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London as a Provincial Capital. J.C. Mann writes: London is the child of geography. Its history is intimately linked with the history of the Lowland Zone. Before the Roman period, the Lowland Zone had never been politically united, and thus London did not exist. But as soon as the Romans had conquered the Lowland Zone — within a mere three or four years of the invasion of A.D. 43 — so London rapidly emerged as the natural focus of communications, being the lowest point on the Thames which could be easily crossed by those from North and West who sought the Continent. While Roman rule lasted, London persisted, first as provincial capital, then also as capital of the diocese.

When Roman rule ended, the unity of the Lowland Zone came to an end. London is of little importance in the history of the Dark Ages or the early Anglo-Saxon period. But once the conquest of the kingdoms of the Lowland Zone by Wessex had been completed and the Lowland Zone politically united again, so the capital soon moved from Winchester to London. London has remained the undisputed capital ever since.

Thus in the years immediately after A.D. 43, it is irrelevant whether there was an early military occupation of any site in or near London, or whether there was any planned settlement there. A settlement would have arisen anyway, and expanded steadily.

It was simple geography that prompted the growth of London. The same forces influenced its emergence as the centre of administration. It is true that the governors in the early years will have spent the summer six months of most years in the field, returning to the capital each winter for jurisdiction and administrative duties. The procurator on the other hand will have had to supervise the financial and other matters committed to his care continuously. He will have had to remain at his desk, figuratively speaking, for all twelve months of the year. It is his activities, more than those of the governor, which decided where the centre of government should be.

The vicious, sensationalist attitude of Tacitus has left a lasting impression on his readers that there was a violent and inevitable hostility between (upper-class) governor and (inferior) procurator. In particular, the procurator is portrayed as a permanent thorn in the flesh of the governor. In practice, governor and procurator will have had to work together — and probably did so for the most part amicably.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the rebellion of Boudica was caused, not so much by the actions of the procurator, Decianus Catus, as by the manner in which his duties were carried out by his subordinates, the slaves of the emperor. It appears that emperors claimed the property of client kings as their own, and it was the duty of the agents of the emperor to claim that property for him. This is specifically laid down by Ulpian.[222]

> This above all is the duty of the procurator of the emperor, that by his order a slave of Caesar may take possession of an inheritance in the name of Caesar. If the emperor is designated heir, the procurator legally confirms this by taking possession of the inherited property.[223]

This is the justification for the annexation of the property of Prasutagus. Whoever was responsible for the violence, it is worth noting that Decianus Catus was not the mere bureaucratic lackey of the emperor that Tacitus seeks to portray. Research into his likely background discloses the careers of several of those who were his contemporaries as procurator of the emperor. Five individuals can be cited, all with similar careers, as listed by Brian Dobson in his classic study of the Primipilares.[224] All of these men had served as legionary centurions, before becoming *primus pilus*, serving in Rome tribunates and holding a second primipilate before going on to a procuratorship.[225]

Thus when Suetonius Paulinus set off in the spring of A.D. 61 to campaign in North Wales, he most probably left this competent military man in charge of the administration of London. This would include control of the governor's staff (*officium*), composed largely of men seconded from the legions of the province. There is no reason to doubt that when the veterans at Colchester called on Decianus Catus for protection, the '200 ill-armed men' whom he sent were from the governor's staff in London. The jibe 'ill-armed' merely reflects the fact that these men were, in effect, office-workers, not equipped for service in the field. (It hardly needs stressing that the early stationing of the procurator of Britain in London is confirmed by the burial there of Iulius Classicianus.)[226]

The paucity of inscriptions from London is probably the main reason for our lack of information on the status of London in successive periods. As Martin Millet has pointed out, the assignment of London to the Cantiaci by Ptolemy cannot be dismissed as merely a mistake.[227] In northern Britain, Ptolemy was given to tacking the names of Roman forts on to whichever tribal list of places seemed to be the most appropriate.[228] London, however, is the second of three places assigned to the Cantiaci, and cannot be dismissed as an abitrary addition. As late as A.D. 118 at least, the wooden tablet from London published by Roger Tomlin also suggests that London lay in the territory of the Cantiaci.[229]

Tacitus, in the *Agricola*, not only indicates that London was not, like Colchester, a colony ('*cognomento quidem coloniae non insigne*') but he also does not apply to London the title of *municipium* which he misapplies to Verulamium.[230] Even as late as A.D. 297,[231] we find *oppidum Londiniense*. Only at the Council of Arles in A.D. 314 do we find an unequivocal reference to London as a city.[232]

222 *Digest* 1.19.1.2.

