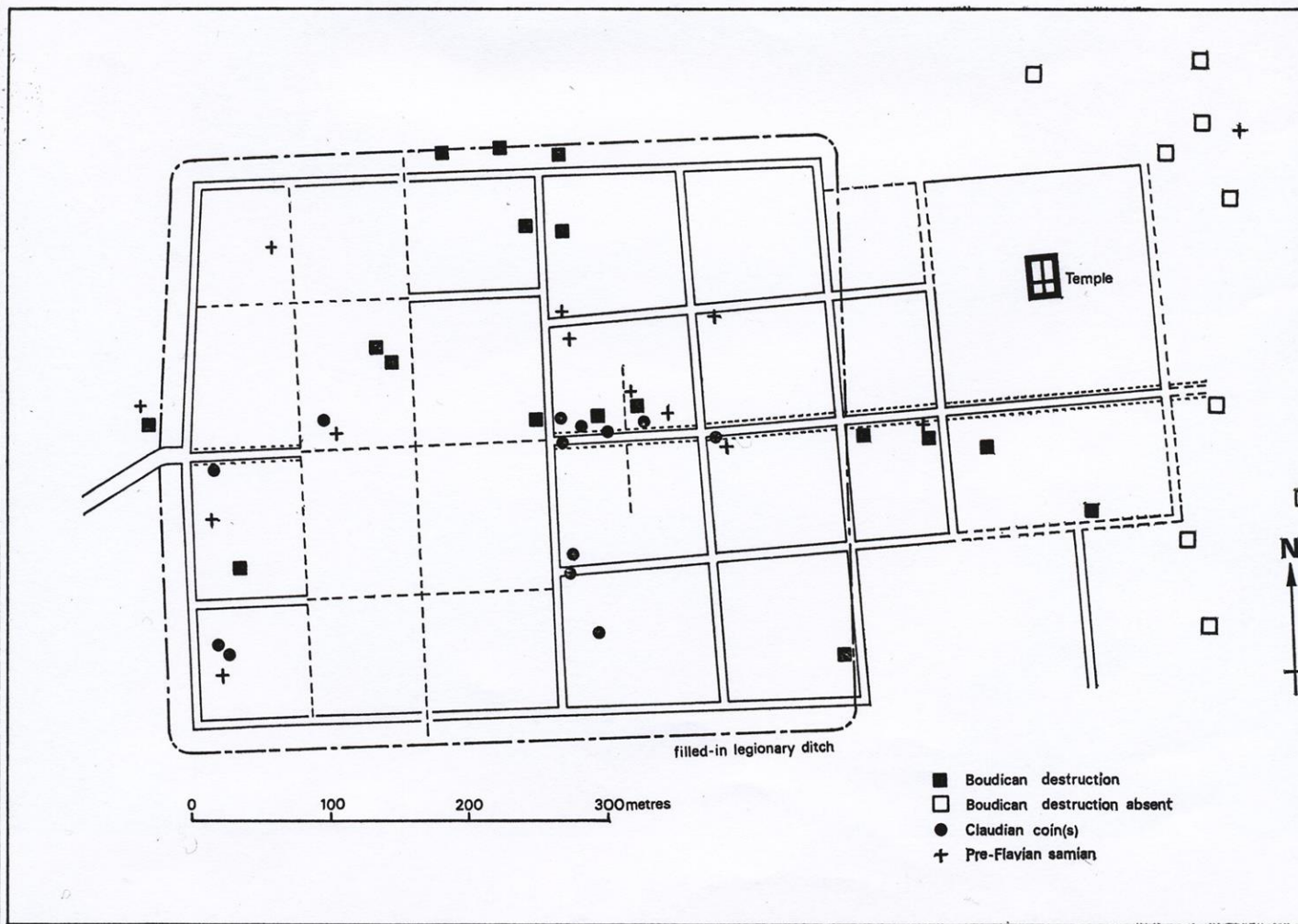
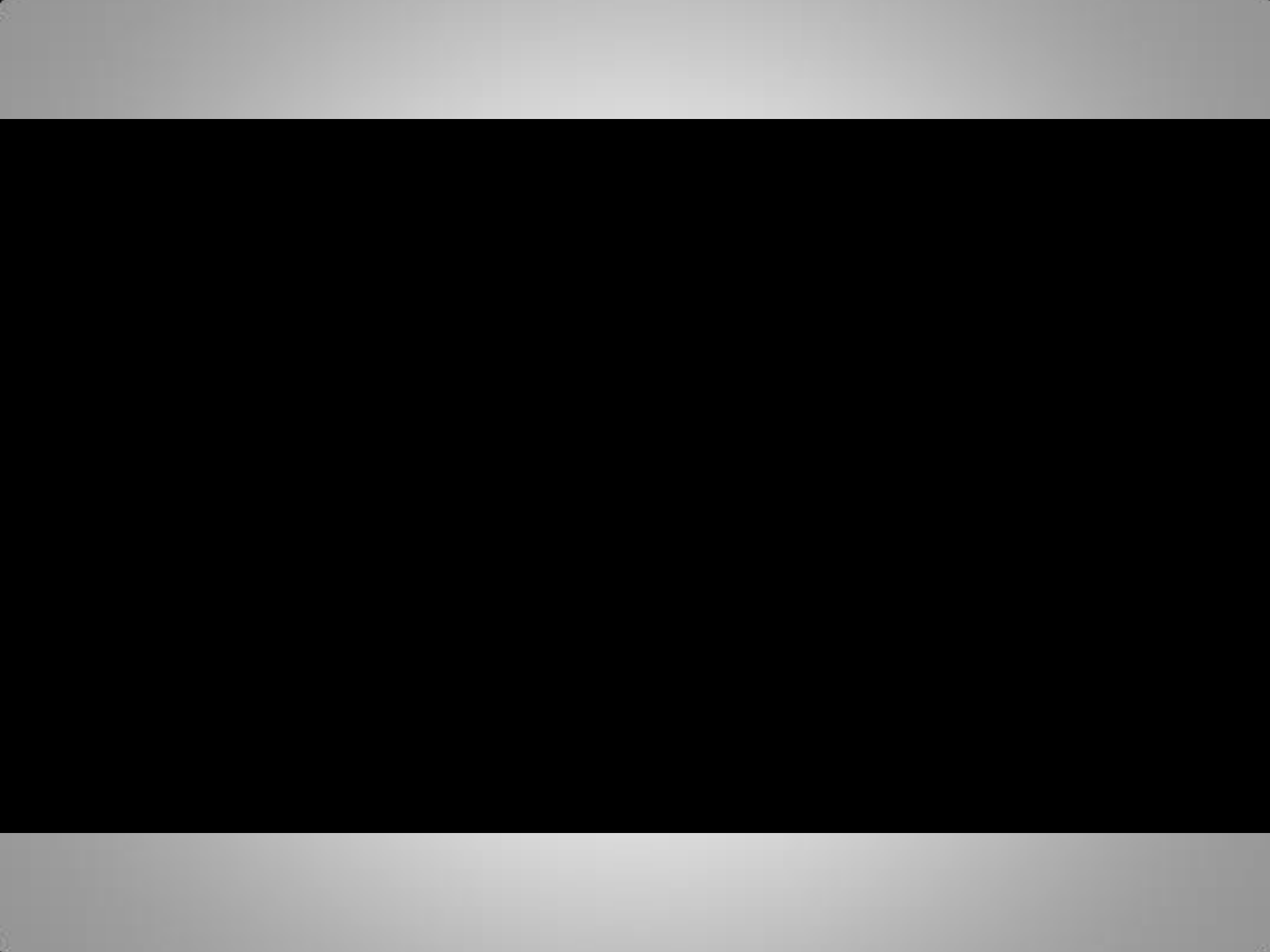


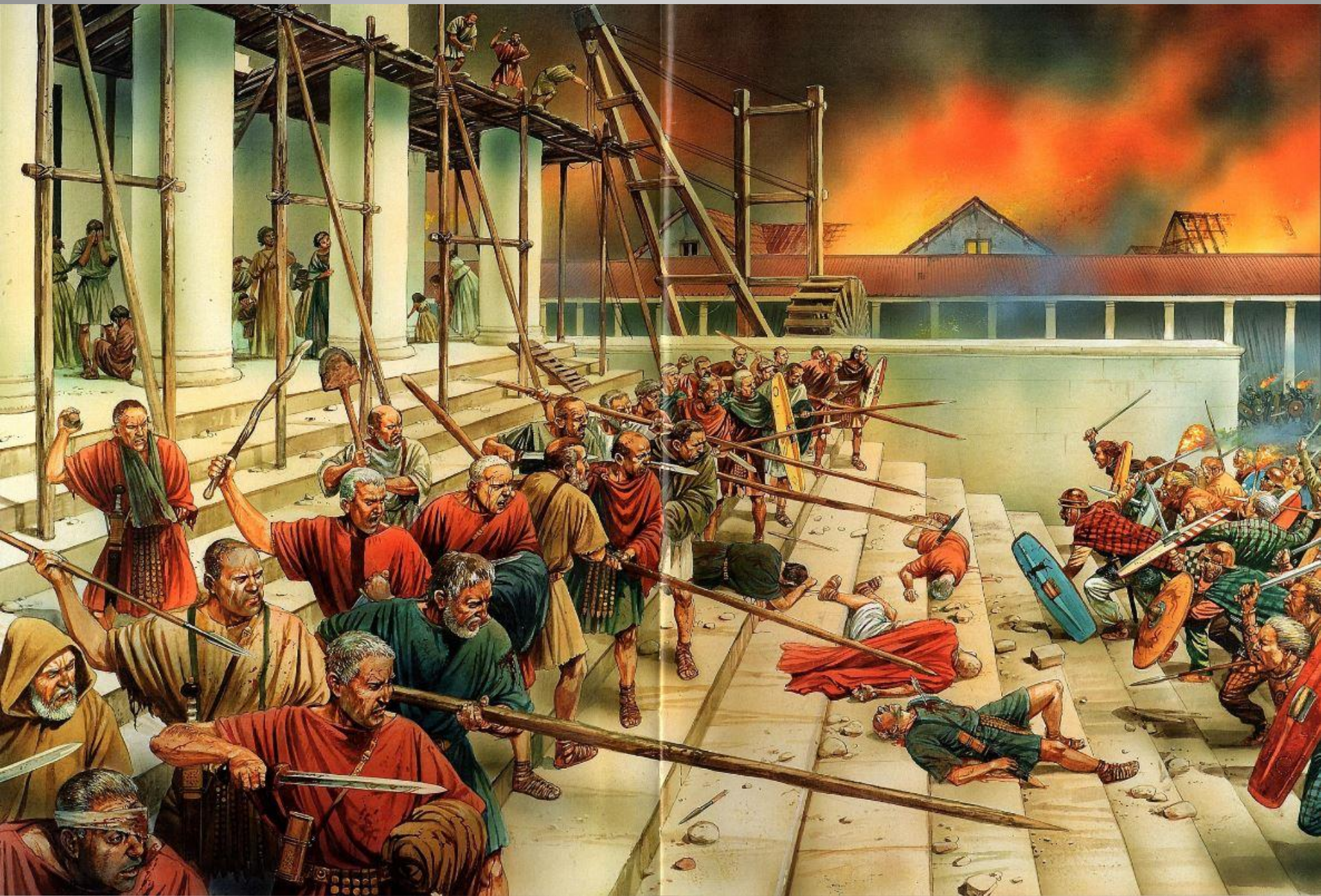
Fig. 7 Roman Colchester: the evidence of the Revolt

Then a native horde surrounded them. When all else had been ravaged or burnt, the garrison concentrated itself in the temple. After two days' siege, it fell by storm.

