Amphitheatres and cultural change in Roman Britain

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Abstract:

Contemporary scholarship on amphitheatres, and those in Britain specifically, focuses heavily upon either these monuments individually from a strictly architectural view, or amphitheatres overall but with particular emphasis upon their categorisations. However, this approach does not allow for the combination of these issues relating to the emergence and spread of amphitheatres through Britain during this period in relation to both individual and wider provincial cultural change. This thesis brings these issues together, allowing me to track the spread of amphitheatres and the cultural change that they manifested from a chronological perspective, including the transfer of knowledge and influence both from elsewhere in the empire and throughout Britain itself. My thesis demonstrates why amphitheatres emerged in Britain and how they differ individually, both architecturally but also as manifestations of a new localised spectacle culture, rather than one that could be considered traditionally Roman or British. Crucially, this emerged organically without an agenda from the Romano-British government or a single centralised drive to build them. While the local wealthy elite did have a significant role in the emergence of these amphitheatres, engagement from those throughout society was also crucial for this organic process of creolisation to occur on a localised level. This is demonstrated through the crucial significance of local choice with the willing adoption and engagement with this aspect of traditionally Roman culture regardless of the activities of the social and government elite. While this occurs on a localised level and these monuments are primarily representations of the local spectacle culture within associated settlements, considering the emergence and spread of this cultural change chronologically, many amphitheatres appear connected in relation to the transfer of culture, knowledge, and capability behind their construction. My thesis concludes that, while individually unique, these Romano-British amphitheatres come together to form what can be considered a new and specifically Romano-British spectacle culture.

Abbreviations:

RIB – Roman Inscriptions of Britain

ILA – Inscriptions latines d'Aquitaine

AE – L'Année épigraphique

Chapter 1 – Introductory material:

1.1: Introduction to my project

The central focus of this project is the emergence and evolution of the amphitheatres of Roman Britain. While a great deal of academic and archaeological research has already been conducted into various aspects of spectacle culture and amphitheatres specifically, much of this has been in the form of individual site reports or more general overviews of the amphitheatres from an archaeological perspective. Works such as Bomgardner's *Story of the Roman Amphitheatre* (2013) and Futrell's (2001) research into the status and power associated with the events held within amphitheatres are significant examples of this. These works exemplify the academic interest in the form, symbolism, and potential uses of these monuments throughout the empire. There has been a notable level of focus into Britain specifically, the most significant work for my thesis being Wilmott's *The Roman Amphitheatre in Britain* (2008) which briefly covers all of the identified and theorised amphitheatres spanning the province both architecturally and to some extent on an individual contextual basis. Additionally, there have been a series of detailed excavations conducted at multiple sites throughout Britain such as at Dorchester (Bradley, 1976), London (Bateman, 1997) and Silchester (Fulford, 1989). There are even excavations being conducted at Richborough at the time of writing of this project. Despite the significant academic and archaeological focus in this area, these aspects appear to be mostly considered separately. There has not been a noticeable focus on how and why the amphitheatres and the culture surrounding them spread not only to Britain but also through the province itself. In my view and within this thesis these aspects are intrinsically linked. The willingness to construct amphitheatres and the choices in relation to their architecture can be considered a physical manifestation of both local and perhaps empire wide cultural influences as well as the individual agency of those behind their construction.

Research has demonstrated that amphitheatres were constructed throughout the empire and Britain specifically. Though through my own investigation it appears that examples within Rome and Italy specifically have been the main subject of this area of research. This in my view provides a perhaps problematic or singular representation of the cultural value and status of amphitheatres. While there are certainly themes or more general aspects of these monuments applicable to examples throughout the empire, the cultural and architectural significance of amphitheatres should be looked at within their individual contexts. As I shall consider throughout this project, this can be broken down incrementally to some extent. I propose to investigate these monuments as a part of the empire while considering the nature of Roman

imperialism under which they were constructed, the political, social, and economic situation in Roman Britain at the time of their construction overall and also the immediate context of the settlement they were constructed in relation to. I shall discuss why this project is focused specifically on Britain later in this chapter. A key aspect of this project is to consider to what extent these monuments were meaningfully Romano-British in comparison to those constructed throughout the other provinces or Rome itself. It appears evident that the concept of amphitheatres originated in Italy, though to what extent the emergence of these monuments in Britain and the resulting form and status of them within the provincial context is a result of the combination of these two cultures is central to my project. The vital concept of these monuments as 'Romano-British' is further demonstrated through the 'creolisation' model I shall be using throughout this project suggesting that they are the result of these two cultures coming together organically.

1.2: The nature of Roman Imperialism and the progression of the Romanisation Theory

The inarguably outdated theory of 'Romanisation' proposed by Haverfield (1923) originally considered the process as a wave of Roman culture being imposed on Britons. Roman culture expressly took the place of their own hence Britain being 'Romanised'. This hypothesis cited by Haverfield has a plethora of issues, many of which were identified by J. Webster (2001), notably, the lack of engagement or focus placed upon the majority of people in Britain, Haverfield seemingly insisted that Romanisation of the elites represented society as a whole. He failed to expand upon the reasons why the lower classes did not seem to accept Roman culture to the same degree (Webster, 2001, 221). It is interesting in this case that Haverfield clearly noted native Celtic religion especially "seemed to have survived more vigorously" amongst the lower classes although he failed provide a suitable reason or much evidence for this (Haverfield, 1923, 21). Many ancient cultures and societies including the Romans were essentially dominated by religion, acting as a central belief system for every member of society regardless of class or status. It appears that religion under Roman rule in Britain also underwent a somewhat natural evolution with the emergence of Romano-Celtic temples throughout the province (Goodman, 2013). Much like the amphitheatres while these temples are still identifiable as such, they are essentially a product of the coming together of Roman, Gallic and British culture as well as a product of cultural shifts post-conquest. Nevertheless, one would assume that if strictly Roman culture was imposed upon Britons, this process of religious evolution would not have taken place and manifested physically through these temples. Furthermore, examples of these multi-cultural temples such as those located within the original hub of the Roman administration in Britain, Colchester (Muckelroy, 1976) suggests

this was not limited to the lower classes. The construction of these temples firstly required more funding than that which was presumably available to the lower classes. Secondly, if there was to be a grand mission of Romanisation perpetrated by the Roman administration, one would think due to the importance and authority religion held, that allowing Britons to essentially integrate their own beliefs into those of the Romans to create this hybrid culture would not have occurred.

I believe Haverfield's original hypothesis regarding Romanisation does demonstrate issues that can be tracked through the theory's progression up until very recently. Webster's investigation working chronologically through the progression and expansion of Romanisation and related theories in her work *Creolizing the Roman Provinces* (2001) is of great use when considering these issues. Notably, Collingwood did advance the theory regarding Britain somewhat, for the first time introducing the notion of a 'hybrid-culture' rather than simply the introduction of Roman culture (Collingwood, 1932). However, again the lack of focus placed upon the majority of those living in Britain is noticeable. This I believe is the primary failing of early theories surrounding the Romanisation of Britain. The seeming lack of care or interest surrounding those within Britain outside of the wealthy native and Roman elite I propose was the main academic shortcoming identifiable through the 20th century progression of theories relating to the Romanisation of Britain. This was to a certain extent brought to light with the Nativist critique of the 1970s. This theory originated in relation to North Africa due to its recent colonisation by Europeans (Webster, 2001, 212) with notable and comprehensive works on the theory by Laroui (1970) and Benabou (1976). This theory was still applicable to the Roman empire, it focused on bringing the issue of the agency of the native population to the forefront. Although it is important to consider the feelings and role of people within Britain at the time of Roman occupation, I cannot align myself with this approach. The central aspect of the Nativist theory was that Romanisation was simply a veneer, suggesting that behind closed doors native Britons ignored Roman culture, not specifically accepting, or denying it but rather being indifferent to it (Webster, 2001, 212). This goes very much against the general theory of this project considering these amphitheatres as 'Romano-British' in nature specifically. The lack of recognition regarding the role of the native population in the cultural changes that occurred under Roman occupation presents a clear problem. A critical aspect of spectacle culture is engagement from the population as a whole. Whether it be hosting or funding the games, attending events, or even owning associated material culture. Public engagement is vital regardless of class to a large extent.

Following up in the 1990s Millett's *The Romanization of Britain: an essay in archaeological interpretations* (1990), presenting his own theories regarding Romanisation significantly advanced academic understanding of the concept. Webster noted Millett provides two major advances from Haverfield's original theory, initially and vitally recognising that native people took an active role in the process and were not simply "given civilisation" (Webster, 2001, 209). Millett accepts that this was largely a spontaneous process, with the main transfer of culture coming down from connections between native and Roman elites. He further mentions the motivations behind native elites working alongside Rome mostly through the desire to advance their own positions within this new society (Millett, 1992). I do agree to some extent with Millett's theories, however yet again it is noticeable that the focus is placed on the upper-class minority. Undeniably the role of the wealthy elites within Britain is important to my project. The nature of spectacle culture as a 'service' and something to a certain degree for leisure required at the very least wealthy nobles to provide funding for such events. Correspondingly the requirement for specific structures such as amphitheatres or forums to be constructed to host events necessitates again, either very wealthy individuals or the government to commission, fund and organise their construction.