223 *Est hoc praecipuum in procuratore Caesaris, quod et eius iussu servus Caesaris adire hereditatem potest et, si Caesar heres instituatur, miscendo se opulentiae hereditati procurator heredem Caesarem fecit.*

224 Dobson 1978, 190–203.

225 Dobson 1978, career nos: 55 Baebius Atticus, procurator of Noricum, under Claudius; 56 (Ignotus), procurator of Claudius; 58 Maximus, procurator of Claudius; 65 Iulius Iustus, procurator of Thrace, A.D. 61; 69 Vettius Valens, procurator of Lusitania, before A.D. 66.

226 *RIB* 12. Just as the presence of the governor in the late first or early second century (certainly before the reign of Hadrian) is confirmed by the appearance of at least two *speculator*es in *RIB* 19, cf. *Antiquity* 35 (1961), 317–18 = Mann 1996, 142–3.

227 Bird, Hassall and Sheldon 1996, 35.

228 Mann and Breeze 1987.

229 Bird, Hassall and Sheldon 1996, 209–15.

230 Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.33.

231 *Pan. Lat.* 8(v).17.1.

232 *Antiquity* 35 (1961), 317 = Mann 1996, 142.

However, there is another community, also a provincial capital, which is not known to have achieved city status before a very late date. This is Mainz (*Mogontiacum*), the capital of Germania Superior, appearing first as a city only under Diocletian.[233] In the Julio-Claudian period we find a veteran of Legion XVI who was *curator civium Romanorum Mogontiaci*.[234] The *cives Romani Mogontiaci* (or *Mogontiacenses*) reappear in A.D. 198,[235] under Severus Alexander,[236] and as late as A.D. 276.[237] A number of *vici* appear in and around the urban area.[238]

It is just possible that London had a similar history, with nothing more than an informal grouping of '*cives Romani Londinienses*' or the like. Perhaps London remained a mere *vicus* (or group of *vici* — note the *vicus Iovius*, where *vicus* is probably used in Festus' second sense, to mean a ward or 'parish' of an urban community) in the territory of the Cantiaci.[239]

The citizens of capital cities tend to be politically deprived. The city of Rome itself was run in the Principate by the Urban Prefect, the Prefects of the Annona and the Vigiles, and the Senate. The People had no say. Washington DC was, until recently, run by the Congress with a rod of iron. But in London, as in Mainz, the wealthier citizens at least had some control of their own affairs. The '*cives Romani Londinienses*' may have operated much like the Court of Common Council.

We are hamstrung by the lack of epigraphic evidence; an inscription-detector would be a great help. For, of course, an inscription could still show that the comparison with Mainz is wrong. Forum and basilica may after all indicate the achievement of city status — but not necessarily. There would be nothing to prevent their creation by the '*cives Romani Londinienses*'. Note that Mainz claimed both an *ordo* and magistrates.[240]

However, if we stand back and view the situation as objectively as possible, perhaps the question of the formal status of London is not really important. The main source of the wealth of London was surely trade, which would not be impeded or affected at all by the lack of city status. Further income will have come to the inhabitants through the presence of the governor, of his judicial assistant (the *legatus iuridicus*), and of the procurator — along with their staffs and the governor's bodyguard, the *equites* and *pedites singulares*. The housing of litigants and witnesses attending the courts of the governor and his judicial assistant will have brought further income, as will the presence of sycophants fawning on the governor.

A further source of income is likely to have been the presence of representatives of the British *civitates* attending the annual meeting of the Provincial Council, formally charged with the financial maintenance of the so-called 'Imperial Cult'. That the Provincial altar or temple was somewhere in the London area is suggested by the presence in London of the tombstone of a slave of the province, that is of the Provincial Council.[241] (The temple of the divine Claudius at Colchester[242] has nothing to do with the so-called 'Imperial Cult': it is merely a temple built after his death to Claudius as the founder of the colony, and on land in the possession of the colony — a temple which had to be maintained by the Trinovantes, who had been made subjects of the colony, hence their rebellion in A.D. 61.) The Provincial altar or temple will have been set up to Roma et Augustus, and located on a piece of land belonging to the Provincial Council, somewhere near London.