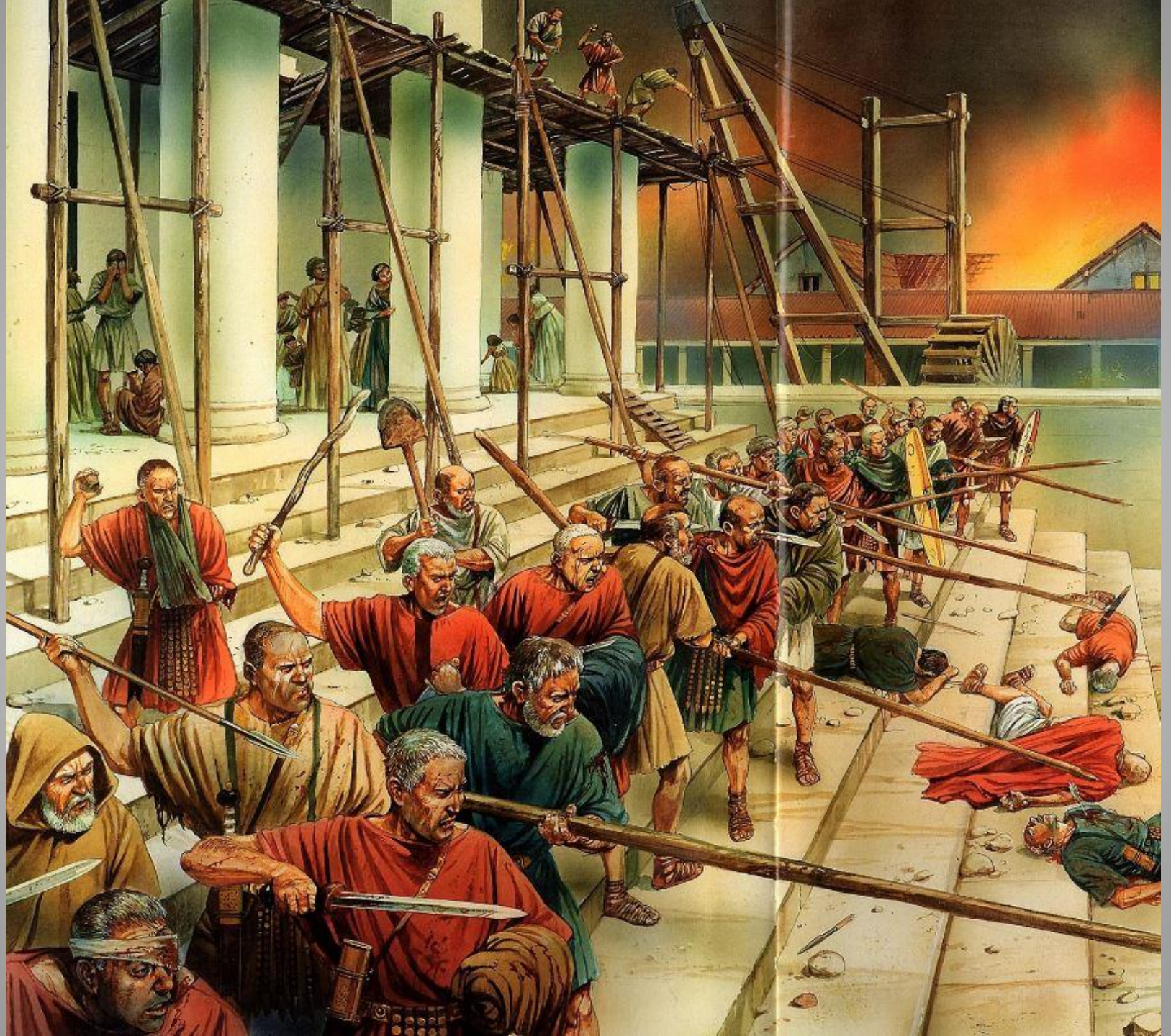


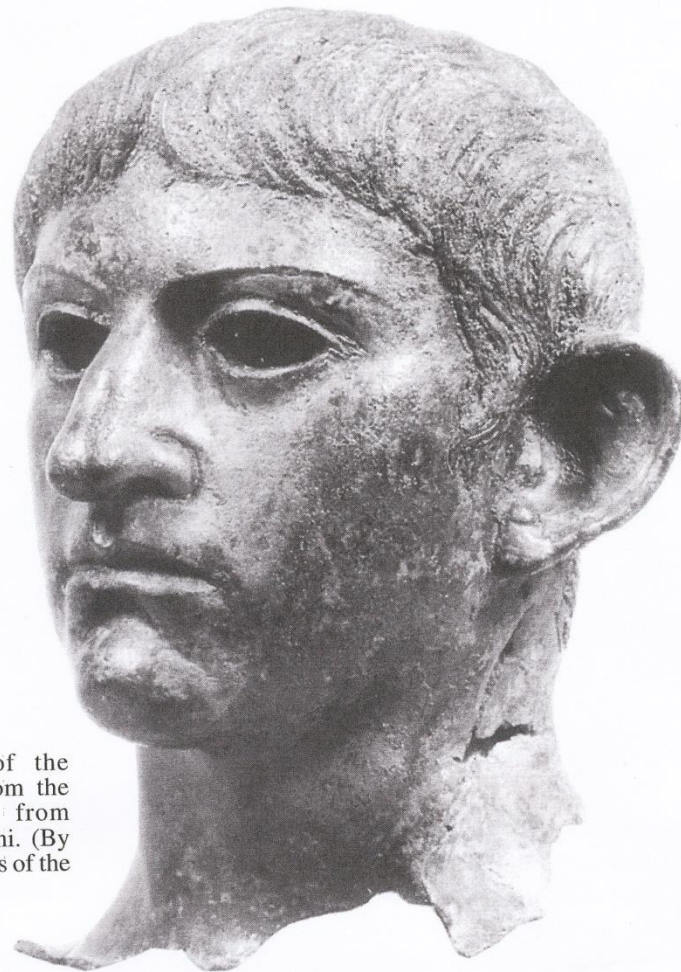


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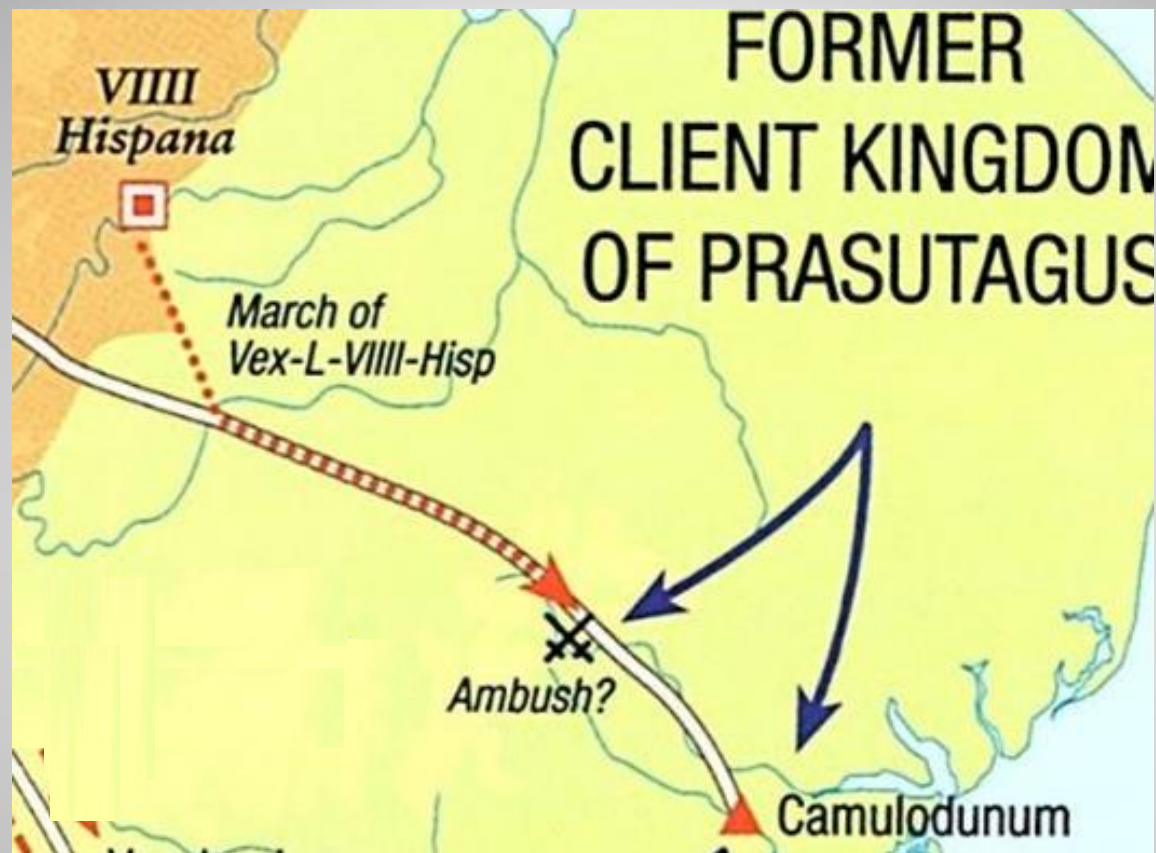




17. Bronze head of the emperor Claudius from the river Alde, looted from Colchester by the Iceni. (By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.)



15. The tombstone from Colchester of the Roman cavalry officer Longinus, smashed in the revolt. (Copyright Colchester Archaeological Trust.)

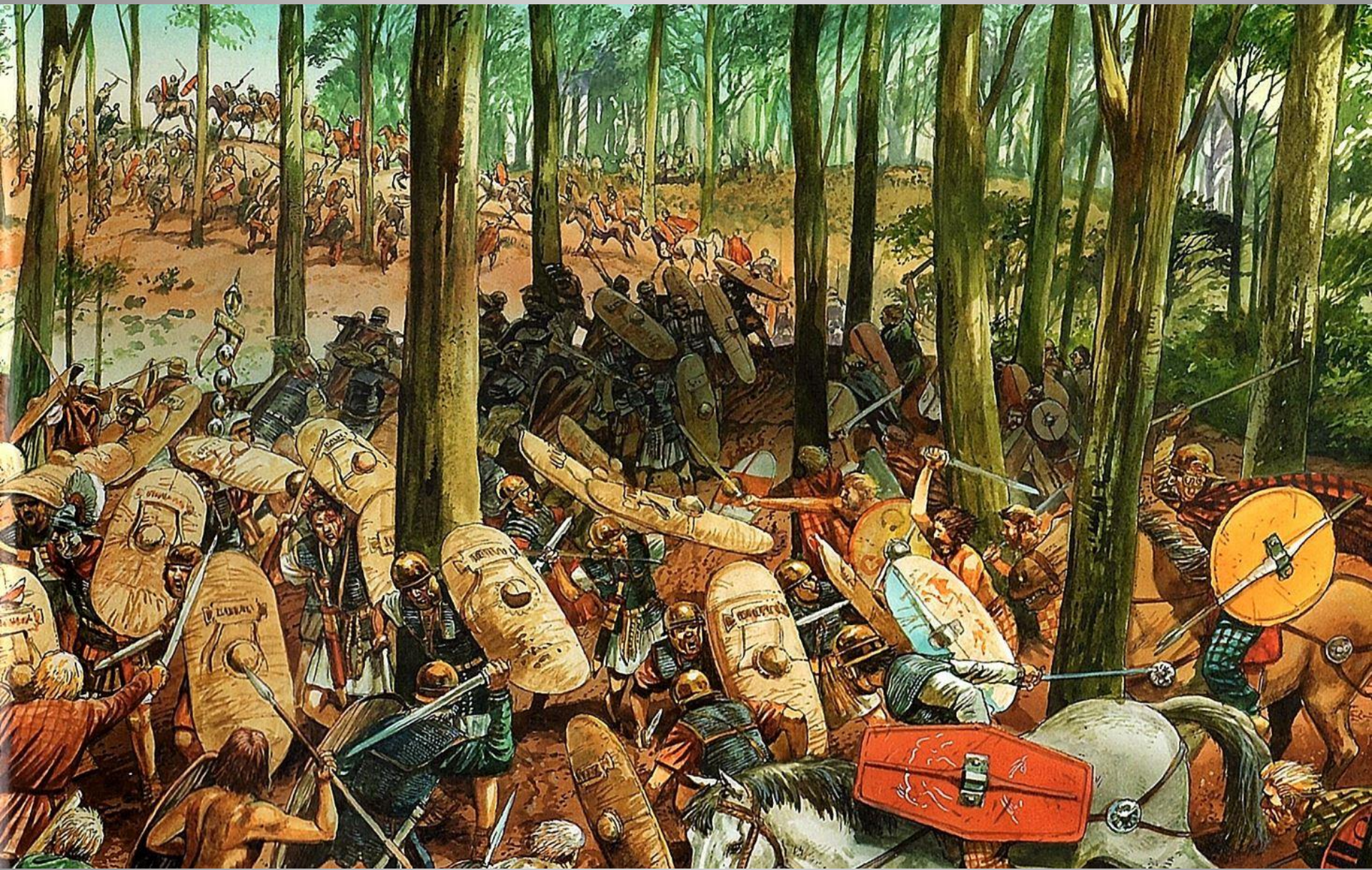


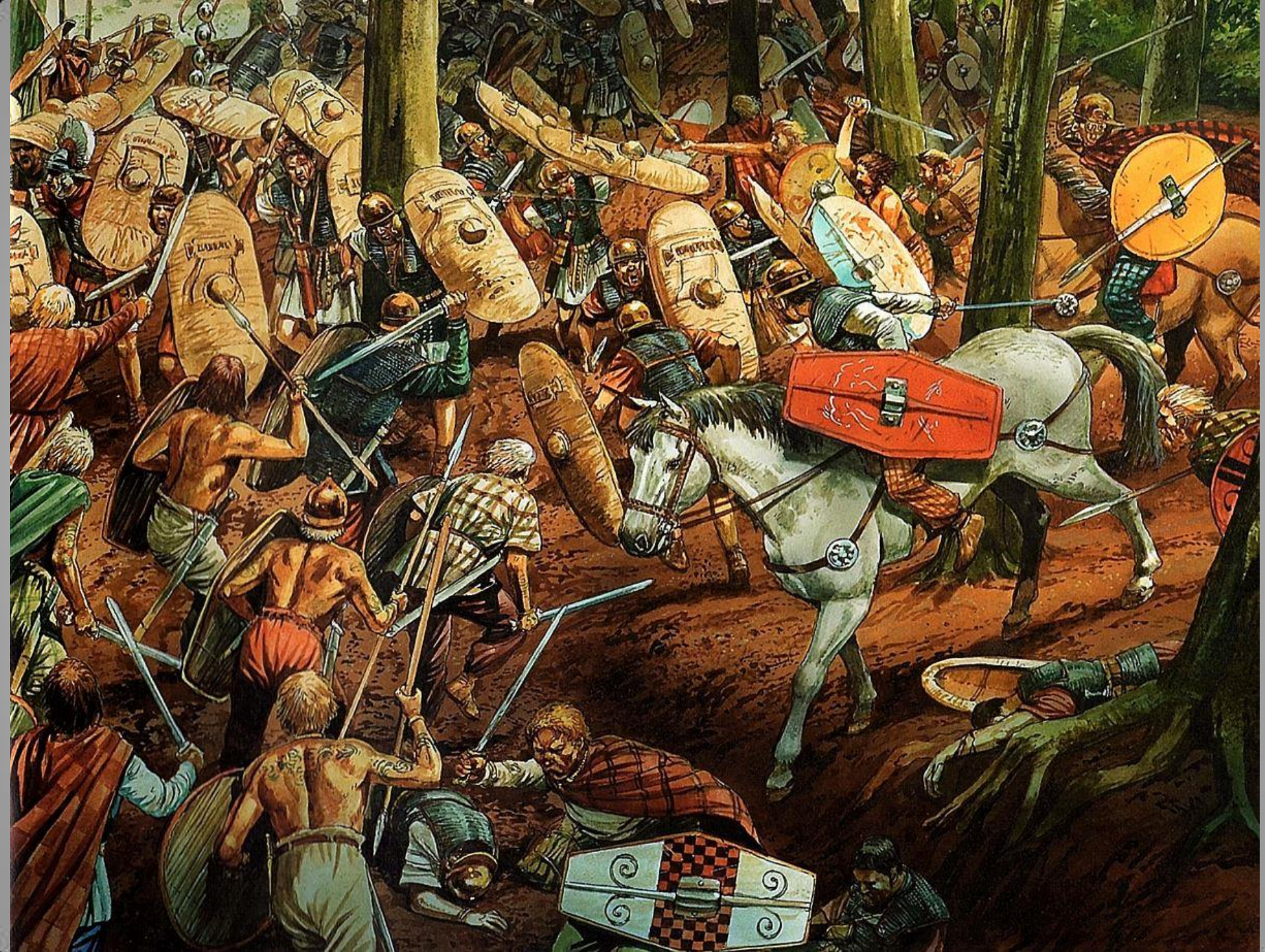
The ninth Roman division, commanded by Quintus Petilius Cerialis Caesius Rufus, attempted to relieve the town, but was stopped by the victorious Britons and routed. Its entire infantry force was massacred, while the commander escaped to his camp with his cavalry and sheltered behind its defences. The imperial agent Catus Decianus, horrified by the catastrophe and by his unpopularity, withdrew to Gaul. It was his rapacity which had driven the province to war.