However, this is not to say that these changes were entirely controlled by wealthy elites, or the Roman government as alluded to earlier. The role of Britain's inhabitants, native Britons or otherwise will also be of paramount importance to my research, specifically, the role played by those, not in positions of power or wealth. Progressing from Haverfield's proposal of the Romanisation process (1923) and the role indigenous elites had in simply implementing what the Romans presented to them, more recent ideas suggest that people of the elite class can be considered more active agents in this process of cultural change, making significant choices in relation to the adoption of new culture (Mattingly, 2007,15). This is demonstrated by the necessity of government and elite involvement regarding the introduction of the Romano-British amphitheatres, especially in the realms of architecture and the allocation of funds and materials. Yet, the role of the lower classes and majority within Roman Britain in relation to the process of cultural change in regard to the emergence and integration of these amphitheatres is of critical importance throughout this project. This post-colonial approach and the creolisation model I plan to base my research upon appear especially valuable and pertinent when investigating cultural change within the realms of spectacle culture. Before I delve into the reasons behind this, it is important to lay out what I mean by creolisation, especially since it will provide the primary theoretical framework for this project.

The crucial aspect of creolisation is that rather than the replacement of one culture by another, as proposed by Haverfield (1923), it describes the blending of two cultures resulting in an ambiguous culture being created (Webster, 2001). Webster also noted this process is often centred around religion, positing that in the Western Roman provinces indigenous people were exposed to the Roman Pantheon. Especially due to the evolvement of Roman religion already it is certainly possible a creole Romano-Celtic belief system was developed (Webster, 2001, 219). The creolisation model overall suggests specifically in the case of 'Romanisation' that upon the introduction of Roman culture neither culture was superior nor extinguished the other. Rather they produced a new culture taking elements from each. In this project, I am considering the introduction and construction of these Romano-British amphitheatres as physical manifestations of this new spectacle culture formed in Britain during this period.

A primary criticism of this model by Mattingly suggests that the emphasis on the lower orders rather than the entire spectrum of society may limit the "explanatory power" of the creolisation model (2004, 7). I can see how this would be a significant issue in relation to some aspects of cultural change. However, in relation to this project, the focus is on Roman-British amphitheatres as results and physical manifestations of this process. While the 'elite' within Britain must have been responsible for the actual construction and planning of these amphitheatres, their success in relation to cultural integration and change was in my view steered by the community at large and their reaction to the construction of these amphitheatres. Furthermore, I view these monuments specifically as a product of the creolisation process both physically and culturally. While they are all unique architecturally, contextually and culturally, they are all still recognised as amphitheatres ultimately. Their individuality comes from the introduction of this traditionally Roman concept to individual contexts and their associated culture through an organic process of creolisation. In respect to the focus on the lower classes, I am pursuing a tempered version of the creolisation model, retaining its essential insight that interactions between Romans and provincials created new forms of culture. In this case I view these amphitheatres as physical manifestations of this new culture, though taking Mattingly's critiques into account I am applying this to both the lower classes and the elite within Britain. This is essential when considering the introduction of these monuments specifically and spectacle culture.

Mattingly's own approach of "discrepant identities" places further significance on the diversity and heterogeneity of experience under provincial Roman rule, even to some extent on an individual basis (Mattingly, 2004). I agree with this in that there was no "stereotypical life" in

Roman Britain (Mattingly, 2007). It is important to consider the wide range of responses to the Roman invasion and Roman rule in Britain, from eager integration and pre-invasion alliances to resistance to the invasion itself and ongoing Roman control afterwards. Identity is important to my research, but it is not the focus of this project, however this theoretical approach certainly has its place within this project. In relation to the introduction of amphitheatres specifically, the main way in which we can propose the success of their emergence both physically and culturally is through their initial construction, specific architecture and potential period of use and maintenance. My primary focus is the culture surrounding these monuments specifically as a product of creolisation. Despite this, when considering the experience of groups and individuals in relation to the introduction of and use of these amphitheatres even on an individual level Mattingly's approach will be useful throughout this project. My approach does place significant focus on the agency of indigenous and Roman people in relation to the process of creolisation and their role in the introduction of this new spectacle culture. Regardless of potential motivations or consequences it is down to the agency of the individuals and groups of any class or status within Roman Britain. This is also touched upon by Mattingly (2011, 29-30) when considering "discrepant experiences", it is vital to consider a spectrum of experience beyond the binary of the ruled and the rulers. However, it must be noted that in relation to the emergence and especially the construction of Romano-British amphitheatres, those within the elite and lower orders of society played significantly different roles in steering the process of cultural change that these monuments represented.

This is to some extent respecting of Millett's approach placing a lot of emphasis and power regarding the process of cultural change into the hands of indigenous people. However, it is important that I distinguish myself from Millett's ideas due to the framework of this project not purely focusing on the 'trickle down' of Roman culture from the elite within Britain (Millett, 1992). Furthermore, Millett's proposal falls short due to his presumption of emulation, those in Britain were trying to emulate Roman culture rather than combining it with their own. More precisely, my approach suggests the power capable of steering cultural change does not only lie in the hands of the wealthy and powerful few within Britain, whether Roman or native. But rather cultural change must be ushered in by populations with different groups and individuals taking on the roles necessary. However, this is further necessitated by their conscious decision to engage with change based on their motivations. While there are other limiting factors such as capability and societal circumstances that apply in differing degrees to everyone within society the agency involved in even attempting to overcome these is still significant. In relation to amphitheatres specifically the overcoming of these potentially

limiting factors such as funding, planning and the eventual knowledge in relation to the construction of these monuments may only serve to emphasize their importance culturally and the motivations that drove creolisation. It is also of paramount importance that we understand Romano-British culture was not an emulation of Roman culture or just a continuation of British culture, more accurately I will argue a creole culture was formed by the combination of both. This occurred naturally during the Roman occupation, rather than simply an instantaneous program led by local and Roman elites of introducing purely Roman culture. Mattingly notes that a primary issue with Romanisation in emphasising the role of native elites is that it diminishes the influence of the state of Rome (Mattingly, 2007, 15). However, in relation to spectacle culture specifically, this is not the case. There was no direct purposeful influence or an agenda behind the introduction of amphitheatres to Britain managed by Rome. This process occurring organically, without interference or an agenda pushed by the Roman state is a vital distinction for this project.

Furthermore, it is crucial to investigate what these differing motivations regarding participation on any level in this new culture were. These may be dependent on multiple factors. Primarily I believe these would have been class, status and to a certain extent the origin of the individual. The nature and motivation of the invasion of Britain as a whole is something that I need to take into account throughout this project. The nature of Roman imperialism is directly linked to theories surrounding 'Romanisation' and alongside it has also developed theoretically. I will be investigating and clarifying particular aspects of Roman culture within Rome itself, specifically relating to the games and the military in the first chapter and within the context of the invasion of Britain in the second chapter of this project. At this introductory stage, I want to briefly lay out my own thoughts regarding Roman imperialism and how it will work into my creolisation framework. It seems somewhat clear that the obsolete idea of "defensive imperialism" especially when talking about Rome is no longer viable (Sidebottom, 2005, 315-17). In more up to date models proposed by Mattingly (2013), Morley (2010) and Gardner (2013), it is common now within academia to see Rome as the aggressor. Mattingly specifically cited that many sources such as Virgil's *Aeneid* stating bringing nations under Roman control to "impose the ways of peace" (6.851ff) were "veiled apologies" for Roman dominance (Mattingly, 2013, 17). From my research which I shall explain in detail in chapter two, I am inclined to agree with this theory, and within my project I view Rome as an aggressive expansionist state. I do not view the Roman policy in a negative light for this, rather it is a fact that must be acknowledged within the realms of Roman imperialism and in the context of the invasion and occupation of Britain. This is especially significant when

investigating the motivations by Romans and the reaction of native people concerning cultural changes within Britain.

It appears evident that Rome did not force this cultural change within Britain, as has been the case with various forms of imperialism through history, especially after establishing control over most of the province of Britain. Those who allied with Rome such as friendly kings were allowed to keep their power and influence, such as the famous king Tiberius Claudius Cogidubnus, a client king of Silchester who allied himself with Claudius' forces and was loyal to Rome during the Boudican revolts of A.D.60/1. For this, he was lavishly rewarded with power and influence in Britain (Moorhead, Stuttard, 2016). Tacitus even mentions him as a "faithful ally" and says that some states in Britain were given to him as a reward (*Agricola*, 14). This system benefitted both sides, meaning far less work and potential bloodshed for both the Romans and Britons and perhaps even encouraging other tribes in Britain to surrender to Rome with the promise that they may keep their current powers. However, outside of the wealthy elite engaged in these decisions, it seems that the wider population were often left down to their own agency to some extent in relation to their engagement with Roman culture without specifically political motivations. In this case, their fate was often decided by their tribal leaders and their reaction against the invading Roman forces initially.

Once the province had been brought into the Roman administration to a certain extent the cultural change was set in motion. Yet it is vital to consider the events of the invasion itself and how Rome treated the native people of Britain. Of course, I also need to acknowledge the fact that these original sentiments against or specifically in support of the Romans would presumably change or become diluted over generations as the culture changed. One aspect of Roman culture which was quickly introduced was its system of ruling and government. This brings me back to my ideas surrounding Roman imperialism for this project. The fact that native individuals were permitted to retain power and influence under this system of Roman government suggests this was done for both convenience by Rome and also to elicit control through what they believed to be a superior and easier system. It also shows that Rome does have the power to dictate systematic changes within Britain.