233 *CIL* XIII. 6727.

234 *ILS* 2465. This organization is quite separate from the legionary *canabae* — *ILS* 935 (Nero), *ILS* 4615 (probably second century), *CIL* XIII.6780 (A.D. 255).

235 *ILS* 7077.

236 *ILS* 7078.

237 *ILS* 7079.

238 e.g. *ILS* 7081–4, 7086–7; *CIL* XIII 11827.

239 *Britannia* 17 (1986), 445, no. 64, fig. 10. Just as *Mogontiacum* may have been in the territory of the Aresaces, cf. *CIL* XIII.7252 and 11825; H. Klumbach, *Schr. der Inst. fur Ur- und Frühgeschichte der Schweiz* 14 (1959), 69–76.

240 *Ordo*, *ILS* 7078 cf. 7079; *quaestor*, *ILS* 7077.

241 *RIB* 21.

242 Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.31.

All of the activities mentioned above will have proceeded throughout the Principate without hindrance, whatever the precise status of London. City status from Diocletian's time of course merely meant subjection to the bureaucratic straitjacket of the Late Empire.[243]

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The Creation of Four Provinces in Britain by Diocletian. J.C. Mann writes: So far as we know, the subdivision indicated by Cassius Dio[244] as operating about A.D. 215 continued down to the recovery of Britain from Allectus in A.D. 297. In passing, it is worth noting that after Gregory the Great sent Augustine to Britain in A.D. 597, he ordered him to establish a metropolitan bishopric in London and another at York, each of whom was to consecrate twelve bishops in his province. Since at that time Augustine had no access to either London or York, it seems likely that Gregory was basing his proposed organization on documents relating to the British Church which he found in the papal archives.[245] Since only two metropolitans were to be appointed, it seems clear that Gregory had found nothing of later date than third-century in the archives, otherwise he would have had to authorize the appointment of four (or five) metropolitans.

It has been suggested that, after A.D. 297, Diocletian (in theory along with Maximian) established a third province by taking some city territories from each of the two existing provinces and forming the new province in between them. This new province, it is claimed, was named Caesariensis, or Britannia Caesariensis (or Maxima Caesariensis), taking that name from its capital, a city named Caesarea. The new province was then later subdivided into Flavia Caesariensis and Maxima Caesariensis.

It has to be said at once that there is no evidence whatsoever that any British city was ever named Caesarea. It has also to be said that when provinces were subdivided, whether during the Principate or under Diocletian or later, it was not normal procedure to take city territories from the adjacent parts of two provinces, thus creating a new province in between. Most subdivisions of provinces are simply that — the province is divided, whether it was Moesia in the early A.D. 80s, or Pannonia shortly after A.D. 100, or Dacia after 106, or Syria in 194, or Britain in 197. Under Diocletian, Mauretania Sitifensis is simply carved out of Mauretania Caesariensis, Sequania out of the southern half of Germania Superior, Valeria out of the northern part of Pannonia Inferior, and Scythia out of the northern part of Moesia Inferior. In general, a new province is merely a part of a previous province. The only exception seems to be the special case of the new province of Dacia south of the Danube, which included city territories taken from Moesia Superior, Thrace, and Moesia Inferior. But then, Aurelian was virtually pretending that Dacia north of the Danube had not been permanently given up at all.

Occasionally, individual cities might be transferred to a different province, apparently simply for administrative convenience, by equalizing the size of provinces. Thus the Lingones were transferred from Sequania to Lugdunensis Prima, and the Tungri from Gallia Belgica to Germania Secunda. It is difficult to see any point in creating a province which took its city territories from two other provinces: it seems a recipe for conflict. It is also difficult to see how, if this new province were later divided, both halves could be named Caesariensis, as if both were claiming that its capital was still Caesarea.

It is more probable that Maxima Caesariensis and Flavia Caesariensis were created at the same time — but with a difference. As Richard Goodchild suggested to me, in a letter written shortly before he died,

243 Jones 1964, 19.
244 Cassius Dio 55.23.2–6.
245 Bede, *H.E.* 1.29.