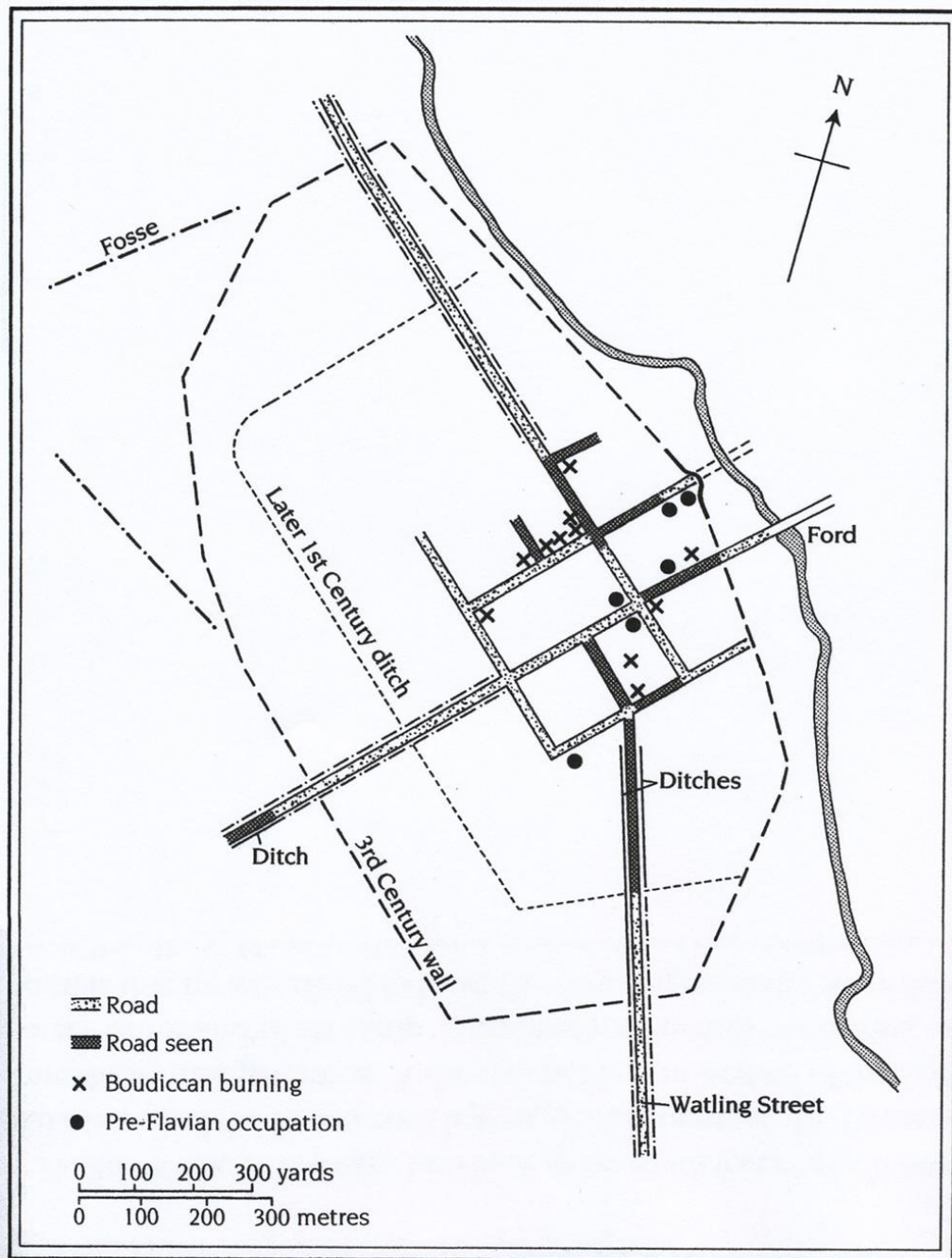




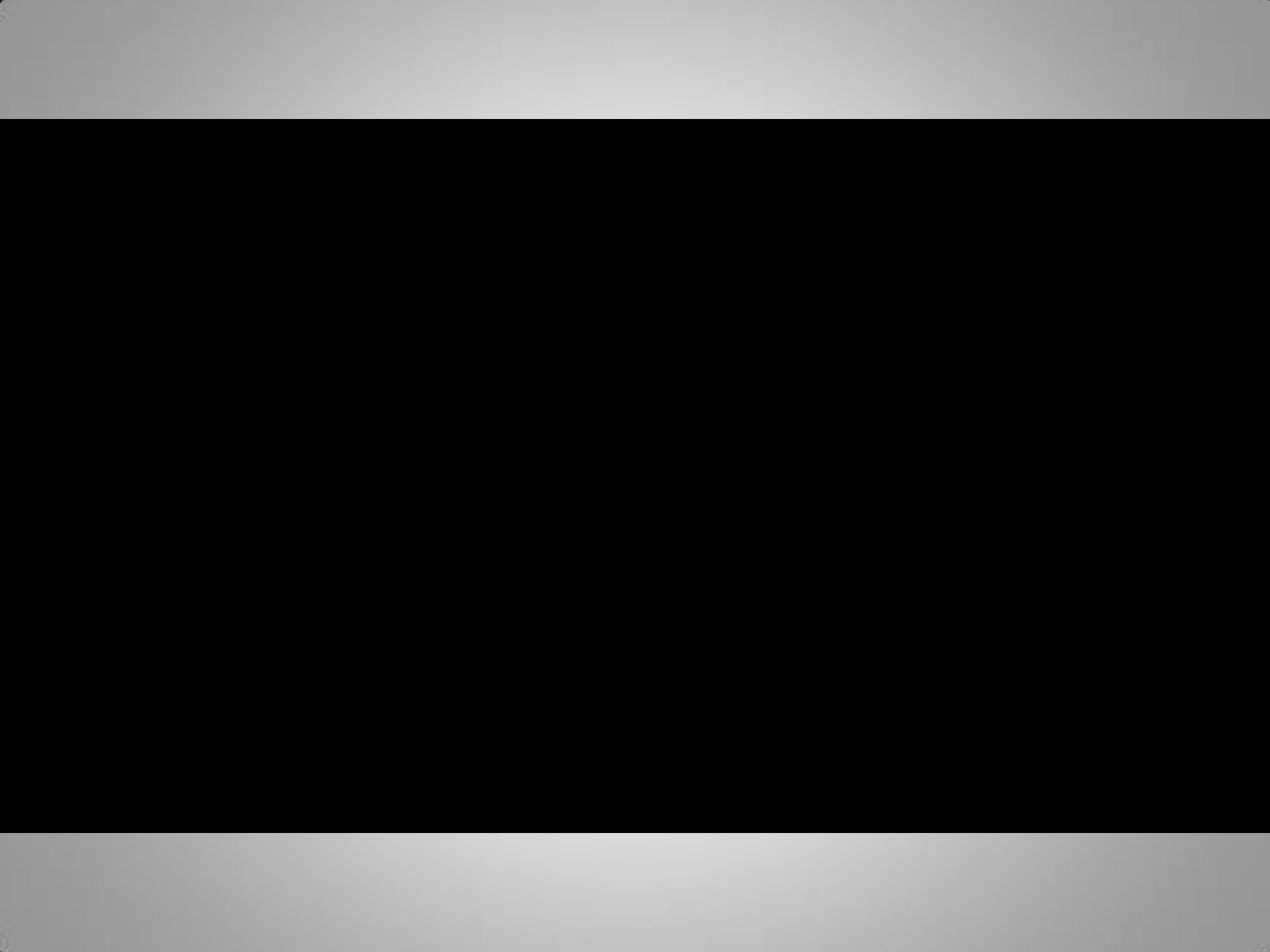




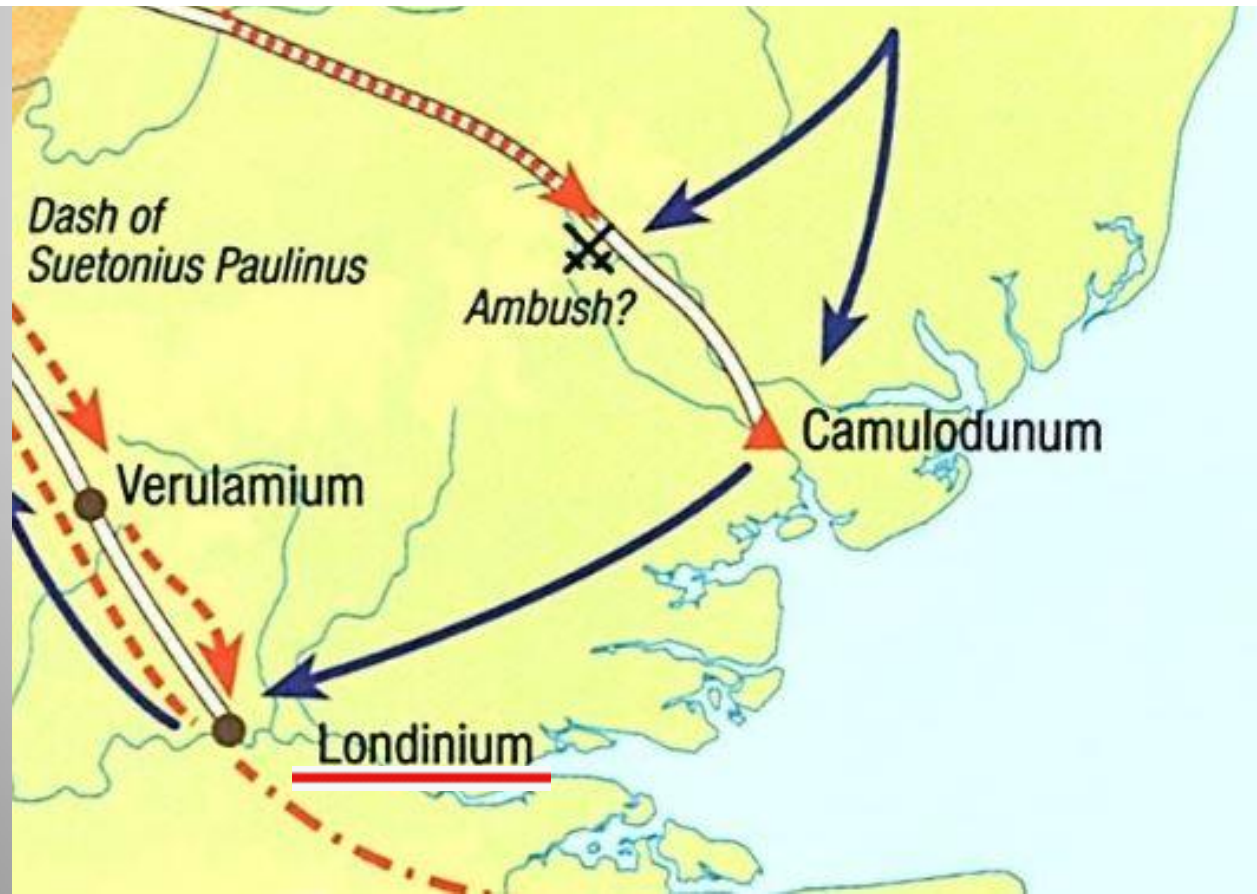




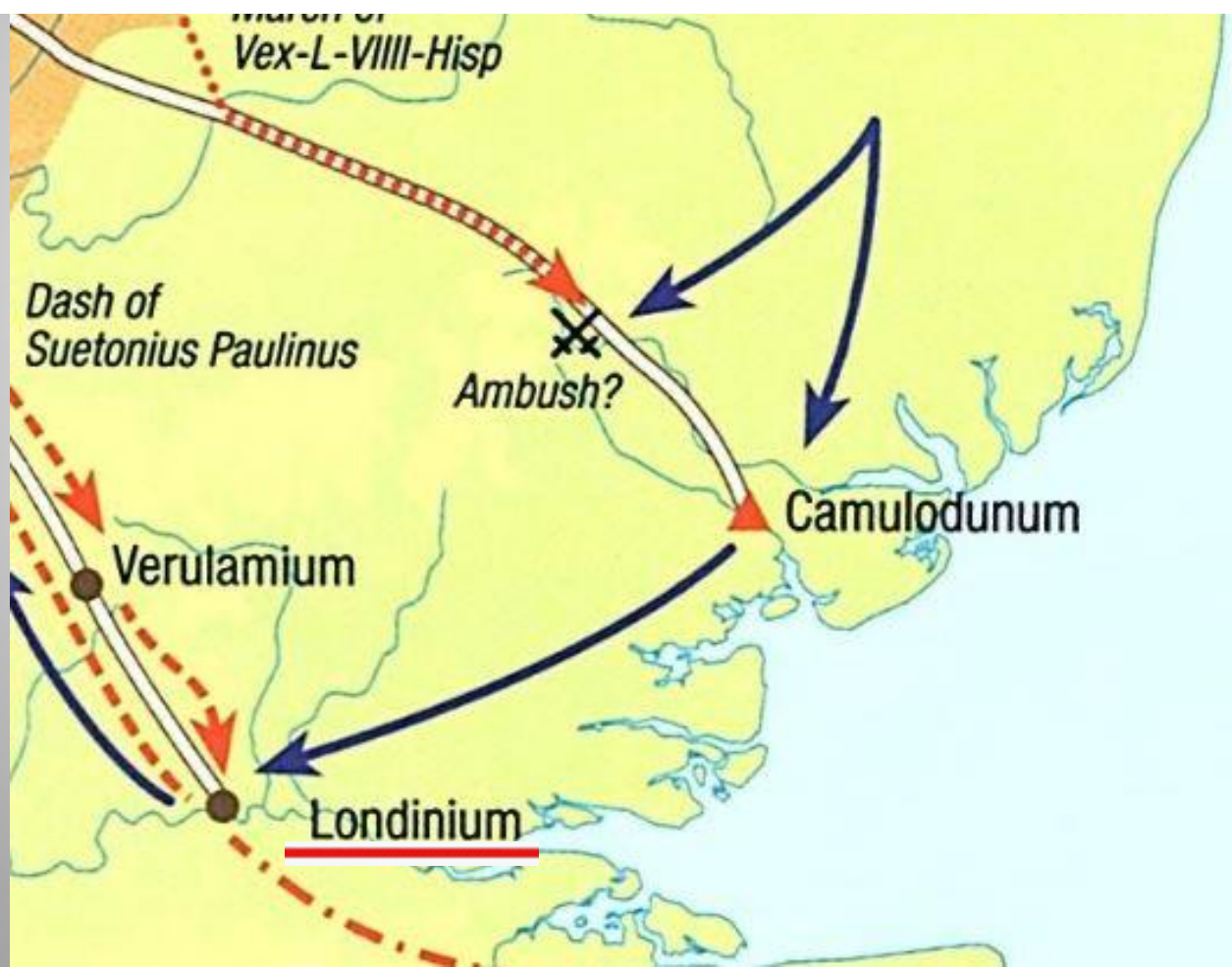
THE VERULAMIUM SACKED BY BOUDICCA is revealed by plotting finds from under the centre of the later city. The point where the roadside ditches of Watling Street cease indicates how far early Roman Verulamium extended towards London, since such ditches would not have been provided inside a built-up area.

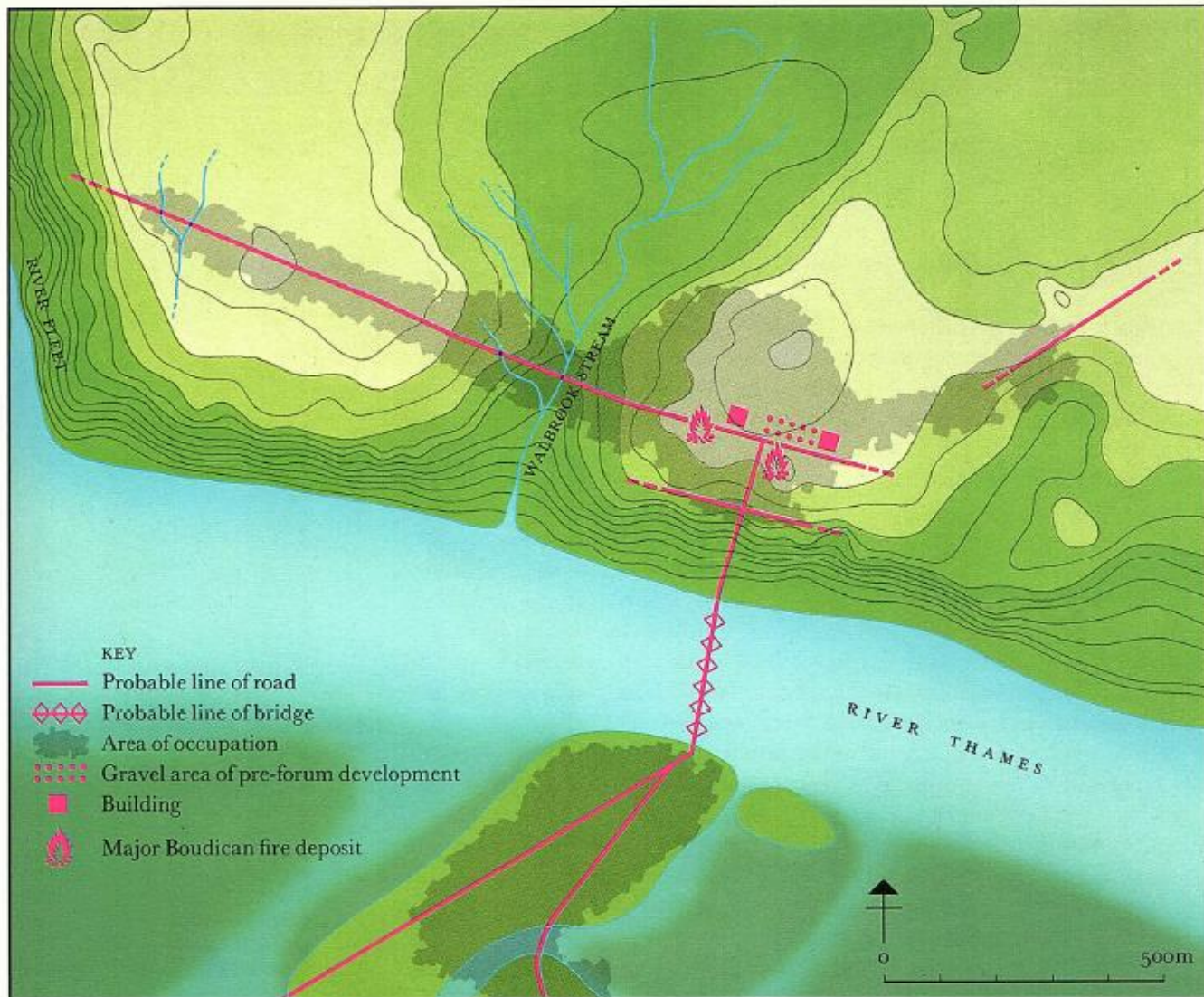


But Suetonius, undismayed, marched through disaffected territory to Londinium. This town did not rank as a Roman settlement, but was an important centre for business-men and merchandise. At first, he hesitated whether to stand and fight there. Eventually, his numerical inferiority – and the price only too clearly paid by the divisional commander's rashness – decided him to sacrifice the single city of Londinium to save the province as a whole. Unmoved by lamentations and appeals, Suetonius gave the signal for departure. The inhabitants were allowed to accompany him. But those who stayed because they were women, or old, or attached to the place, were slaughtered by the enemy. Verulamium suffered the same fate.