However, in the interests of keeping my creolisation model in mind, this system of government and its implementation into Britain will have mainly affected the upper echelons of society. The lower-class masses, principally those who lived outside of major power centres are unlikely to have been directly affected by this new government. Yet, concerning those who did live within cities and settlements where the Roman system of government was initially

introduced (Millett, 1992) partaking in it for the average people within society was somewhat optional. This comes back to a notion that status and reputation were the main reasons behind the Roman expansion and specifically the invasion and occupation of Britain. Past invading, taking control of and to a certain extent changing Britain through the introduction of the Roman style of government, Rome compared to many other empires was relatively passive when it came to the imperial government directly taking control. Although the reasons behind the invasion and the nature of Roman imperialism itself may not be considered honourable, it is vital to understand the Romans sought to control, not conquer. I do not believe Rome made a conscious effort to change the indigenous culture or practices, introducing their own and thus providing this to some extent as an alternative all comes down to the agency of the individuals within Britain. Rome's approach to the provinces is certainly I believe the reason that its own empire is championed above others throughout history. While there are various examples of Britain and its population being exploited, an issue I will also address further in chapter two the creolisation framework does somewhat rely upon cultural changes and the interaction between the native and invaders' culture in this context to meet somewhat freely and fluidly, rather than one being forced over the other. One may be viewed as superior to the other, yet this is down the individual to decide and not the government or ruling powers. It is also significant that these changes occurred over the course of the Roman occupation and over multiple generations as cultural values, material culture and society changed and progressed somewhat naturally.

1.3: An overview of the political and social significance of amphitheatres in the Roman empire

Amphitheatres throughout the empire should be considered unique based upon their individual contexts and then on a wider scale within their province. For example, while Romano-British amphitheatres may be bound together as distinctly 'Romano-British' when compared to those constructed in Gaul or Italy, they are also distinct on an individual level compared to one another within the province. However, it seems apparent that these physical representations of what may be considered originally Roman culture appear almost omnipresent throughout the provinces of the empire with excavated examples in Gaul (Lyons, Nimes), Germania (Avenches, Xanten), Hispania (Tarragona) and Africa (El Djem) (Benario, 1981). In my view this must represent their significance on an empire wide level. It cannot be coincidence that this aspect of Roman culture was adopted and adapted by such a wide range of differing cultures. This probable significance is magnified by the system of Roman imperialism discussed in section 1.2, concluding that the introduction of these monuments was

to some extent voluntary and even embraced by the local populations within the Roman provinces. Progressing from these conclusions, I would propose that the political and social significance of amphitheatres may have been one of the primary reasons for their adoption throughout the empire. It is vital to examine their uses and the power and influence that they held within Rome to consider this as a model of their intended uses within the provinces, whilst accepting that there will certainly be significant differences between amphitheatres in Rome and those in Roman Britain. It also worth considering amphitheatres originally are viewed as solely an Italian invention and were not derived from Greek or any prior culture. In Wilmott's view they stood as perfect examples of *Romanitas* "Romaness" (Wilmott, 2008, 8). Of course, if this was the case it will certainly diminish across the centuries of Roman occupation as the process of creolisation takes place organically. This view of amphitheatres as an originally Roman invention and continued representation of *Romanitas* is also crucial to my implementation of the creolisation model. While the culture surrounding Romano-British amphitheatres is unique and a product of the melding of various cultures, this "Romaness" I believe is not totally lost through this process. A crucial component to this process is that neither culture is totally erased. Rather, to what extent traditional Roman culture or the "Romaness" of these monuments is championed over other cultural or architectural elements must be considered on an individual basis within the context of each Romano-British amphitheatre. Despite the unique architecture and culture of these monuments, I do not believe that the motivations for constructing amphitheatres in Roman Britain, or any province will have changed to a great degree over this time. Especially considering the apparent freedoms and individual agency involved in their planning, funding and construction as shall be discussed in detail later within this chapter.

In this instance, the amphitheatres within Italy provide I believe a baseline of the 'most Roman' examples. Especially with the introduction of the Roman political system into the provinces such as Britain to what extent the social and political significance of amphitheatres in Rome can be applied to those in Britain is certainly an issue that requires serious consideration. At this stage, the appearance of these monuments throughout the empire alongside the Roman system of administration appears to exemplify their significance within it. It is important to clarify amphitheatres' importance in a political and cultural sense in Rome itself. The origins of the games that took place in these buildings started mainly commemoratively and had robust religious associations. A good example of this was recorded by Pliny in his work *Natural History*, noting even late into the Republic Caesar's apparent main reason for hosting games in 65.B.C. was for his father's funeral in which criminals fought wild

beasts with all of their equipment made of silver (Pliny the Elder, 33.53). However, transitioning into the Imperial period it seems clear that political issues took over in terms of motivation for organising games especially in Rome. The amphitheatre became a social and political centre for elites and the emperor to display their wealth and power and for them to compete against one another (Hopkins, 1983, 12). Emperors and the elite classes were eager to publicly celebrate military prowess, marriage or the dedication of building projects (Edmondson, 2002, 9). This is an area in which the games in Rome seem to have differed from those in Roman Britain and potentially other provinces. The lack of the emperor's consistent presence in the provinces suggests that the amphitheatres and the spectacles held there took on a different motive and meaning. Without the emperor, wealthy individuals, and elites able to retain their power under the Roman administration would have taken on the role to gain political status and popularity.

In Rome itself a sense of reputation was placed onto these structures because the state, or later the emperor, was responsible for providing games and building amphitheatres as a duty to the people. In the provinces it is evident that this sense of reputation and resulting competition was rife between wealthy elites willing and able to sponsor the construction of amphitheatres and events within them. The Magerius Mosaic from North Africa is a solid example of this within the provinces. A 3rd century mosaic in a private home displaying duels between men and leopards repeatedly praises Magerius as the sponsor of the games. Futrell further comments, rightfully in my view, that this "captures the meaning of the arena in Roman society" (Futrell, 2006, 50), especially in relation to my own research in the provinces outside of Italy. Gladiatorial shows were known as *Munera* meaning simply "duty" or "obligation" (Wilmott, 2008, 12). To what extent these specific events took place in Britain will be a consideration throughout this project. One may expect events within provinces, like the amphitheatres physically, to be a representation of individual or local cultures; though it is also probable in my view that events just like the amphitheatres themselves were also products of the natural combination of Roman and local culture.

Dio records that even though Vespasian was known to not enjoy gladiatorial fighting (*Roman History*, 65. 15), it was under his rule that Nero's Golden House was converted into the Flavian amphitheatre (*The Colosseum*). Bateman stated that Vespasian saw himself as a restorer of Republican virtues and the amphitheatre was "a place of specifically Roman legitimacy" (1997, 82). This principle is well illustrated by the surge of amphitheatre construction under the Flavians (Bateman, 1997, 82). Similarly, Hadrian, who Dio mentioned as not personally supporting amphitheatres, seems to have held games in many cities he visited (Dio, LXIX, 10.

1). The concept of the amphitheatre being quintessentially Roman and essential to Roman culture both as a physical structure and on a societal and political basis is a common theme in the primary sources who spoke about the games. The building itself promoted a display of Roman virtues vital to society in Rome. Again, to what extent this may be transferred culturally to provinces such as Britain is an issue that shall be considered throughout this project. This was especially the case during the *Pax Romana* when the amphitheatre probably gave the Roman people, specifically the lower class, an outlet for aggression or anger. At the time many of the aristocracy perceived the games as a crucial aspect of society in relation to keeping order (Hopkins, 1983). Games held in amphitheatres can also be seen in part as a by-product of war. Hopkins wrote at length of Rome's devotion to war and imperial expansion that allowed them to build and dominate their empire. The amphitheatre permitted these war-like traditions and actions to be converted and preserved in mainstream society even during times of peace as a "replayed drama of cruelty, blood and death" (Hopkins, 1983, 22). Executions of condemned criminals reinforced moral order and reminded the spectators of the fate of those who committed crimes against the Roman state. D. G. Kyle stated that these executions demonstrated the "the limits of the human versus the natural world in beast combats, the limits of morality, law, and social order" (Kyle, 1998, 10). These seemingly gruesome but artistic events were described and detailed by authors such as Seneca in his letters, even going as far as stating "it is pure murder" (Seneca, 7:8).

This brutal function of the amphitheatres could have been very significant within the provinces such as Britain when recently brought under Roman control. While it may be used to promote pro-Roman sentiment through positive means by providing leisure and entertainment, the other side of brutal spectacles and a display of power by those now allied with the Roman administration would have also had a significant impact on those viewing them. The use of the amphitheatres as a method of suppression was especially visible in Rome itself. This was not only symbolically but physically through the enforced class-based seating system that had been the case since 194.B.C. when senators first gained their own privileged seats. This advanced in 67.B.C. with the introduction of the *Lex Roscia* i.e., laying down the first fourteen rows of seats for the equestrian order. This was so entrenched in the Roman consciousness that the official designation for members of this order was "those who have the right to sit in the equestrian seats" (*quibus sedendi in equestribus locis ius erat*) (Edmonson, 2002, 10). The pressure placed upon individuals within Roman society surrounding their own class and status was immense. Amphitheatres and *ludi* played a vital role in this, especially within the Roman elite and in part related to their ability to host the most extravagant games. This is reflected in

primary Roman sources e.g., Suetonius wrote regarding Tiberius stating, "He gave no public shows at all, and very seldom attended those given by others, for fear that some request be made of him" (Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 47.1). This appears highly critical of the lack of games hosted by Tiberius as he was not seen to be fulfilling this aspect of his obligations to the people.