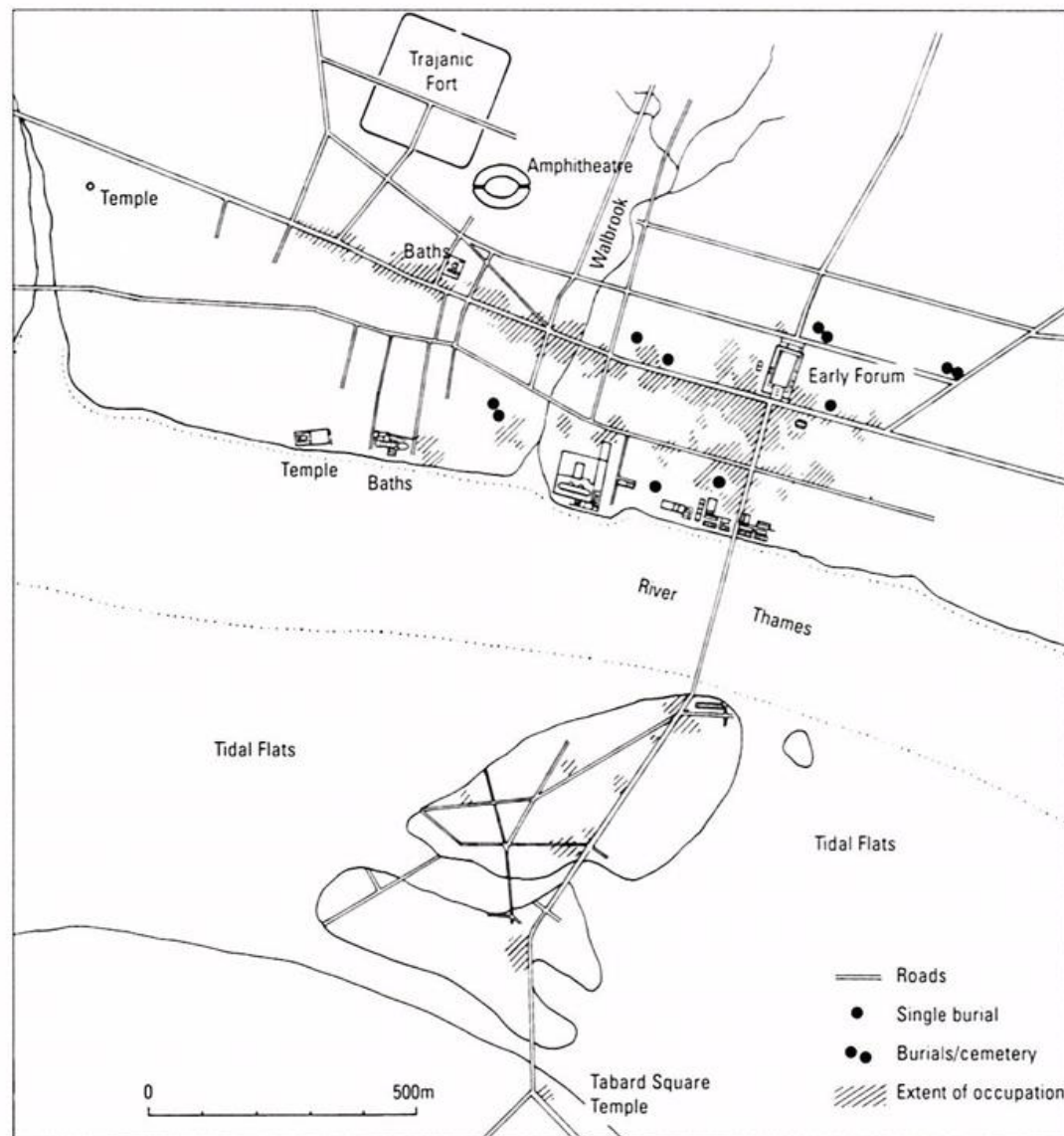
The natives enjoyed plundering and thought of nothing else. Bypassing forts and garrisons, they made for where loot was richest and protection weakest. Roman and provincial deaths at the places mentioned are estimated at seventy thousand. For the British did not take or sell prisoners, or practise other war-time exchanges. They could not wait to cut throats, hang, burn, and crucify – as though avenging, in advance, the retribution that was on its way.

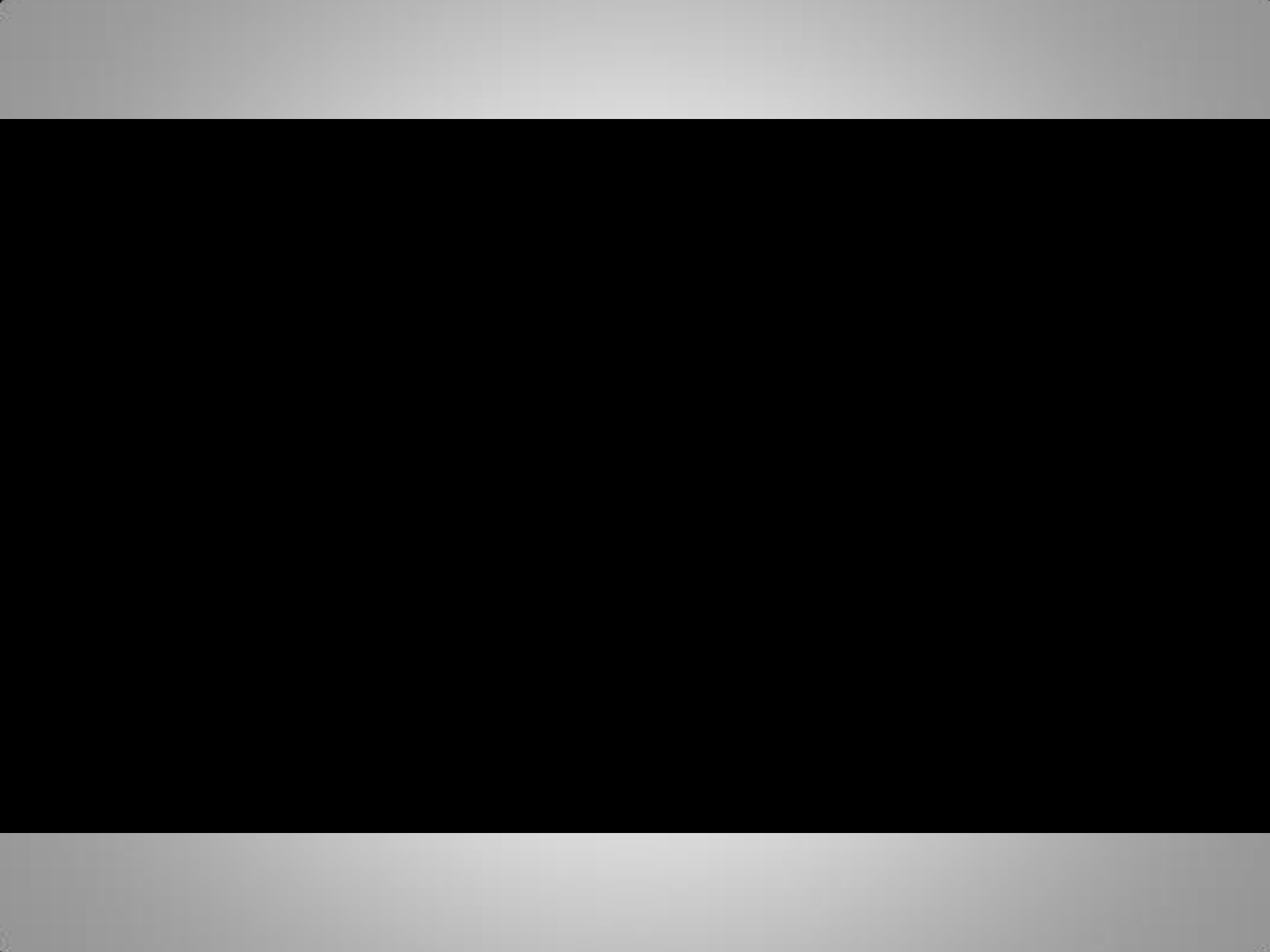




10
 The early development of *Londinium*
 and the Roman settlement, south of
 the River Thames, in Southwark
 c. AD 50–60

44 (right) Simplified plan of early Roman London. Settlements were established on either side of the river c. AD 50. That on the north bank was probably occupied by Roman citizens, many of whom migrated from other provinces. London was the centre of the road network and grew to become the largest town in the province. After the Boudiccan revolt of AD 60–1, it also became the centre of government for the province with the procurator, the governor and his military staff based there.





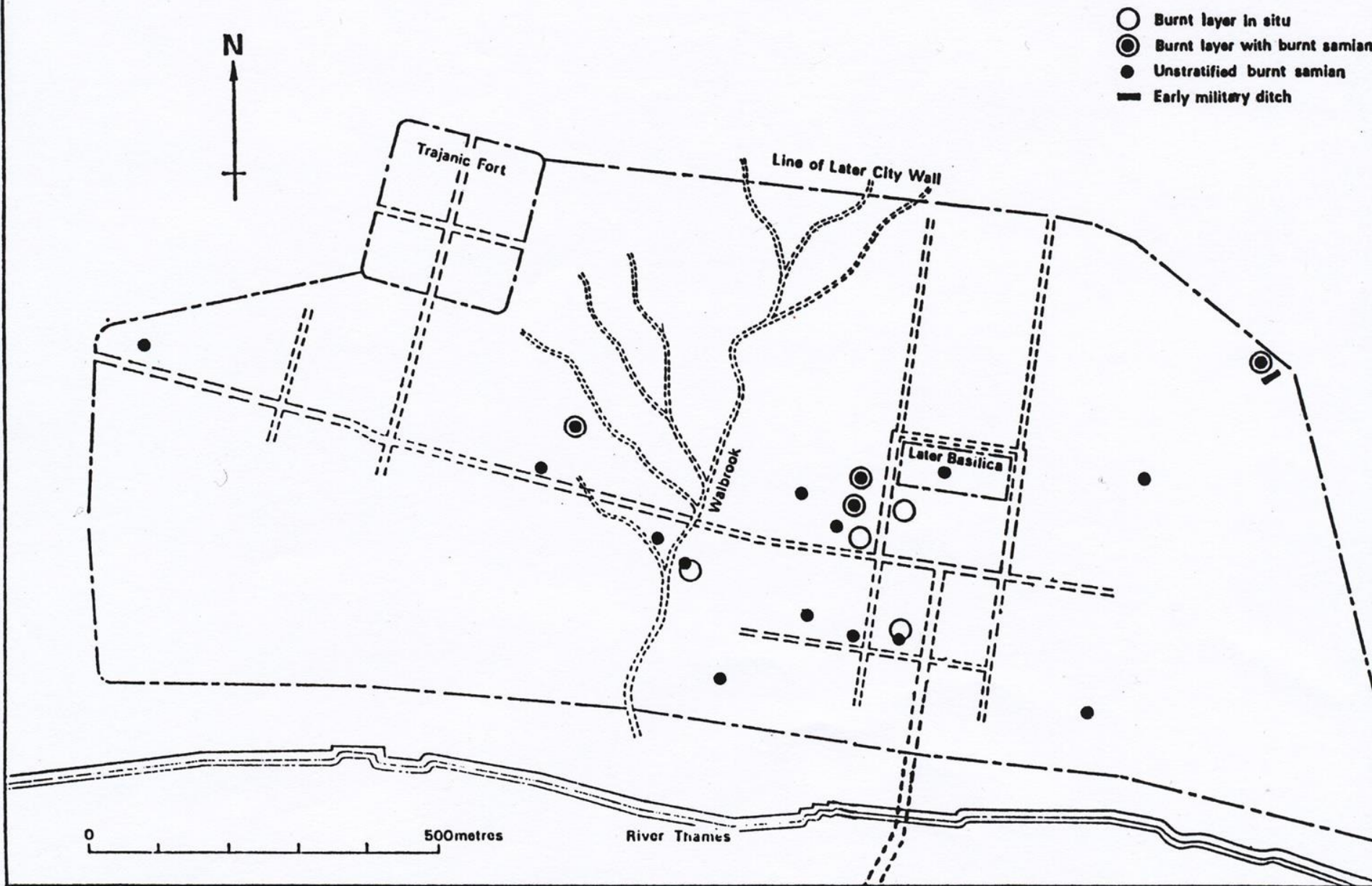
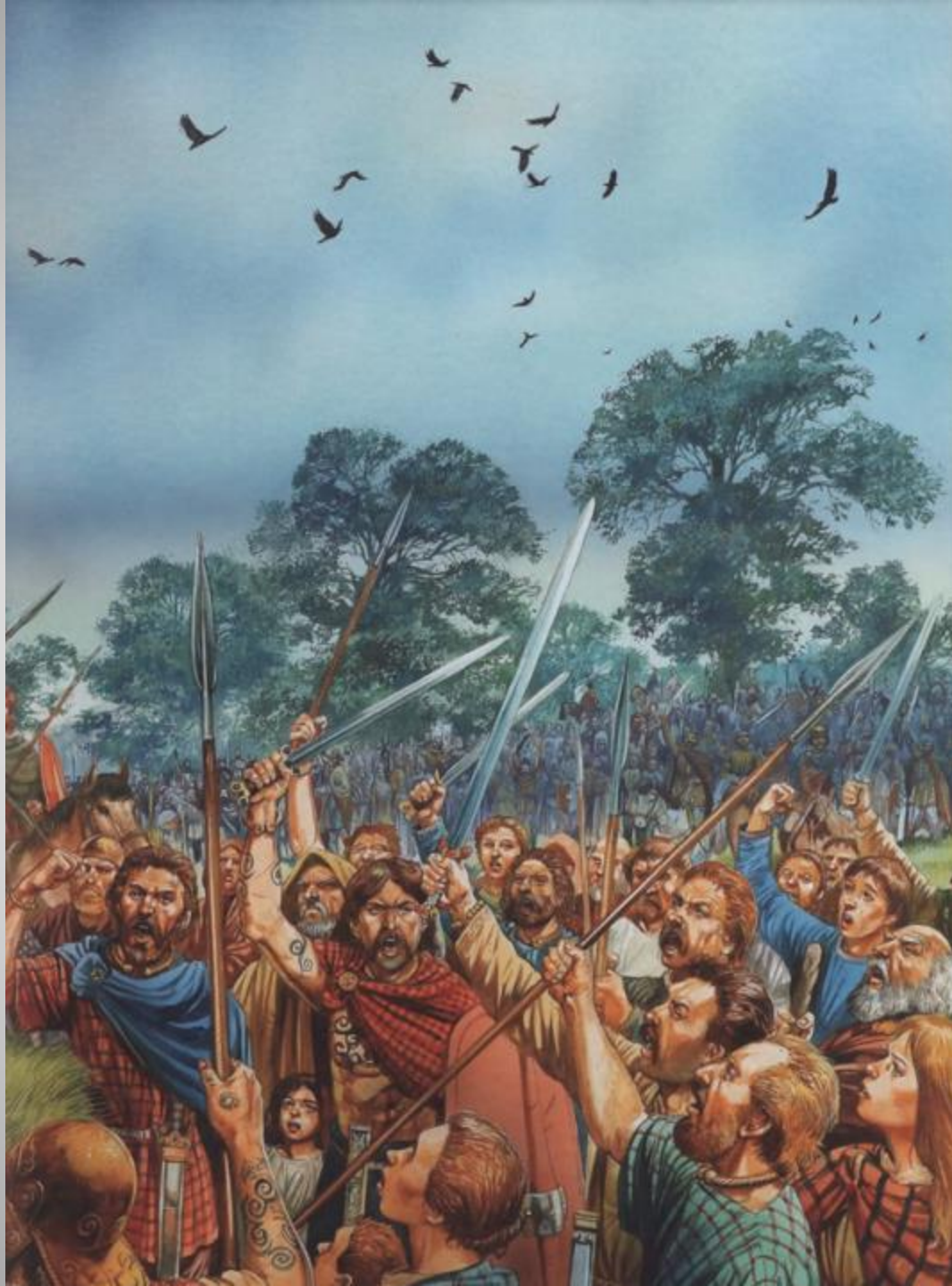