The games and the amphitheatres they were held in are mentioned frequently in primary accounts and sources either as historical accounts or by providing philosophical observations e.g. Dio's writings. We can assess from other primary accounts what the Roman elites' attitudes towards the games actually were. Pliny the Younger in his Letters to Calvisus was discussing the Circensian games he attended and described them as *"*an entertainment I have no taste for" even going as far to congratulate himself on his indifference to "these pleasures" prefering books over such an "idle occupation" (Pliny, 9.6). However, the political implications and imagery used within the arena in my view is undeniable. Claudius staged the storming and sacking of a town "in the manner of real warfare" recreating the surrender of kings of the Britons and presided dressed in a general's cloak (Suetonius, *Claudius,* 21.6). He also re-enacted a naval battle on the Fucine Lake consisting of 100 ships and 19000 sailors as the Rhodians and Sicilians (Suetonius, *Claudius,* 21.6). In the 2nd century A.D. increasingly realistic spectacles have been documented in the amphitheatres, even extending to punishments based on the recreation of the story of Paris with a wooden mountain, live goats and a stream (Apuleius*, Metamorphoses, 10.34*).

This idea of control over the lower classes through these structures and the games is pertinent to not only Rome but its provinces. One of the primary transferable aspects comes with the structural significance and the impact that these amphitheatres had on the provincial landscape. Bomgardner stated "The Colosseum conveyed both majesty and might of the Roman empire, it dominates the space" (Bomgardner, 2013, 2). The Colosseum was in my opinion the most tremendous example of an amphitheatre in the whole empire, seating 50,000 spectators (Hopkins, 1983, 16). As a demonstration of purely Roman architecture it does truly resemble a physical embodiment of the virtues and power exemplifed by Roman spectacle culture. The idea of this transference of a structural, physical and consistent representation of political status, wealth and power is especially significant when considering the amphitheatres of Roman Britain and the provinces. Especially in Britain due to a lack of notable evidence in relation to the specific uses of these amphitheatres, much of the focus in relation to their significance socially and politically must come from their architecture and place within the landscape.

Newmyer sees the ancient emphasis on the "technical skill" within these performances showing the Roman preference for "artificial over the natural" but also displaying their control over nature (Newmyer, 1984, 1-3). This may also be very much applicable to the actual construction and planning of these monuments as a triumph not only over nature but perhaps as a representation of technical capability and resources. This is primarily true within Rome itself and Italy where the amphitheatre represented a symbol of Roman authority and status that the people of Rome itself could be proud of and relate to, as well as being a physical embodiment of order, punishment and the domination of others. This was coupled with the perceived necessity for emperors and members of the Roman elite to push the boundaries constantly of what could be accomplished within these spectacles by forever increasing their scale and magnificence. Conversely within Roman Britain the early amphitheatres may have provided the Britons with a physical and authoritative memento of their own subjugation under Roman power.

This demonstrates that there is also the question of perception for those in Britain attending events or even just viewing these structures. To what extent these monuments would be viewed as 'Roman' or a representation of Roman power specifically by the average person is certainly debatable and may depend on their context and individual experience. This is where Mattingly's (2004) approach of 'discrepant identities' is especially relevant to my project. While it seems highly probable that those behind their construction would have been aware of this aspect of amphitheatres, the vast difference in perception between wealthy elites engaged within the political system and the majority of the population essentially engaging with and or acting as observers to the introduction of amphitheatres is crucial to my project. Even so, as Mattingly's approach suggests, while these individuals and groups belonged to the elite social and political class, their experiences, and perceptions of the Roman administration during this period were still highly diverse. Despite this, they were still willing and capable of investing in amphitheatres specifically over other monuments. This aspect of agency in relation to individual and group roles in the construction these monuments is essential to my theoretical framework. As established, the adoption of amphitheatres in Britain appears to have been primarily out of choice and the melding of traditionally Roman and British culture.

Despite the architectural freedom of those within the Romano-British elite, it is hard to ignore the reality of the threat of Roman domination had British elites refused or fought back against Rome as demonstrated by rebellions such as the Boudican revolt of A.D.60. The agency and continuation of power allowed by the Roman administration cannot be confused for kindness. As noted, this system appears to have worked best for both Rome and the Britons, but this

does not mean that the threat of violence and displays of power by Rome were not present also regardless of whether these were manifested by Romans or local elites and client kings aligned with them. Moorhead and Stuttard observed that due to the arguable success of the 'shock and awe' tactics of the military invasion of Britain they moved onto a hearts and minds approach towards the population (Moorhead, Stuttard, 2016, 89-119). This most likely occurred before and immediately after the initial conquest (Creighton, 2006) . It is of paramount importance to understand what is meant by 'shock and awe' tactics. It is no secret that the Romans were particularly brutal towards their enemies. The focus was strongly upon showing their dominance through architecture and acts intended to frighten natives into submission. At the initial *Coloniae* founding at Colchester (*Camulodunum*), which came before London, the centre of the Roman administration, it is said that severed heads were displayed on stakes beside the triumphal arch as a reminder of Roman domination (Crummy, 1997, 54). Tacitus confirms this recording the reactions of British tribes "The Trinovantes felt a bitter hatred for the veterans" (Tacitus, *Annals*, 14-31). Even when considering those within Britain of the elite classes and tribes that allied with Rome perhaps even prior to the invasion and introduction of Britain to the Roman administration, Mattingly (2004, 22) rightfully points out that "being Roman also involved being subjects". This again comes back to this idea of individual experiences, while some may have been willing to eagerly submit to the Roman administration or ally alongside them, the non-consensual aspect of this relationship could certainly influence individual's agency and motivations (Mattingly, 2004, 22).

This is where I believe the main differences lie between amphitheatres in Rome and those in the provinces. In many cases amphitheatres did wield entrenched social and political influence and throughout the empire were of paramount importance as representations of Roman culture and virtues. However, their physical and symbolic presences within settlements which they often dominated, even in Rome, often defined the differing roles they played within cultures. I wonder to what extent these structures and their spectacles were primarily there to act as a control system and a violent outlet for the bloodlust of the surrounding populace. Were they arenas of death to execute the condemned or as an area of competition for the political elite and even the emperor himself, or even just as meeting places? I believe that amphitheatres could represent and function as a combination of all of these roles. Depending on the context or landscape of the structure itself the issue of its primary use and reasons behind the introduction of amphitheatres could vary enormously.

Chapter 2 – Introduction to the Amphitheatres of Roman Britain:

2.1: Why I have chosen to focus on Roman Britain and its amphitheatres

As mentioned previously, there appears to be a significant gap within the academic sphere when considering the origins of the amphitheatres of Roman Britain in relation to the evolution of culture within the province during the Roman occupation. Mattingly (2007) focuses heavily on the diversity of experience within Britain during the period of Roman occupation and how culture changed on different provincial and societal levels. While his 'discrepant identities' approach is significant and useful within my project, the focus is not upon spectacle culture or amphitheatres. Furthermore, as noted in the previous chapter, I believe that this focus has only a limited application to this project specifically. I believe this evolution of spectacle culture took place through the creolisation theory in Britain. The separation of the architectural side of amphitheatres and their place as a facet of cultural change within the provinces seems especially evident in Britain. Whilst Romano-British amphitheatres have been well researched with individual detailed site reports at significant sites such as Dorchester (Bradley, 1976), London (Bateman, 1997) and Silchester (Fulford, 1989) there is little focus on the actual introduction and culture surrounding these monuments. While there has been speculation such as by Bradley (1976) and Bateman (1997) as to what they may have been used for, the cultural changes surrounding the construction of these amphitheatres have not been considered significantly. As I have discussed at length thus far, the character of Roman imperialism during the early Imperial period and the seemingly natural blending of cultures within Britain would lead me to suggest that the monuments constructed throughout the province at that time may offer a unique insight into the culture that produced them.

Amphitheatres represent, in my view, the most prestigious, visible, and best researched physical manifestations of spectacle culture. The funding, planning and technological capabilities necessary for their construction in Britain display the willingness of those responsible for their adoption to engage with this aspect of originally 'Roman' culture and truly make it their own. In some ways, I would propose that amphitheatres are a perfect example of the creolisation model in relation to architecture due to their nature as mainly public monuments without significant administrative roles. They represent not only the active engagement of wealthy elites and groups behind their construction but also a possibility and probability of the majority within associated Romano-British settlements to engage with this aspect of Romano-British culture actively through their own agency. This specific engagement possibly across the class and status system within society I would propose makes

amphitheatres especially useful when considering the process of cultural change and the introduction of spectacle culture to Britain. The issue of choice is especially significant throughout this project; having established that this aspect of Romano-British culture was not forced upon the people of Britain, one must consider why these people seemingly willingly engaged with the construction and use of amphitheatres.

It is also for this reason as well as in the interest of the length of my project that I shall be focusing specifically on amphitheatres rather than material culture in relation to spectacle culture in Britain. Numerous examples of material culture relating to both amphitheatres and the specific events held within them have been identified throughout Britain such as multiple mould designs for imitation samian pottery from Colchester depicting gladiatorial combat (Wilmott, 2008, 174-5), gladiatorial games depicted in a mosaic from Kent and a relief showing a left-handed *retiarius* gladiator from Chester (Wilmott, 2008). However, in my view, these examples do not explicitly exemplify active engagement with this aspect of spectacle culture. It is impossible to accurately determine how the individuals who both owned and saw these pieces of art interpreted them or to what extent they were aware of the culture surrounding them. Many people would have come from settlements where amphitheatres had not been constructed and would likely have never seen the architecture or the spectacles held within them. Additionally, they are not necessarily reflective of events within Britain and as such not representative of the culture unique to the province and therefore not specifically relevant to the process of creolisation that my project is modelled around. While it is significant that the moulds from Colchester appear to have been imitations there is no way of knowing who they were used by. It could perhaps have been local people or Romans living in Colchester at the time. Simply put, there are too many issues to consider when tackling the role of material culture in relation to the cultural change through the introduction of spectacle culture within this thesis, especially alongside the amphitheatres which in my view already provide significant evidence for the population's engagement with and adoption of spectacle culture through their own agency. The unique nature of these amphitheatres when compared to examples throughout the empire also reflects the process of creolisation on a larger architectural scale through which the process and provenance can be tracked. This cannot be said for individual pieces of art and material culture, with depictions of gladiators in material culture appearing throughout the empire in a very similar manner.

One area of interest is how Britain is often viewed by Roman primary authors prior to and after the Roman invasion. Caesar himself focused on the distinct 'otherness' of Britain where they "dye their bodies with woad, which produces a blue colour" (Caesar, *Gallic War,* V.14). This

theme is also mentioned in Tacitus' work *Agricola* referring to Britain as "where land and nature end" (Tacitus*, Agricola, XXXIII*). This distinct cultural disconnect between the people of Britain and the invading and settling Roman forces may have affected both structural but also intended cultural aspects of amphitheatres. However, having considered the nature of creolisation and how this influx and evolution of culture within the province occurred after the Roman invasion, one also must consider to what extent the attitude of the Romans in regard to Britain, especially prior to the introduction of the province into the Roman administration, would have really mattered. Rather, it may even demonstrate the natural process of creolisation due to the freedoms that those within Britain were allowed during the Roman occupation. It must also be noted that these views are those of the Roman aristocracy specifically and perhaps not representative of the wider Roman population's opinion. However, it must also be considered to what extent those within Rome would have access to different sources or even experiences in relation to Britain during this period. Even so, if Iron Age British culture is to be considered so strange and distinct from Roman culture, the combination of these two cultures to form something that is so uniquely Romano-British is even more significant and worthy of study.

Having considered the Roman attitudes towards Britain and the nature of Roman imperialism in relation to the invasion of the province, the transfer of knowledge in relation to amphitheatres to Britain does not appear to me to have been purposeful. This aspect of essentially accidental inspiration rather than the purposeful passing on or transfer of this facet of Roman culture is a consideration key to my research. This is applicable to Britain specifically, and the question of how individuals and groups in Britain were even capable of constructing amphitheatres is a crucial question to consider throughout this project. My methodology unlike the category-based approach implemented by Wilmott (2008) shall focus on tracking this aspect of the spread amphitheatres through Britain as they are constructed by various groups and in a variety of contexts. There are essentially two probable options for each amphitheatre in relation to inspiration and knowledge. Either they were inspired by those already constructed in Britain, or the knowledge and inspiration for their construction came to Britain from outside the province. These two options must be considered individually for each example in Britain and appears to me to have been a factor overlooked thus far in relation to Romano-British amphitheatres.

A further issue to consider is the landscape of Britain and how its topographical or environmental limitations may have impacted the construction of amphitheatres. Wilmott did suggest the idea that amphitheatres would adapt to the agricultural and societal contexts in

which they were constructed. In conjunction with this Wilmott mentioned that in many cases function dictated the form of these amphitheatres (Wilmott, 2008, 7-8). This consideration as to what is actually possible in terms of the environment or resources is also thought provoking; perhaps dictating the form and location of Romano-British amphitheatres. However, the ability throughout the empire to transport materials and to transform the landscape must also be considered again coming down to factors such as capability, funding, and resources. It is crucial that both factors are explored in detail throughout this project. The idea proposed of the intended function of these amphitheatres being a primary factor in dictating their form and architecture is also certainly something to consider. However, due to the lack of significant evidence in relation to the specific uses of Romano-British amphitheatres considering the wide range of possible events they may have been used for may hinge primarily on the related architectural limitations of Romano-British amphitheatres; essentially what was possible with specific examples due to their size and architecture rather than what events they may have been built precisely for. This exemplifies another area of Romano-British amphitheatres that requires significant further academic attention, and this is something I shall consider throughout this project. It may be reasonably assumed that just like the form of these amphitheatres, their uses may have been unique to the changing Romano-British culture rather than simply mirroring events from Rome or elsewhere in the empire.

2.2: The Roman occupation of Britain and the architectural landscape under Roman rule

A defining question that this project attempts to answer is why amphitheatres were constructed throughout Britain during the Roman occupation. A crucial component of this question especially when considering the creolisation model as discussed previously, is the element of choice behind public building projects throughout Britain of which amphitheatres were a part. Therefore, it is worth considering not just amphitheatres, but other public or private building projects associated with them, in terms of their overall political, social, and economic significance. As such, understanding the wider architectural landscape and situation under the Roman administration is crucial to contemplating the role that amphitheatres held within Romano-British society including the motivations behind their construction as shall be discussed in section 2.3.

The invasion of Britain under Claudius occurred in A.D.43 (Sauer, 2002) although the Britons had some connection to the Roman Empire prior to this date, especially when considering the invasion attempt by Caesar that occurred almost a century prior. Jones has proposed that urbanisation "marked by increasing nucleation taking place" specifically in the tribal centres of the south-east occurred before the Claudian invasion; he even stresses that this perhaps

stemmed from Caesar's visit (Jones, 2004, 168). There is significant archaeological evidence for this proposal through primarily material culture, indicating that there was significant trading during the Late Iron Age at Chichester (Down, 1988, 5-6). In relation to urbanisation though, Jones argues that even perhaps prior to the Claudian invasion the "native aristocracy" had begun favouring the Roman style of "urbanism" due to its security and material benefits (Jones, 2004, 169-171). This issue is especially important when considering the introduction of spectacle culture. While amphitheatres undoubtably served a physical purpose both in appearance and use, they in many cases are not viewed as intrinsic to the running of a town unlike structures such as workshops or street grids. It is also worth noting that the earliest towns in south-east England such as Silchester originated from Iron Age tribal centres, the main constraints on the development of these settlements during the 1st century B.C being resources available but also and very significantly the motivations of individuals and groups behind their construction (Jones, 2001, 170-1). As discussed previously, urbanisation, including amphitheatres throughout Britain was not part of a wider project by the Roman administration. As shall be considered further in section 2.3, these monuments in my view were mostly planned, funded and built by individuals or groups not associated directly with the administration, but rather local elites within the towns or from the surrounding areas investing into urban development.

The invasion under Claudius appears to have been very successful, Claudius himself only spent 16 days in Britain as his forces had advanced to the mouth of the Thames, most likely via Richborough (Sauer, 2002, 340). After the initial crossing of the Thames the south-east of the province appears to have been mostly brought under Roman control. The Claudian triumphal arch erected in A.D.51 in Rome proclaimed the subjection of 11 British kings without any loss to the empire (Todd, 2004, 49). It is worth considering to what extent the foundation and urbanisation of settlements within the south-east was reliant upon the subjection of local elites and kings to Roman rule. As previously discussed there does appear to have been evidence of this prior to the Claudian invasion. However, for the most part and especially when investigating the amphitheatres specifically none seem to have been constructed prior to the Claudian invasion. One could propose that this is principally due to the function of amphitheatres physically and symbolically. However, as I shall discuss later, the categorisation and origins of these monuments significantly impacted the context, motivations, and source of their construction. In terms of amphitheatres separate from the Roman military none appear to have been constructed until the associated settlement and surrounding areas were under Roman control.

As would be expected, urban amphitheatres first started appearing in the south-east after the area had been brought into the Roman administration before spreading somewhat quickly south-west (Fig.2.1). Over the course of the 1st and 2nd centuries they spread further north and west (Fig.2.2). Most amphitheatres constructed in the province were in the south. This is understandable when considering the well-known concept of the "north-west/south-east divide" noted by Wilmott (2008, 44). While this theme can also be seen when investigating urbanisation in general under Roman rule the pattern is not simple, with areas of overlap, the divide is centred on a line dividing the Highland and Lowland areas of Britain between the River Tees and River Exe (Wilmott, 2008, 44). Wilmott has also noted, as I have proposed, that the area to the south-west is more heavily urbanised with clear Roman influence and public building works (Wilmott, 2008, 44). As one may expect, the north of the province especially past Hadrian's wall was extensively militarised with many auxiliary forts (Wilmott, 2008, 44). This area contains few Romano-British settlements and perhaps reinforces the importance of the implementation of the Roman administration prior to the investment into the construction of monuments by individuals and groups within these settlements. Nevertheless, there are examples of amphitheatres constructed in the north-west of Britain, the furthest northern example being at Newstead (Wilmott, 2008). It should be noted that examples constructed around the further northern frontiers such as Newstead come under the categorisation of 'military amphitheatres', an issue that I shall be discussing in detail in section 2.4.

At this stage, it is very much worth considering to what extent urbanisation spreading across the province was directly related to the military or Roman authorities during this early post-invasion period. This is especially relevant when investigating the introduction of amphitheatres specifically into Britain. As I have already highlighted, urbanisation throughout the province appears to have been primarily led by individuals and groups not directly associated with the imperial government, or at least not acting specifically on orders from the Roman administration. It should be noted that this was also in my opinion the case with amphitheatres constructed by the military, the funding for which shall also be discussed in section 2.3. Importantly, I would propose that the construction of military amphitheatres was just as every other example primarily voluntary even when associated with militarised settlements such as the legionary fortresses at Caerleon and Chester. This is further demonstrated by the lack of 'military amphitheatres' in relation to the widespread network of legionary and auxiliary forts and settlements throughout Britain with only six examples in my opinion of military amphitheatres located in Britain at this time.