Fig. 8 Roman London: the evidence of the Revolt

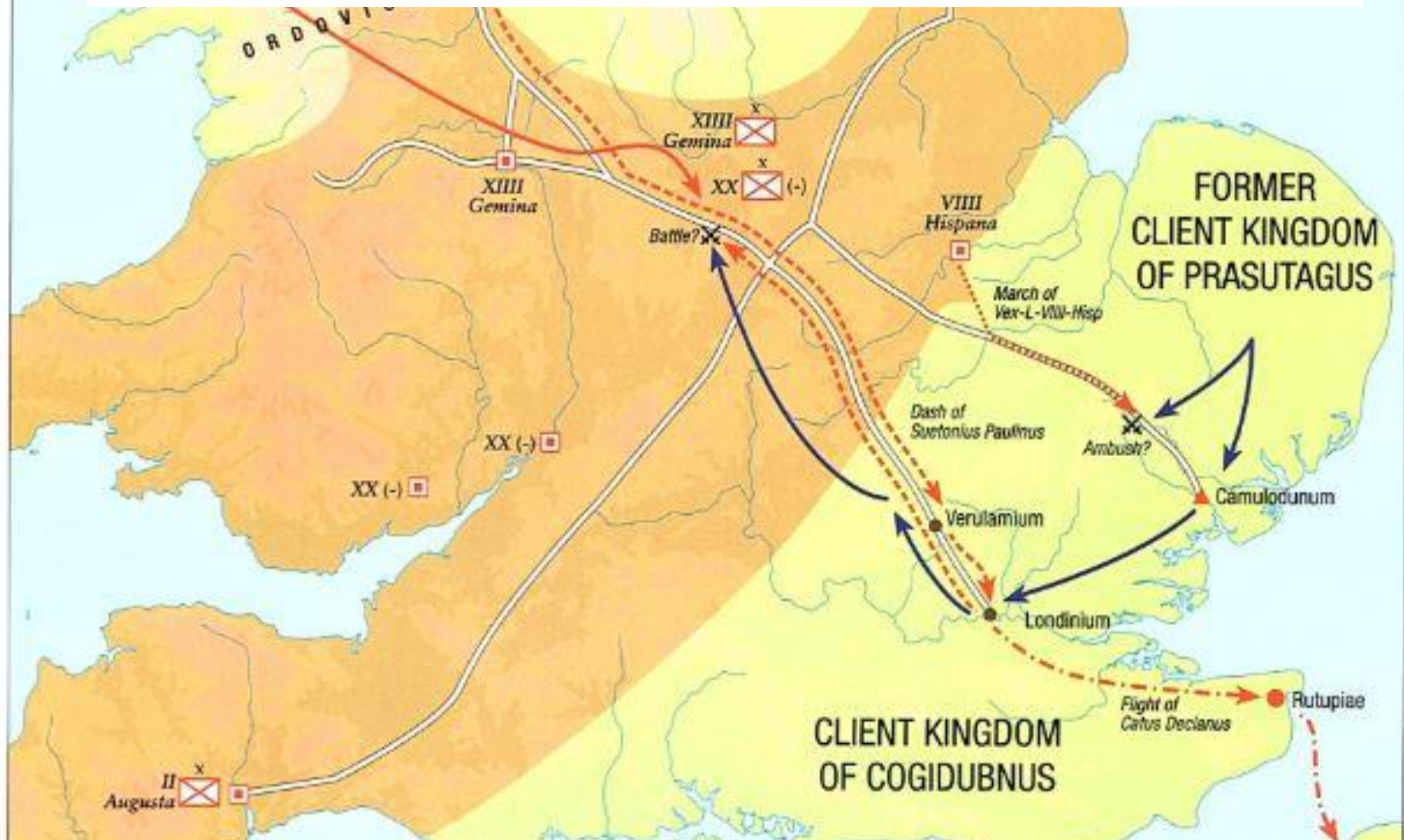


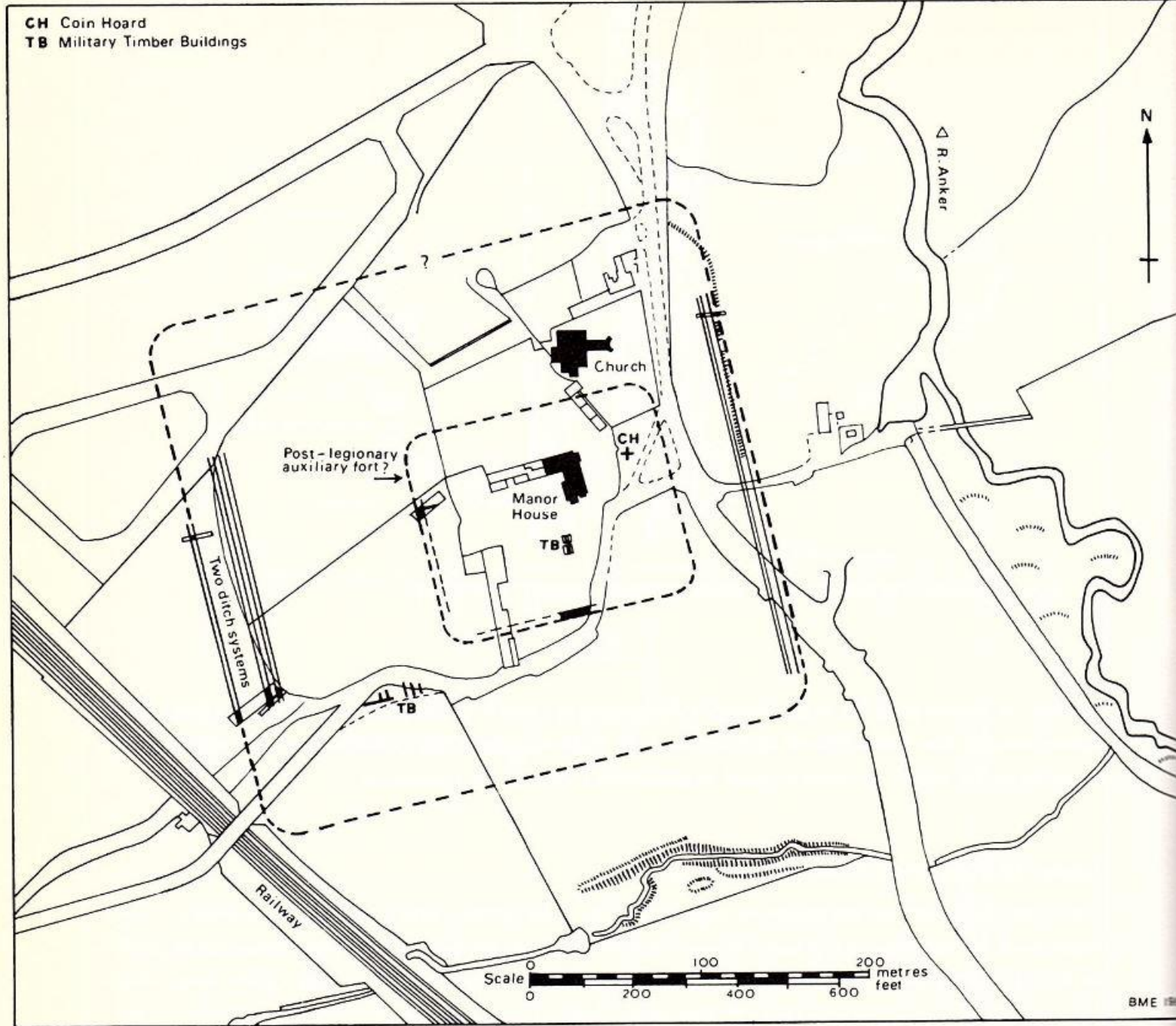
Skulls found in the stream-bed of the Walbrook. *Victims of the Boudican massacre?*





Suetonius collected the fourteenth brigade and detachments of the twentieth, together with the nearest available auxiliaries – amounting to nearly ten thousand armed men – and decided to attack without further delay. He chose a position in a defile with a wood behind him. There could be no enemy, he knew, except at his front, where there was open country without cover for ambushes.





6 Plan of the military features at Mancetter

The Roman Military Installations

MANDVESHEDVM
VEXILLATION FORTRESS
AND LATER FORT



Plan of the Vexillation Fortress and Later Fort at Manduessedum
Adapted from *Rome Against Caratacus* by Graham Webster (p.48, fig.6)

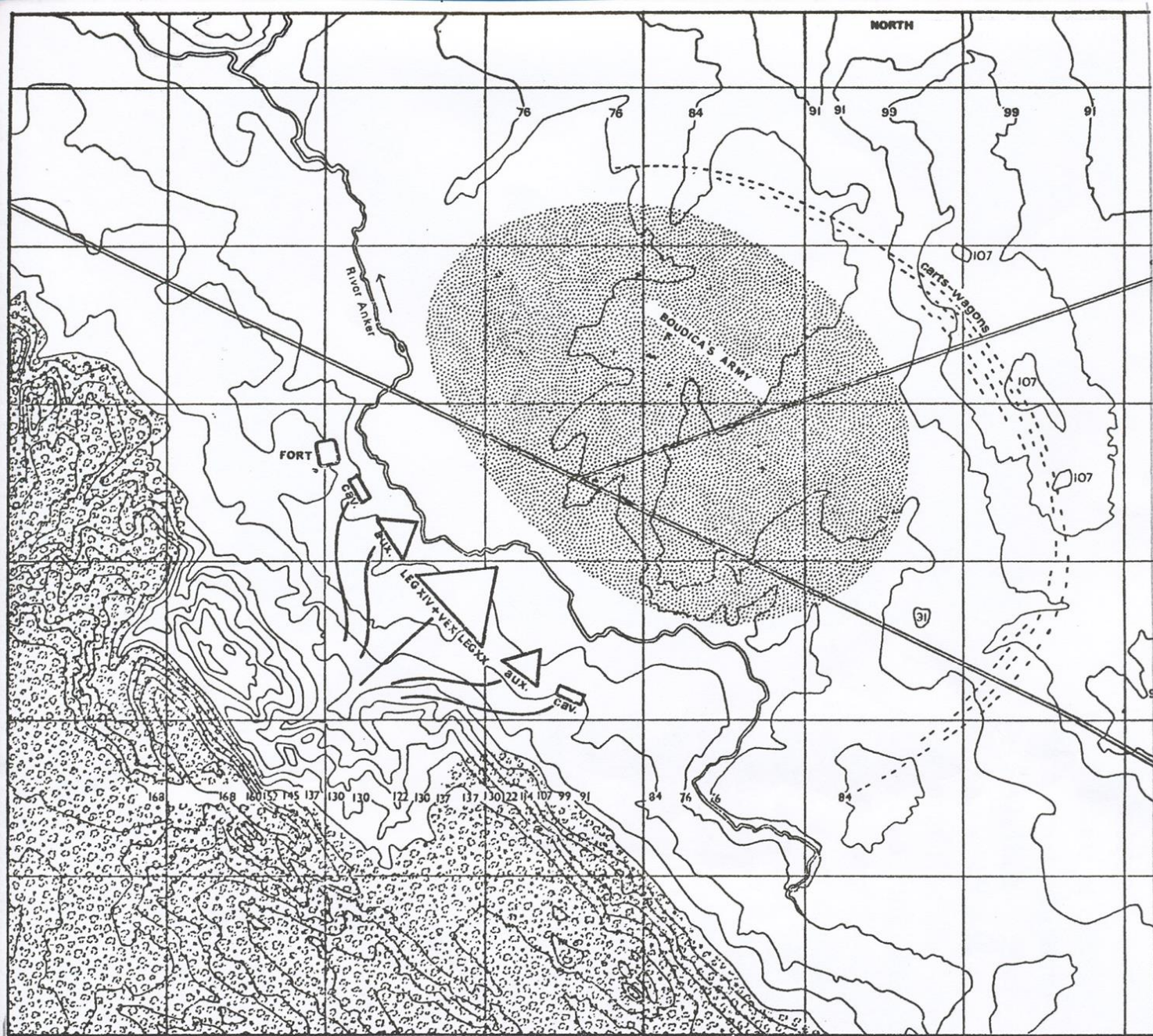
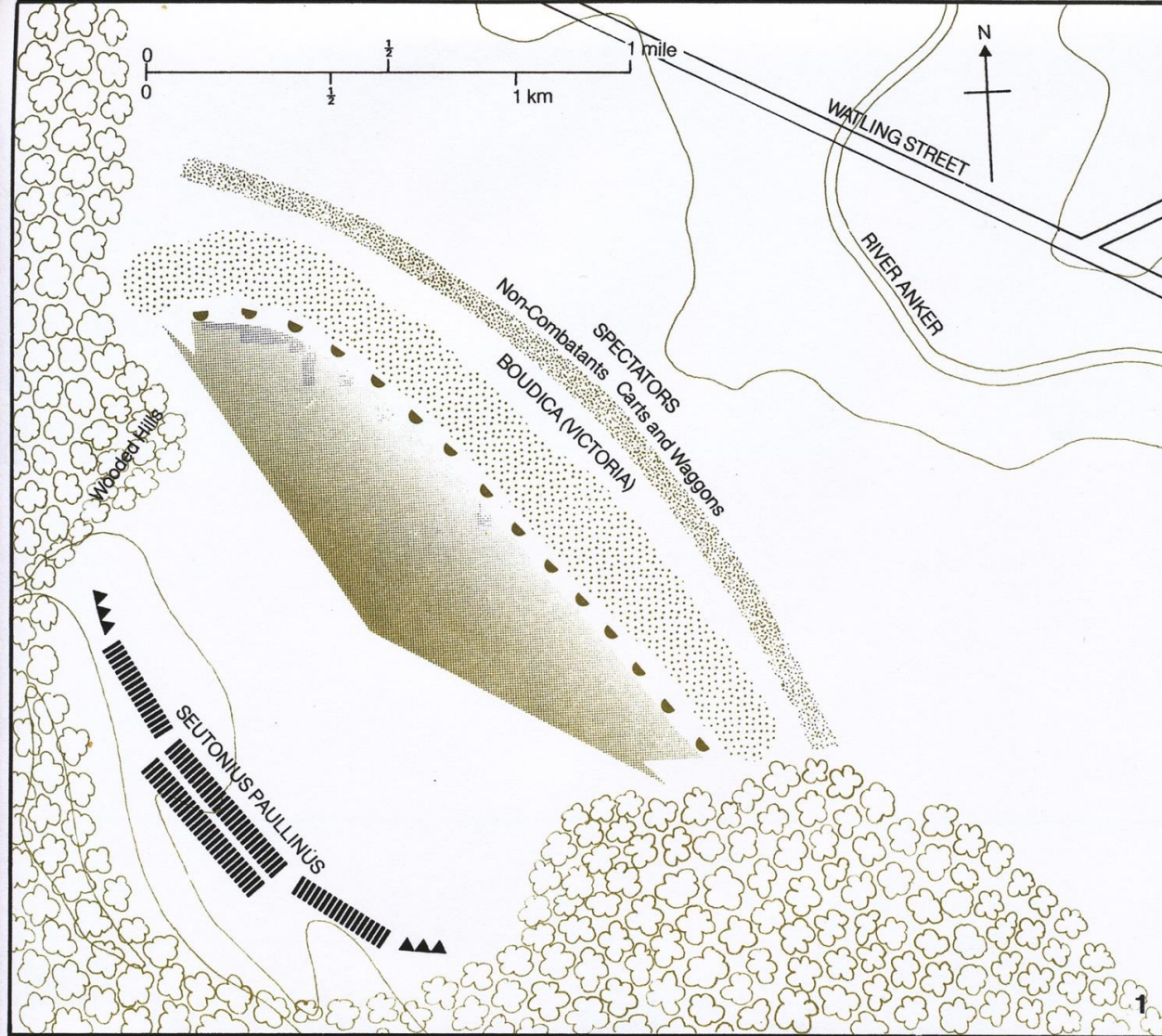


Fig. 5 The battle between Boudica and Paullinus in its possible Mancetter context



Suetonius drew up his regular troops in close order, with the light-armed auxiliaries at their flanks, and the cavalry massed on the wings. On the British side, cavalry and infantry bands seethed over a wide area in unprecedented numbers. Their confidence was such that they brought their wives with them to see the victory, installing them in carts stationed at the edge of the battlefield.