The spread of amphitheatres over Britain alongside urbanisation and plethora of potential monuments available for individuals to invest in out of their own will introduces a further question in relation to the categorisation of Romano-British amphitheatres. For the purpose of this thesis, it is necessary to consider not only considering classifications such as 'urban' or 'military' monuments, but which proposed examples can be definitively classified as 'amphitheatres.' It remains a matter of opinion in relation to the categorisation of these monuments also highlights the issue of potential limitations when considering certain examples over others. This is demonstrated in Figures 2.1 and 2.2, with examples established as "certain" and "uncertain". Somewhat in line with the approach proposed by Wilmott (2008) I shall be focusing only on established examples of these amphitheatres throughout this project.

This is not to suggest that those classed as "uncertain" are not potentially still amphitheatres. The most thought-provoking and relevant examples of this is the structure at Frilford. I will us this monument as a brief case study to demonstrate the classification of amphitheatres I shall be focusing on throughout this project. The large circular monument was discovered by aerial photography in 1976. It was later subject to excavations and proposed to be an amphitheatre by Hingley (Kamash *et al.*, 2010, 106-7). However, it seems apparent that many present authors cast some doubt on this interpretation. Wilmott (2008) appears very much tentative in suggesting that this structure was an amphitheatre, especially in a "conventional sense" (2008, 131). The monument has also been described as "amphitheatre-like" (Kamash *et al.*, 2010, 115) in relation to its structure. While the circular form of the monument is unusual, as shall be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, Silchester Amphitheatre was also originally constructed with a near circular arena (Fulford, 1989, 13). So, this does not solely dismiss the potential of the monument at Frilford from being classified as an amphitheatre.

In my view, this exposes the main issue in the categorisation of these monuments as 'amphitheatres'. We cannot consider them as such just due to their contexts alone. While these monuments are a representation of their cultural and architectural contexts, all other public buildings are also physical representations of these alongside amphitheatres. At the same time, architectural features such as the shape of the monument itself, the shape of the arena, seating capacity and size, or the methods of access do not define these monuments as amphitheatres. Alternatively, a major focus throughout this project is the architectural and contextual individuality of these monuments within Roman Britain and the wider empire. This calls into question what it is about these monuments that defines them as amphitheatres specifically despite a plethora of contextual and architectural differences. The simplest answer

in my view would be the meaning of the word itself, coming from the ancient Greek ἀμφιθέατρον (*amphitheatron*) meaning 'around' or 'on both sides' and 'place of viewing' (Liddell, Scott, 1896). This is the main architectural feature that is necessary for the classification of these monuments as amphitheatres, regardless of size, shape, and context. It must be acknowledged that there is certainly some ambiguity throughout the empire, amphitheatres were not necessary to hold games and events. *Munera* for example, also took place within the forum, as mentioned by Livy (*From the Founding of the City*, 39. 46) and on a larger and more elaborate scale by Caesar, holding the celebrations for his daughter in 46.B.C. (*Suetonius, Julius Caesar,* 26.1-3). At the earliest dated amphitheatre in Pompeii (Bomgardner, 2013), the games appear to have been even more important that the structure itself, hence the dedicatory inscription calling it *spectacula* (Bomgardner, 2013), meaning shows or spectacles.

The classification of the monument at Frilford based upon its architecture is still somewhat dubious. While there does seem to be a bank located surrounding the structure, the original interpretation of the feature on the eastern side of the 'arena' as an entrance proved to be unsound due to the lack of stairs or slope down to the 'arena' or any point of access to the bank making it unsafe (Wilmott, 2008, 131). This has been "tentatively" suggested to be a viewpoint overlooking the 'arena' area (Wilmott, 2008, 131). A significant issue and concern is the layout of the bank itself and the low mound behind the wall of the enclosure. The dimensions of this mound provide no space for seating, terracing or even a substantial area or grassed surface which might accommodate an audience (Wilmott, 2008). Furthermore, the banks do not seem to surround the arena entirely, rather they terminated to the north-west and north-east (Kamash *et al.*, 2010, 113-17). As noted, there are no traces of any seating in the form of post-holes and beams for wooden superstructures or terraces for standing crowds (Kamash *et al.*, 2010, 108-110).

The monument has been referred to as "amphitheatre-like" and as a possible "semi-amphitheatre" (Kamash *et al.*, 2010, 118) with comparable examples noted in Gaul. Prior to more recent excavation, excavators in 2002 proposed alternative ideas of the monument's classification such as a ritual pool, formalising the spring outlet (Wilmott, 2008). It seems even now that present authors Kamash, Gosden and Lock (2010) doubt the original interpretation of this monument as an amphitheatre. The proposal of it being a "semi-amphitheatre" (Kamash *et al.*, 2010, 118) is certainly possible though at the same time, the lack of notable seating arrangements both in terms of architectural evidence and the physical layout of the wall and mound noted by Wilmott (2008) cast some doubt on this role. This is the primary reason I will

not be discussing the monument at Frilford in detail within this project alongside well established and researched Romano-British amphitheatres.

This aspect of current research and available material is also vital to the monuments I shall be investigating within this project. The aim of this thesis is to consider the process of cultural change that resulted in the emergence of these Romano-British amphitheatres, not to consider which proposed amphitheatres can be classified definitively as such. Furthermore, the information and research available in relation to each Romano-British amphitheatre individually is something that I must consider. In this thesis I shall discuss the majority of the established amphitheatres displayed in figures 2.1 and 2.2. However, some examples although confirmed to be amphitheatres, are lacking significant resources and specific evidence especially architecturally to consider alongside those that have undergone significant investigation and physical excavation.

Those I will not be discussing at length throughout this project for this reason are Caistor St Edmund Amphitheatre, Caerwent Amphitheatre and Canterbury Amphitheatre. The example at Caistor St Edmund was discovered in 1977 and it was subject to a geophysical survey in 1995 revealing a notable outline of the monument (Wilmott, 2008, 117). Outside of this, the monument does not seem to have undergone significant focus or excavation. Horlock (2009) in the Norfolk Heritage Explorer in relation to the Norfolk Mapping Programme still referred to the monument as a "probable amphitheatre", further suggesting that the small size of the monument does not represent a typical amphitheatre, but rather a Romano-Celtic theatre (Horlock, 2009). As noted above, in relation to Frilford, I do not believe that this alone is enough evidence to suggest that this monument is not an amphitheatre; rather the sources and evidence available are severely lacking in relation to this monument. This issue is also notable at Caerwent Amphitheatre, with Wilmott also referring to it as the "supposed amphitheatre" at Caerwent (2008, 119), further stating that the interpretation of the monument as an amphitheatre has not been proven. The monument was discovered during excavations of the Roman town in the early twentieth century, with the excavators suggesting that the structure also appears possibly unfinished (Wilmott, 2008, 118-119). There do seem to be other ideas of what this structure may represent such as a livestock marketplace (Wilmott, 2008, 119).

The monument discovered at Canterbury during the post-war excavations in the 1950s seems to have originally been a Roman theatre in the classical semi-circular style (Wilmott, 2008, 127). It has been suggested that at a later date a total rebuild of the theatre took place, the

excavator even proposed that wide curve of the structure is reminiscent of an oval

amphitheatre, perhaps of a Romano-Celtic type such as at Verulamium (Wilmott, 2008, 127).

However, since this original investigation, again it seems like this monument has not been

subject to academic or archaeological focus. While these interpretations made by the original

excavations conducted by Frere (1970) are significant, information surrounding the monument

is severely lacking contextually, architecturally and in relation to dating the construction of

original theatre and amphitheatre. As such, I shall not be considering it in detail throughout

this project. As noted, I shall also not be discussing monuments considered "uncertain" or

"possible" in figures 2.1 and 2.2.
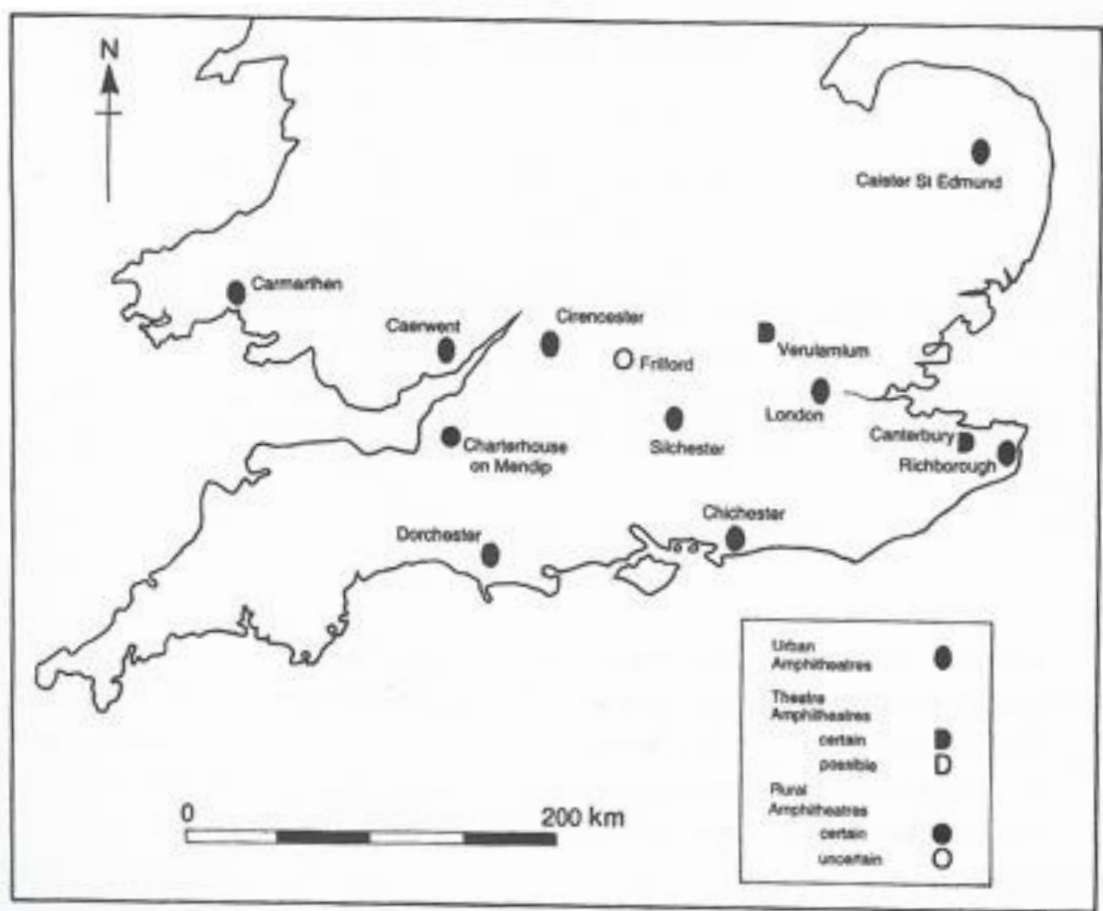
Figure 2. 1, amphitheatres of the south and east of Britain, *Chris Evans,* Wilmott, 2008, 45

It does seem to be widely agreed upon that there was little coercion from the Roman

authorities in relation to the urbanisation of Britain (Jones, 2004, 162-3). Tacitus even

mentioned that Britons were "encouraged to build temples, fora, and houses" (*Agricola,* 21). If

we are to trust Tacitus, this exemplifies the point of urbanisation being encouraged and not

forced. Again, specific reasons for this shall be discussed in section 2.3. Though at this point, it

provides a wider view of the urbanisation process in Britain during the early years of Roman rule and how the process may have been undertaken. This process also does not appear to have been limited to what one could consider 'public' building such as fora, baths, and amphitheatres. Jones specifically mentions this, with "vast amounts" being spent on not just public buildings but also streets, drainage systems and fortifications (Jones, 2004, 175). Jones suggests that these works were often the responsibilities of the "municipal authorities" and adds that private benefactions were obtained when possible (Jones, 2004, 175).
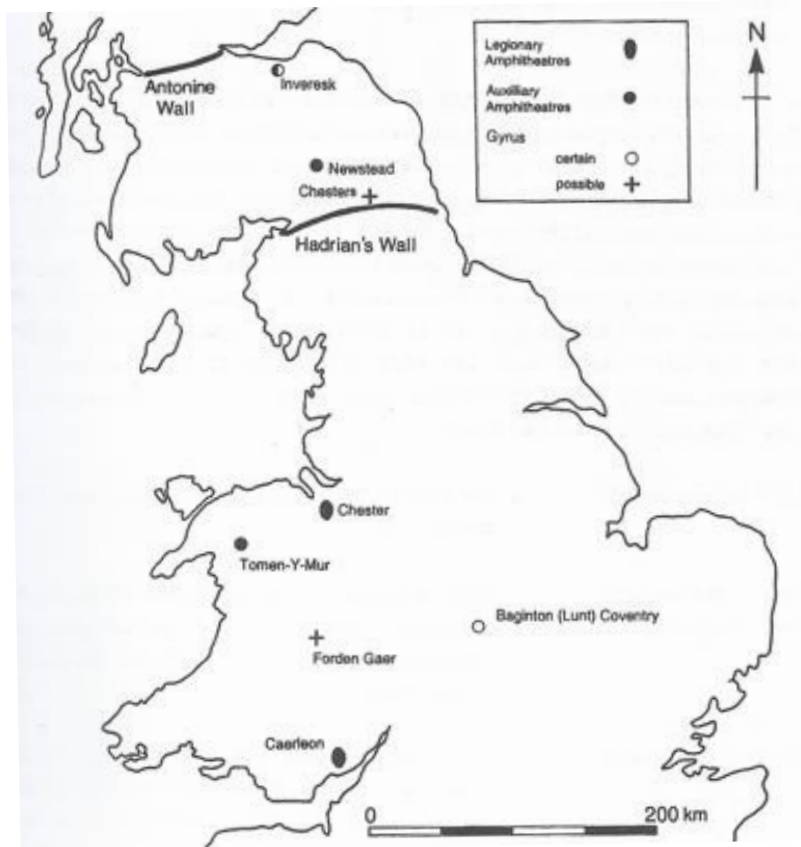
Figure 2. 2, amphitheatres of the north and east of Britain, *Chris Evans,* Wilmott, 2008, 47

Despite the lack of notable Roman coercion in relation to urbanisation and architecture within towns, the very formation of settlements such as these would have been crucial for the Romans to maintain control within the province. The imperial status of towns is certainly significant when considering their urbanisation. Towns known as *coloniae* consisted of retired veterans or legionaries, having been given land for military service. These could be viewed as the more Roman in a cultural sense perhaps, and Wacher (1995) notes that these were populated specifically by Roman citizens. The first example of a *colonia* was established at Colchester in A.D.49 with more being founded later in the 1st century such as at Gloucester

between A.D.96-8 (Wacher, 1995). Existing towns 'upgraded' through being given full Roman rights or only Latin rights would be ranked as *Municipia.* The only town in Britain with evidence to suggest the granting of a municipal charter, probably with Latin rights is at Verulamium. This settlement officially received a charter within the 1st century, according to Tacitus it was a *municipium* at the time of the Boudiccan revolt in A.D.60 (Tacitus, *Annals*, 14.3). While these settlements were likely of paramount importance to the Roman administration, in relation to amphitheatres specifically they were of little significance. While an amphitheatre was constructed at Verulamium it does not appear to have been constructed until around A.D.140 (Wilmott, 2008, 122-6) and does not seem to be directly connected to the status of the settlement. However, it should be noted that the example at Verulamium is not typical to even Roman Britain, but rather it is a 'Theatre-Amphitheatre' (Wilmott, 2008, 122-7) and the only one of its category in Britain.

When considering the initial introduction of amphitheatres during the early period of urbanisation within Britain in the 1st century they appear to have been associated with towns classed as *civitas* capitals (Fig. 2.3). There is no strict Roman definition of 'town', and the word is used to describe general "fortified places of civilian character" (Wacher, 1995, 19). Wacher further notes that it is therefore used to describe anywhere in the hierarchy below chartered colonies or *municipia.* In a strictly legal capacity these towns would be classified as *vici* in the Roman world (Wacher, 1995, 19). However, in terms of their role within the administration socially, politically, and economically *civitas* capitals appear to have been far more significant that *vici.* Millett seems to suggest that *vici* or a *vicus* was essentially smaller settlements that could eventually grow into towns if investment and local administration was introduced at the settlement (Millett, 1992, 74). The application of this system in Britain would mean tribal elites becoming *decuriones* of the *civitas* capitals to retain their power through the 'proper' Roman system of administration within these new towns (Millett, 1992, 74-5). Especially in terms of architecture and the investment into the developing towns of Britain the legal status of the settlements does not appear to have been important. Despite the similar official legal status of *vici* and *civitas* capitals they are very different in terms of both size and what architecture we might expect to find at each. *Vici* may be compared too villages or small towns in modern Britain, with *civitas* capitals acting as larger administrative centres through the province for local government for the surrounding area *vici* included. This is very similar to the situation in Gaul (Wacher, 1995, 20).

This is especially relevant in relation to the introduction of amphitheatres and their construction throughout Britain. As I have mentioned all the amphitheatres which were built in

situ with towns in Britain were constructed in relation to *civitas* capitals. Despite the same status, without clear evidence of military presence such as at Charterhouse-on-Mendip there are no examples of amphitheatres being constructed in the direct vicinity of *vici*. This is not to suggest that those residing within *vici* were of low status or lacked the wealth to construct monuments such as amphitheatres, rather it seems evident in my view that investment into the architectural landscape was focused on the larger administrative centres. In terms of who would have been behind the construction of amphitheatres, it is important to consider the wider trends of urbanisation in general during this period. Since most of these *civitates* were still ruled over and formed by Iron Age tribal groups, Wacher highlights that the development of these centres was "left to the inclinations of the natives" (1995, 20). This again emphasizes the 'native led' nature of urbanisation throughout Britain, especially in relation to the construction of amphitheatres. The correlation between the construction of urban amphitheatres at *civitas* capitals especially during the 1st century is indicative of their introduction primarily being down to the willingness and capabilities of those behind their construction to adopt this aspect of traditionally Roman culture into the architectural landscape of their own towns.