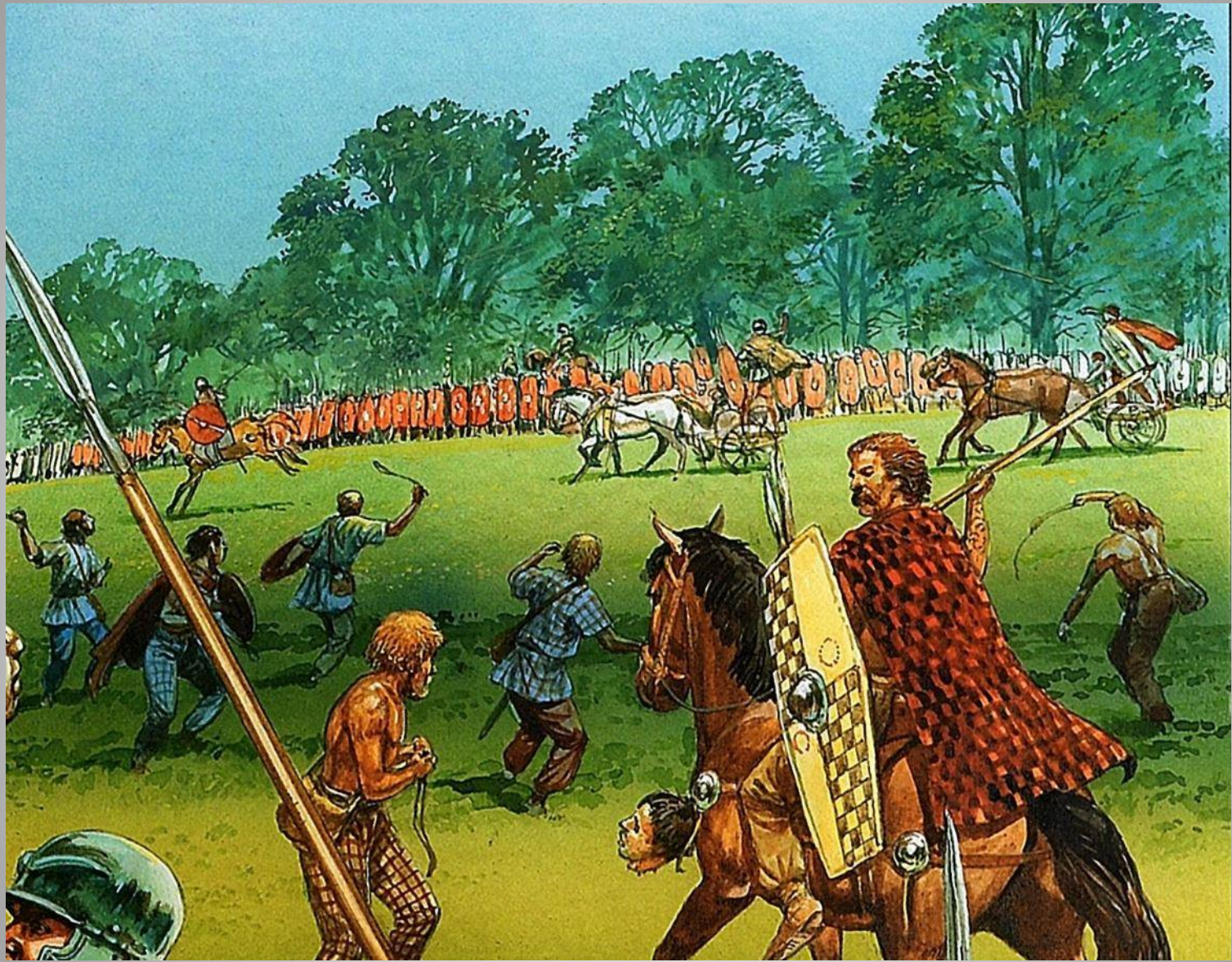
Boudicca drove round all the tribes in a chariot with her daughters in front of her. 'We British are used to woman commanders in war,' she cried. 'I am descended from mighty men! But now I am not fighting for my kingdom and wealth. I am fighting as an ordinary person for my lost freedom, my bruised body, and my outraged daughters. Nowadays Roman rapidity does not even spare our bodies. Old people are killed, virgins raped. But the gods will grant us the vengeance we deserve! The Roman division which dared to fight is annihilated. The others cower in

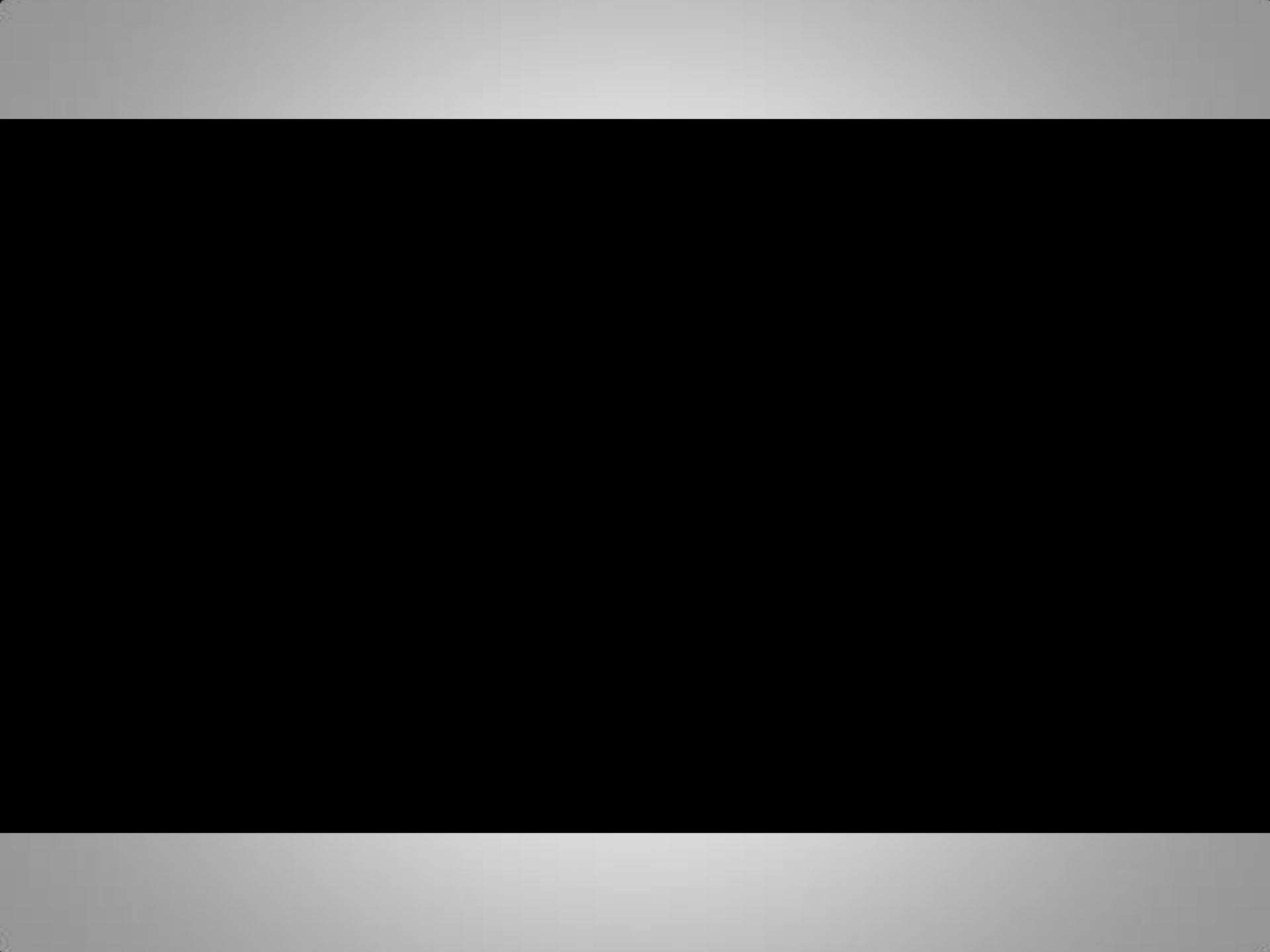


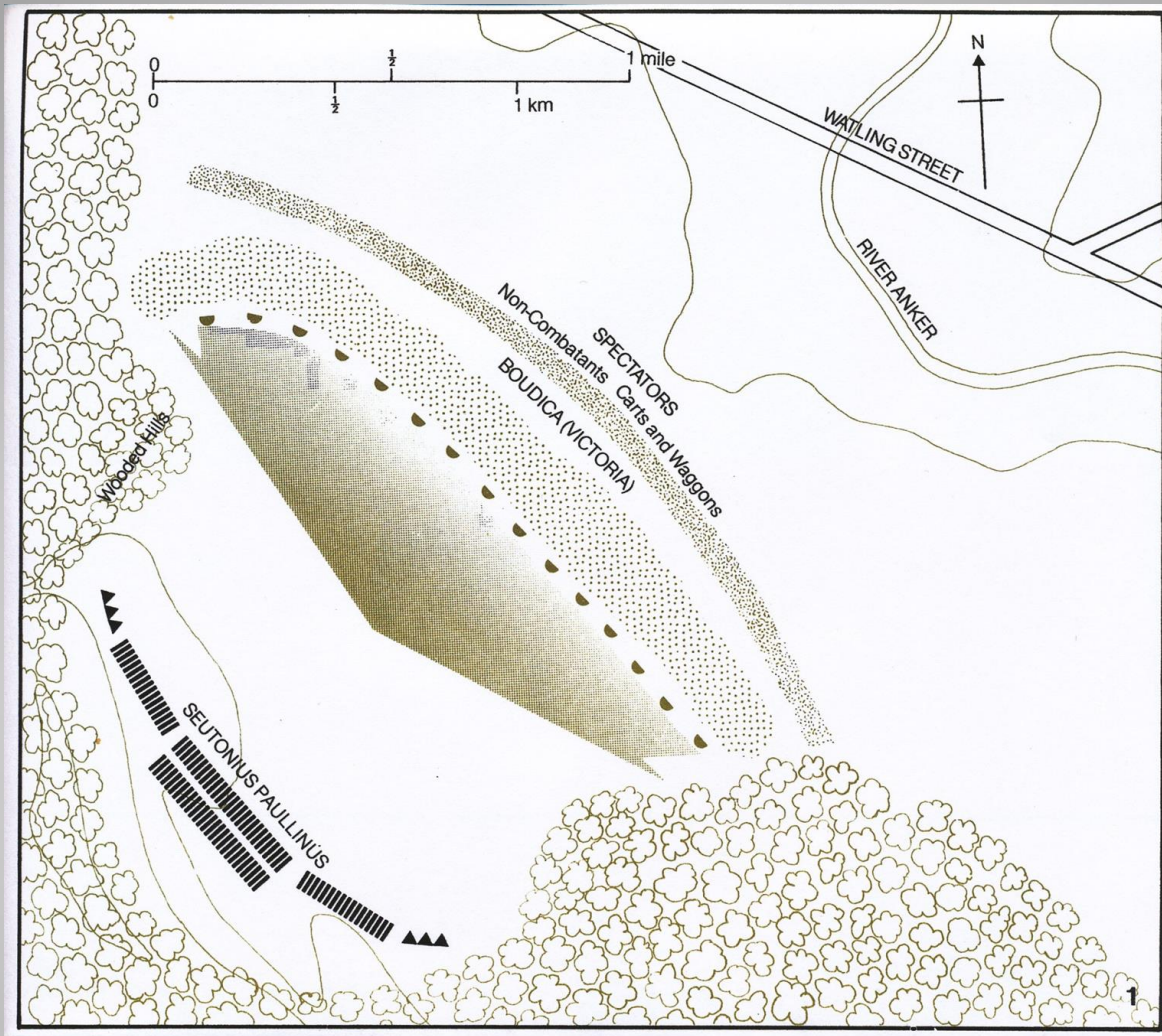
The Roman division which dared to fight is annihilated. The others cower in their camps, or watch for a chance to escape. They will never face even the din and roar of all our thousands, much less the shock of our onslaught. Consider how many of you are fighting – and why. Then you will win this battle, or perish. That is what I, a woman, plan to do! – let the men live in slavery if they will.’











The general's words were enthusiastically received: the old battle-experienced soldiers longed to hurl their javelins. So Suetonius confidently gave the signal for battle. At first the regular troops stood their ground. Keeping to the defile as a natural defence, they launched their javelins accurately at the approaching enemy. Then,

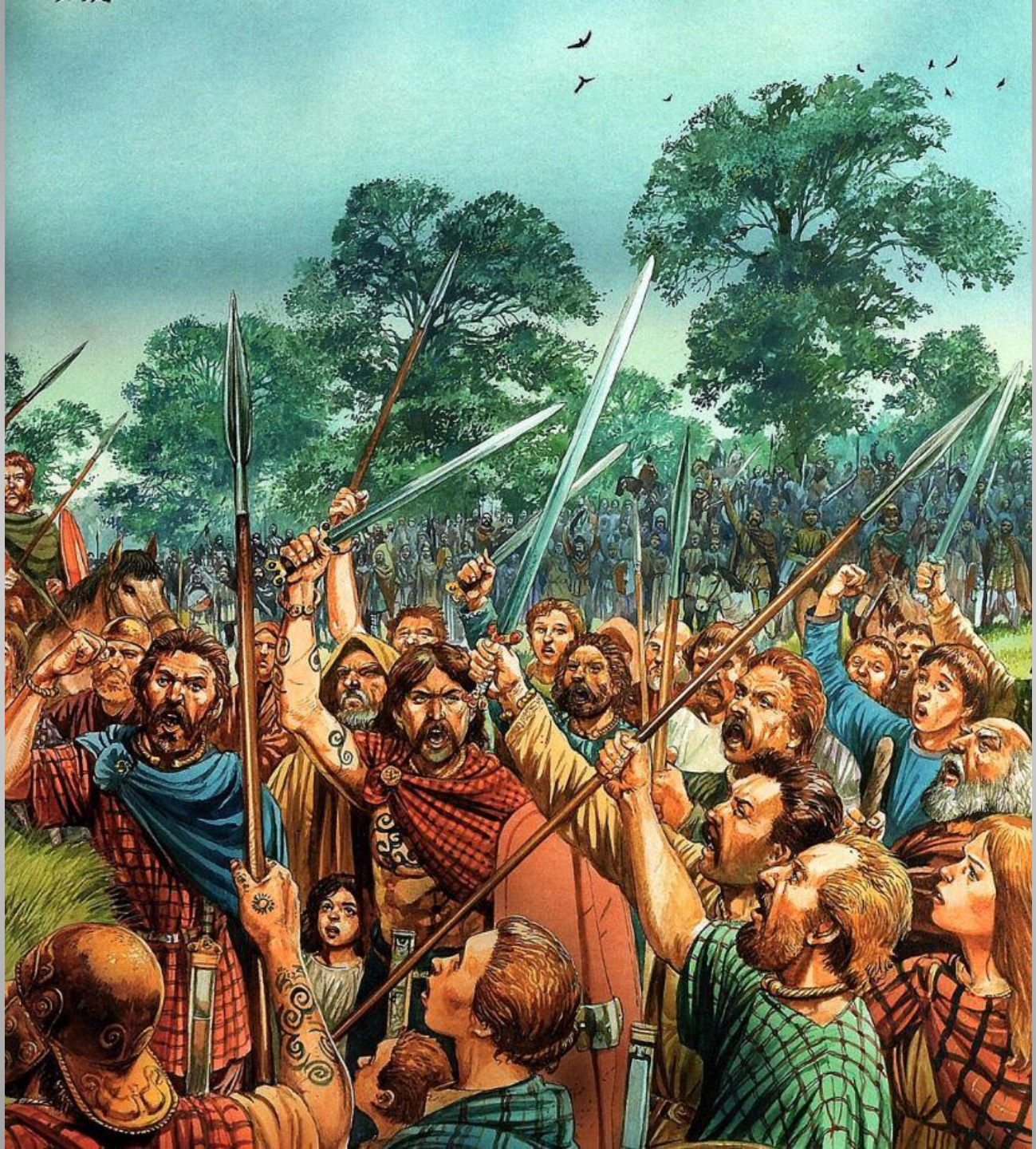


in wedge formation, they burst forward. So did the auxiliary infantry. The cavalry, too, with lances extended, demolished all serious resistance. The remaining Britons fled with difficulty since their ring of wagons blocked the outlets. The Romans did not spare even the women. Baggage animals too, transfixed with weapons, added to the heaps of dead.

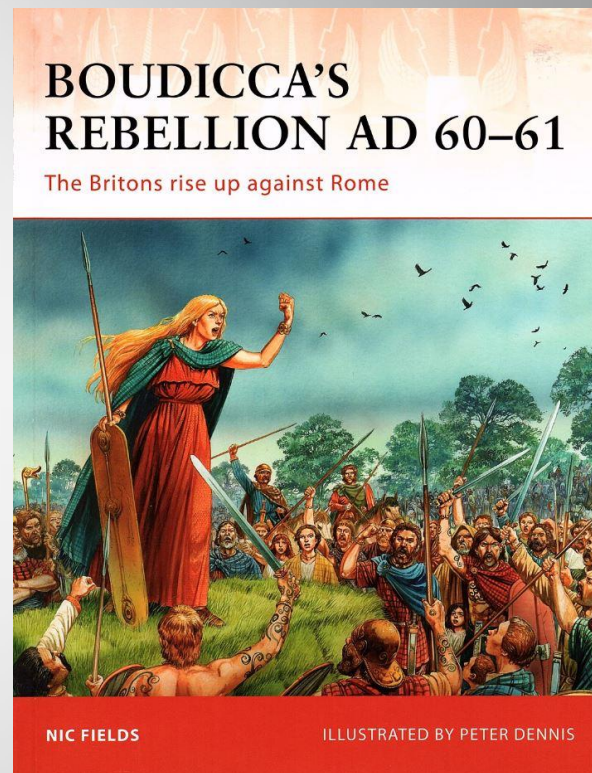
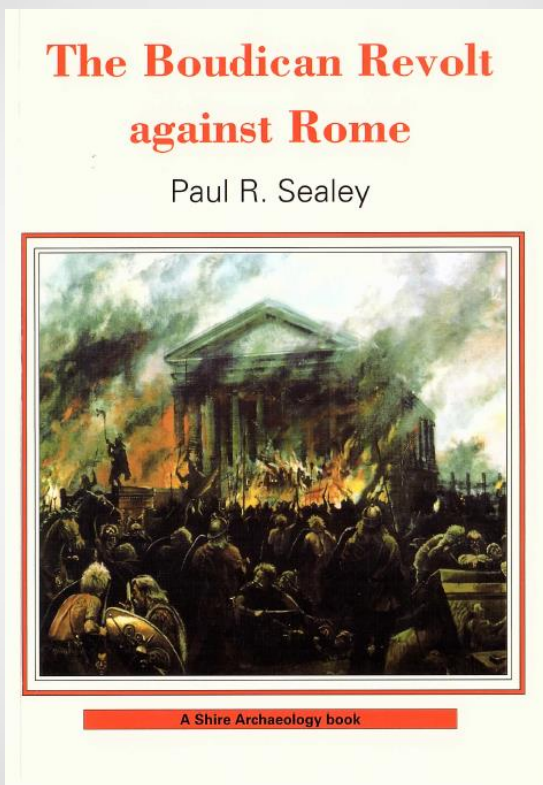
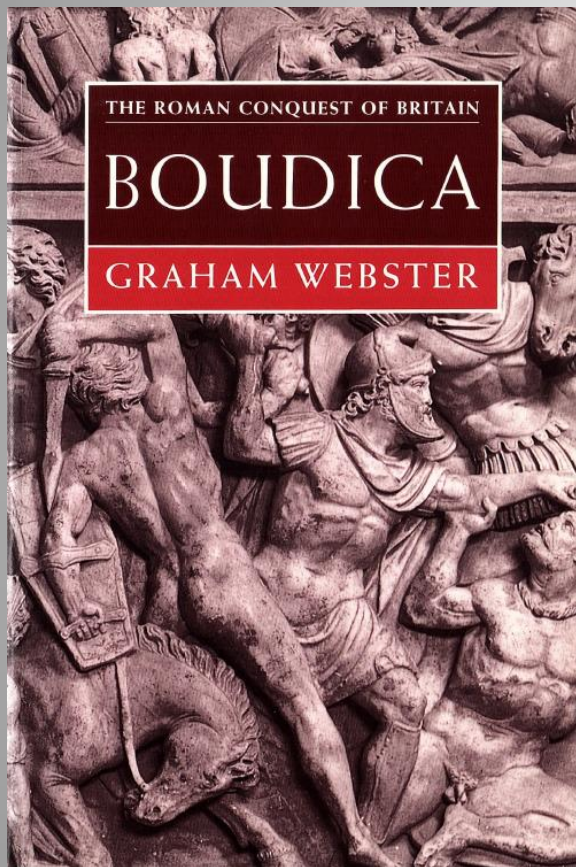


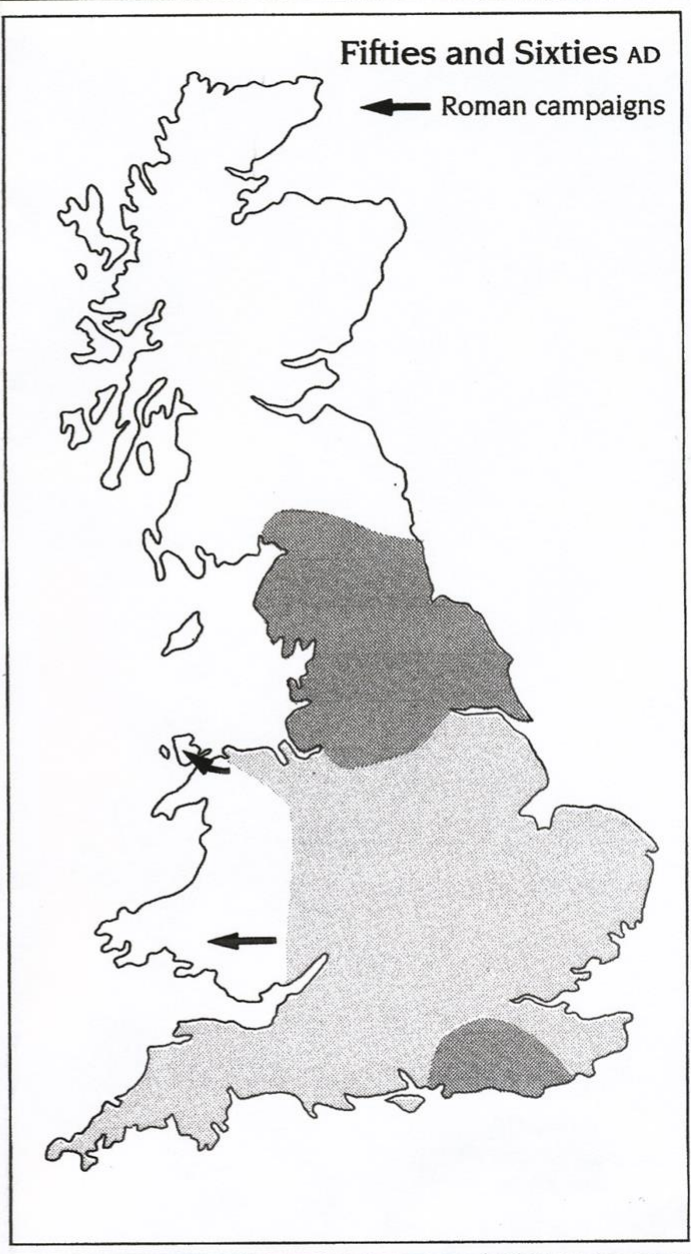
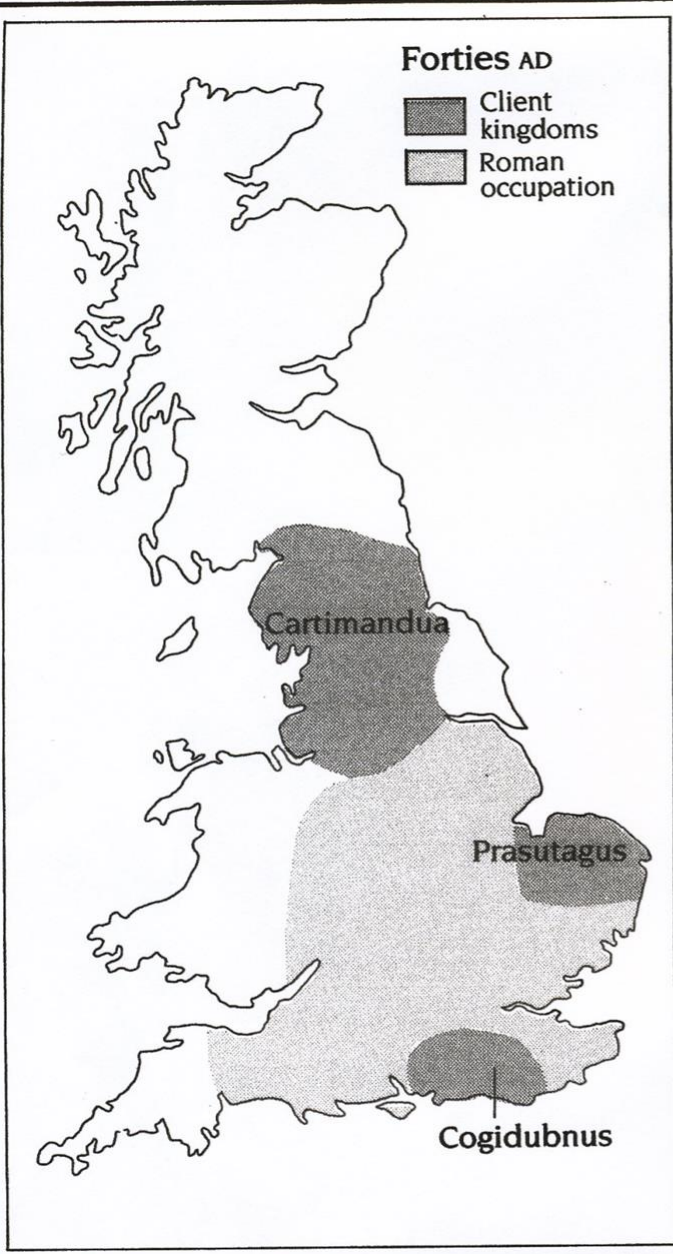
It was a glorious victory, comparable with bygone triumphs. According to one report almost eighty thousand Britons fell. Our own casualties were about four hundred dead and a slightly larger number of wounded. Boudicca poisoned herself.



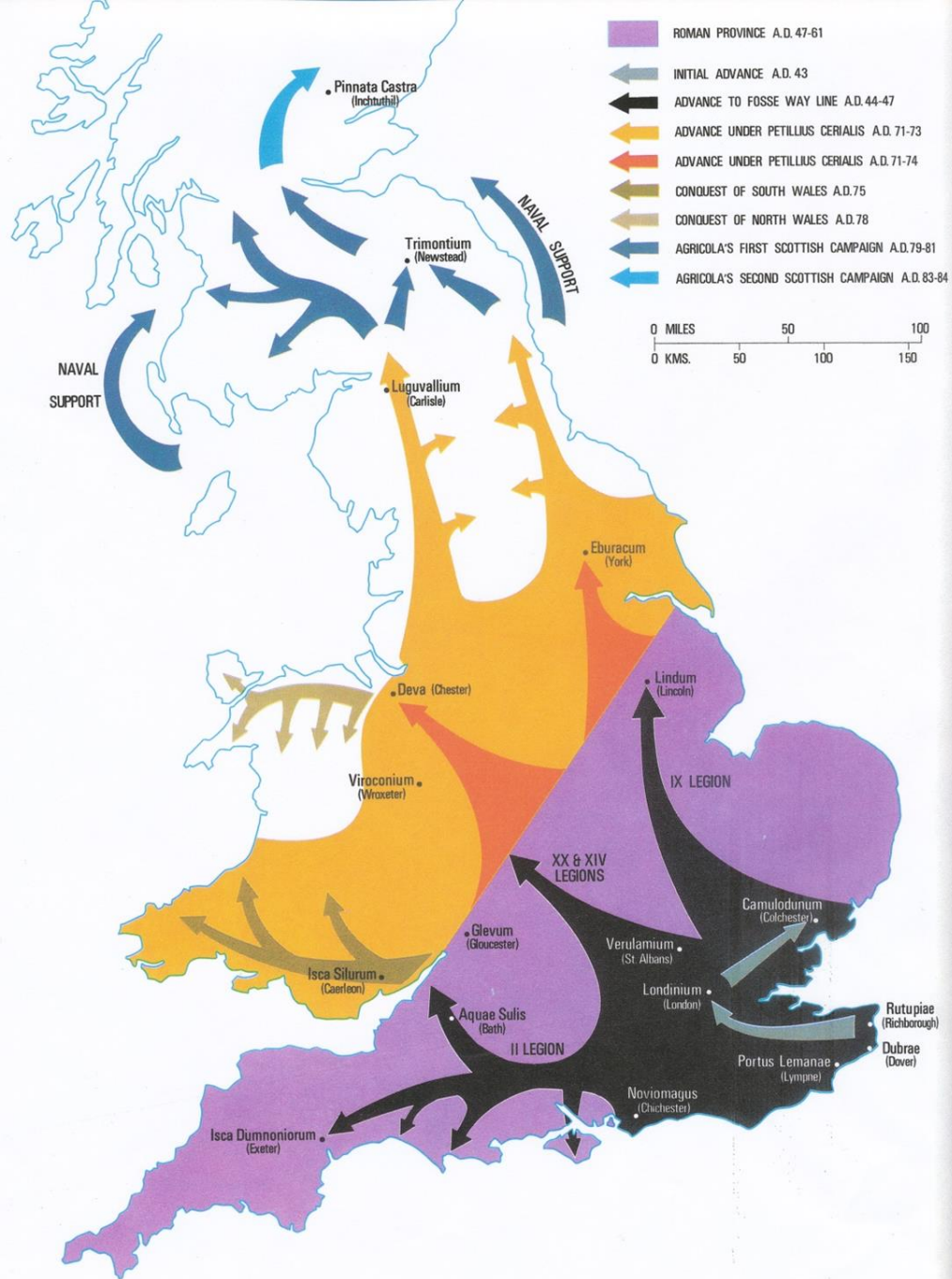


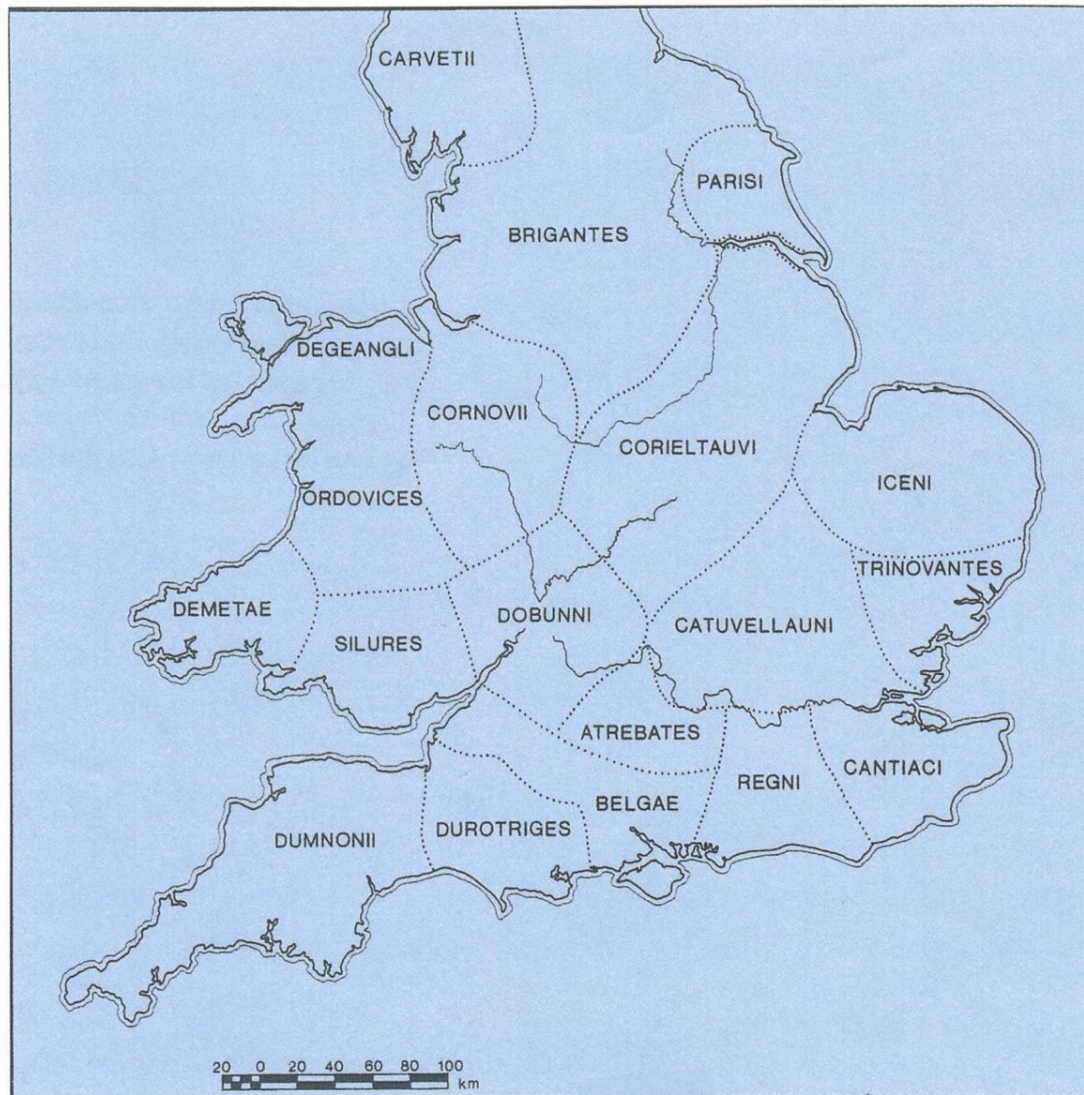








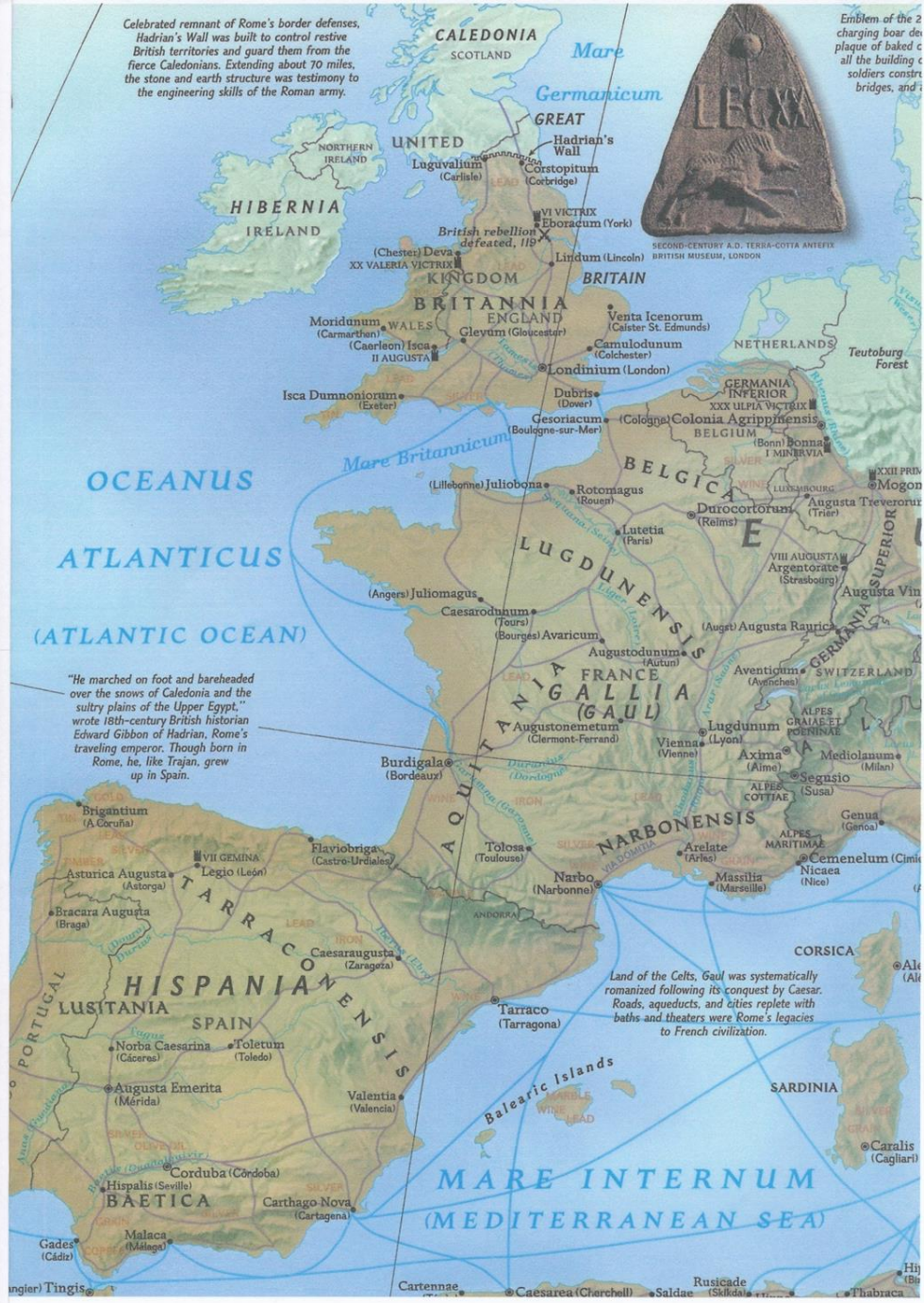




Map showing the *civitates* into which Roman Britain was divided. These administrative districts were based on Roman understanding of the pre-Roman tribes. As such, they fossilized the geography of the province as at the time of the invasion.

Celebrated Roman of Rome's border defenses, Hadrian's Wall was built to control restive British territories and guard them from the fierce Caledonians. Extending about 70 miles, the stone and earth structure was testimony to the engineering skills of the Roman army.

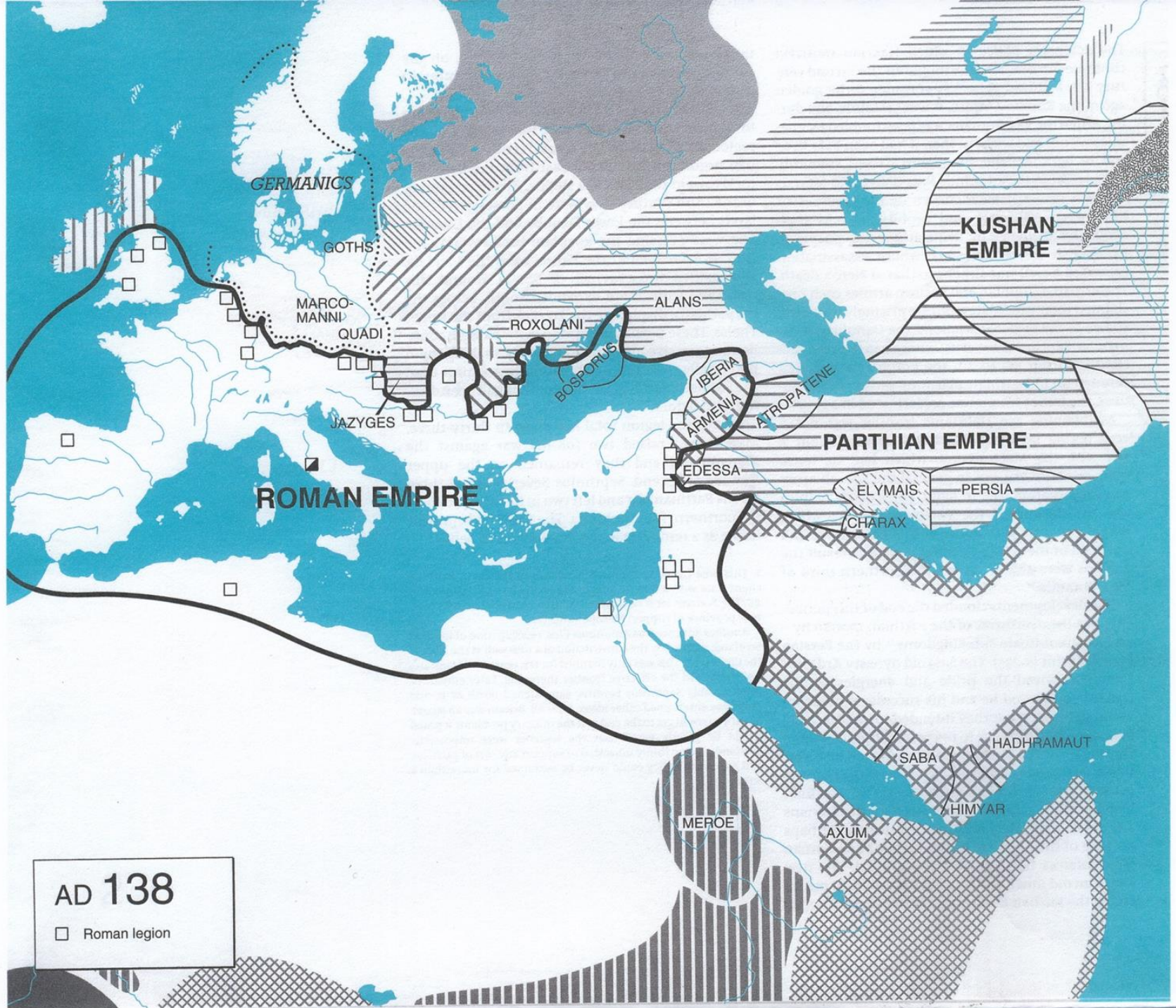
Emblem of the 2nd century A.D. showing a charging boar despoiling a plaque of baked clay. The scene illustrates the building of soldiers constructing bridges, and...



"He marched on foot and bareheaded over the snows of Caledonia and the sultry plains of the Upper Egypt," wrote 18th-century British historian Edward Gibbon of Hadrian, Rome's traveling emperor. Though born in Rome, he, like Trajan, grew up in Spain.

Land of the Celts, Gaul was systematically romanized following its conquest by Caesar. Roads, aqueducts, and cities replete with baths and theaters were Rome's legacies to French civilization.

Caesarea (Cherchell) Saldiae (Skikda) Thabracae



GERMANICS

GOths:

MARCO-MANNI

QUADI:

JAZYGES

ROXOLANI

ALANS

BOSPORUS

IBERIA

ARMENIA

ATROPATENE

KUSHAN EMPIRE

ROMAN EMPIRE

PARTHIAN EMPIRE

EDESSA

ELYMAIS

PERSIA

CHARAX

SABA

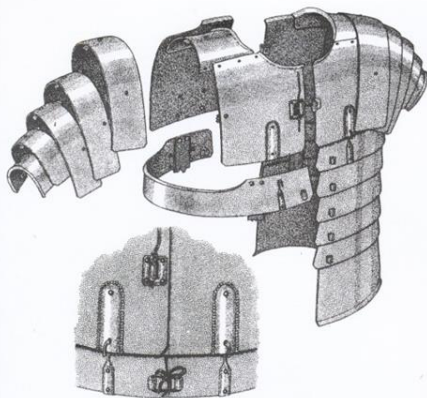
HADHRAMAUT

MEROE

AXUM

HIMYAR

AD 138
□ Roman legion



1st Century AD Legionary

A common soldier of c AD 75-100 is shown here. His helmet is of the type known as "Imperial-Gallic" and his armour is of the segmented style which came into service around AD 30-40. The *scutum* now has straight sides.

The design is one of those shown on Trajan's Column, and is probably that of a Praetorian guard cohort. The two *pila* are of the weighted variety introduced before AD 80. The *gladius* has been slightly modified and now has parallel sides and a short point. The conventional woollen tunic and *caligae* are worn, together with a scarf to prevent the neck-plates chafing. Scarves quickly became fashionable with the auxiliaries, even though they wore mail armour, not the plated sort. The *cingulum* is still worn, but the belt fittings are now less elaborate. This trend towards simplification was to continue in the second century, with decorated studs disappearing, the *cingulum* growing shorter, and eventually being replaced by *pteruges* and the armour becoming simpler. The legionaries also began to wear breeches beneath their tunics like the auxiliaries. The figure is shown wearing the early type of segmented armour, with elaborate bronze hinges and strap-and-buckle fastenings.

Lorica Segmentata (above)
The drawing shows the simpler "Newstead" type of armour in use from c AD 75-80. The bronze hinges have been replaced by simple rivets, and the belt-and-buckle fastenings by strong hooks. The bottom two girdle plates have been replaced by one wide plate. The individual plates, held together by internal leather straps can be clearly seen. The inset shows the front fastenings in detail. This type of armour was worn until the third century AD or later. It must be emphasised that obsolescence as we know it did not exist in ancient times and earlier styles of armour also remained in service in parallel with this type.



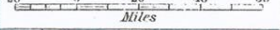


**Roman Britain
about 410.**

1. 2. Routes of Caesar's expeditions to Britain (55-54 B.C.)

— Roman roads.
Names of native tribes thus:
Brigantes

Scale 1: 5 000 000



Geographical Labels:
 CALEDONIA (SCOTLAND)
 HIBERNIA (IRELAND)
 OCEANUS GERMANICUS (NORTH SEA OR GERMAN OCEAN)
 OCEANUS HIBERNICUS (IRISH SEA)
 OCEANUS BRITANNICUS (ENGLISH CHANNEL)
 Sabrina Aest. (Bristol Channel)
 Fretum Gallicum (Strait of Dover)
 Gesoriacum (Boulogne)

Provinces and Tribes:
 Brigantes
 Parisi
 Eboracenses
 Corieltauii
 Demetae
 Deceangli
 Cantuarii
 Trinovantes
 Iceni
 Silures
 Deborini
 Dobunni
 Durotriges
 Durocorivae
 Verulani
 Cornovii
 Ordovices
 Brigantini
 Brigantini

Roman Colonies and Towns:
 Eboracum (York)
 Lindum (Lincoln)
 Londinium (London)
 Verulamium (St. Albans)
 Camulodunum (Colchester)
 Durobrivae
 Deva (Chester)
 Isca Silurum (Caerleon)
 Venta Belgarum (Winchester)
 Isca Dumnoniorum (Exeter)
 Eboracum (York)
 Londinium (London)
 Verulamium (St. Albans)
 Camulodunum (Colchester)
 Durobrivae
 Deva (Chester)
 Isca Silurum (Caerleon)
 Venta Belgarum (Winchester)
 Isca Dumnoniorum (Exeter)

Other Labels:
 Antonine Wall
 Hadrian's Wall
 Tynon Aest. (Solway Firth)
 Abus Aest. (Humber R.)
 Mauron Aest. (The Wash)
 Regulus Aest. (Lambeth)
 Forus Lemhae (Lymington)
 Portus Lemanus (Lambeth)
 Portus Lemanus (Lambeth)
 Portus Lemanus (Lambeth)