Despite this lack of overall coercion or purposeful plan to introduce amphitheatres to Britain I would propose that the military played a significant role unintentionally. The main areas of study in this instance, if we are to consider the construction of Romano-British public buildings and amphitheatres specifically, is the transfer of both the knowledge in relation to construction techniques but also the awareness of these monuments as an option. This is also very much reflective of the model which I intend to use when investigating Romano-British amphitheatres, considering the spread of the monuments as they are constructed chronologically as well as tracking possible influences and motivations behind the construction of each example. In this instance, the first example of an amphitheatre being constructed in Britain in my view is at Dorchester around A.D.50 (Putnam, 2007). The specific context and situation surrounding the construction of Dorchester Amphitheatre shall be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, though in my view it should be classed as a military amphitheatre. If Dorchester Amphitheatre did influence those built subsequently over the 1st century, the military's role in the introduction of this form of monument to Britain would have been very significant. However, it is vital to note that this was not intentional by the Roman military, and rather reinforces the willingness of local groups and individuals to adopt these new what could be considered traditionally 'Roman' monuments and forms of architecture and make them their own. This first example was also notably very close to the period in which the south-east of the

province had been brought under Roman control, though this may be less important due to the military origins of Dorchester Amphitheatre. The second known example and first amphitheatre constructed in an urban context and by groups and individuals not associated with the military was at Silchester. In my view it was most probably constructed during the reign of Cogidubnus and as suggested by Wilmott (2008, 100) to have been built between A.D.55-77. To what extent this was influenced by Dorchester Amphitheatre shall be discussed in Chapter 3. The over two-decade gap between the introduction of the Roman administration of the region and the construction of this first urban amphitheatre is certainly worth noting. In the case of Silchester specifically as mentioned previously there is evidence of more general awareness of Roman culture prior to the Claudian invasion.

However, this gap even after the south-west was brought under Roman rule can be noted in relation to the process of urbanisation and the founding of towns in general in Britain. Jones (Jones, 2004, 162-4) rightly in my view describes the speed at which urbanisation took place as impressive, though also that the majority of the effort took place from the start of the Flavian period (around A.D.69). This explains the possible gap between the construction of Dorchester and Silchester amphitheatres. It should also be noted that in my view, the majority urban amphitheatres were constructed over this period, between A.D.69 and the mid-2nd century. Understanding the connection between the process of general urbanisation and the construction of monuments such as amphitheatres is of paramount importance when considering their introduction to Britain and the seemingly willing adoption of them by those behind their construction. This introduces the critical question of the motivations and reasons behind the construction of these amphitheatres. Looking past the capability to construct them, primarily the motivation to do so comes prior. As mentioned earlier, despite the different contexts of urban and military amphitheatres, I would propose that motivations for their construction and funding have several similarities. In essence, and as one may expect, despite the initial construction of Dorchester Amphitheatre by the military, the introduction and initial spread of amphitheatres through Britain relied upon the locally led process of urbanisation and adoption of architectural forms. The situation in Britain especially into the Flavian period was ideal for this due to the lack of imperial Roman intervention into this process and the significance politically, socially, and economically of architectural munificence in relation to amphitheatres. The lack of coercion or a specific plan by the Roman government to construct amphitheatres was also crucial for the process of creolisation that I have based my investigation on, allowing the groups and individuals behind the construction of amphitheatres

to make them essentially their own, representative of the requirements and preferences of them and the specific context in which the monuments were constructed.

Figure 2. 3, towns of Roman Britain, Wacher, 1975, 22

2.3: The construction and funding of Romano-British Amphitheatres

The political, social, and economic significance of amphitheatres within Rome and throughout the wider empire has already been discussed within this chapter. The question of why the amphitheatres of Roman Britain were constructed as well as the origins of the funding for these projects are of critical importance to their introduction to Britain. As discussed in the previous section, there appears to have been a significant degree of freedom and individual choice in relation to the process of urbanisation through Britain under Roman rule. While the foundation of towns was necessary for the Roman infrastructure and maintenance of order

within the province, the individual nature and in some respects culture of each settlement did not appear to be a concern for the Roman imperial government. This can be noted by the spread of amphitheatres through Britain. There does not appear to be any connection between the status in terms of size and importance of settlements and the construction of amphitheatres within their vicinity despite the political and social significance of these monuments. Certain themes can be established, for example all strictly urban amphitheatres appear to have been constructed in relation to *civitas* capitals rather than *coloniae.* As discussed previously this could be indicative of the lack of any structured system behind the introduction of amphitheatres. One would assume that settlements such as *coloniae* with imperial recognition and either full Roman or Latin rights would have been more likely to invest into what had traditionally been architectural representations of Roman culture and power. This would be further the case when considering those having been rewarded for their military service who would presumably be already aware of this aspect of 'Roman' spectacle culture. This is exemplified very well by the *coloniae* at Colchester (Camulodunum), thought to be the provincial capital and focus of an imperial cult prior to London (Jones, 2004, 171). Despite the status and early development of this settlement there has been no evidence of an amphitheatre located here.

While it could just be a coincidence that no amphitheatre is known to have been constructed in relation to *coloniae* in Britain, as Blagg and Jones remind us, much of the variation in architecture and public construction projects appears to have been down to the priorities of sponsors and the preference of architects (Blagg 1991; Jones, 1999b). In my view the construction of amphitheatres being primarily limited to settlements lacking to some extent imperial recognition in a legal sense is further indicative of the motivations of their construction as well as the architectural landscape within Britain during this period. The importance of architectural munificence has been noted throughout the empire for political and social gain even dating back to the era of the Republic with examples such as Pompey's Theatre. One proposal for the lack of investment into amphitheatres specifically within *coloniae* such as Colchester is that elites within the settlements do not need to strive for political or imperial recognition through investing into projects such as an amphitheatre. However, it is evident that at Colchester investment was made into the landscape and architecture of the town with structures such as the forums and multiple temples (Hull, 1958). Especially contradictory to this proposal is the more recent identification of a circus at Colchester; this monument was first discovered in 2004 and subject to targeted investigations by the end of 2007 (Crummy, 2008, 15). While this does not discount the suggestion that

striving for a place in the new Romano-British administration and political system was not as important in these settlements already granted Roman or Latin rights, it makes the argument appear a lot weaker in my view.

The introduction of this new administration and political system into Britain is certainly a significant factor in relation to the construction of amphitheatres specifically, especially when considering their prominence at *civitas* capitals over other settlements. It appears that indigenous elites and client kings were able to keep their power under Roman rule. A notable example being Cogidubnus, who on the topic of client kings especially is mentioned by Tacitus (*Agricola,* 14) and is identified within a notable inscription at Chichester (Todd, 2004). The new system of government, as laid out briefly by Millett, was based on the *decuriones*, the *ordo,* the *curia* and annually elected pairs of magistrates (*duoviri*) (Millett, 1992, 65-69). Crucially this system, when implemented, permitted pre-Roman tribal elites to take up these positions in many cases and allowed them to maintain their own power. However, this does not mean that there was no need for these individuals and groups to compete and strive for more status. Millett suggested that these rulers were unable to compete on a military level, and this, combined with the introduction of Roman goods, made prestige goods more common place, and decreased their value. The natural progression regarding the display of power and status would then take the form of supporting these urban projects rather than the possession of prestige goods. This possibly followed the examples seen in other parts of the empire, e.g., Gaul. I believe, in the majority of cases, public buildings in general, especially when funded by individuals were supported for personal gain and lasting honour. Cicero's suggestion that buildings would preserve one's memory best for posterity rather than hosting games certainly rings true in this respect (Cicero, *De Officiis,* 2.17) and is especially apt here.

In terms of amphitheatres specifically, the actual function and utility of these monuments certainly played an important role when considering why they were introduced. Despite the symbolic or political nature of amphitheatres, their function in my view was one of the primary reasons for their construction over other potential monuments. Specifically, if wealthy elites were striving for status or self-promotion, there are a myriad of potential monuments they could have funded and constructed. The functional aspects of the amphitheatres such as hosting events and their large capacity for an audience would have in my view been a significant factor for why these individuals and groups were keen to adopt them. This would also assist in explaining the lack of connection with the status of a town and their capacity for investment to a certain point. Of course, this does not just apply to those behind the construction specifically. The potential use of amphitheatres may also factor into the social or

political significance of the amphitheatre over other possible monuments with the ability to provide a place for citizens even outside of the elite within these settlements to attend a multitude of events. In this instance, amphitheatres could be almost a 'gift that keeps on giving' when winning social and political favour from the population of a settlement, and potentially, keeping that population in their place. Individuals or groups were willing to fund events once the structure was constructed, even those who had not been behind its original construction. The functional possibilities of amphitheatres in this instance appear to elevate amphitheatres above other options. Furthermore, without strict rules or a system of implementation by the Roman authorities, those behind the construction of Romano-British amphitheatres appear to have been free to construct them in the manner and form they wished. This is self-evident by the architecture of these monuments throughout Britain and is an issue that is key to my research as a whole. While these monuments will inevitably include elements from throughout the empire such as from Gaul and Rome itself, they are above all Romano-British in form and perhaps also use. Physically and architecturally each individual amphitheatre represents in some ways the context and the community in which it was constructed. As was the case with other public monuments, the motivations behind the construction of amphitheatres in my view were not only political in relation to individuals and groups seeking wider recognition by imperial or provincial powers, but also and perhaps more importantly on a small scale within their own region among other smaller settlements.

Having considered why, the main issue to investigate and that is applicable even at this early stage to the majority of Romano-British amphitheatres is by whom these projects were funded. I will consider how specific amphitheatres were funded investigating each monument individually since it is primarily based upon the context at the time of the monument's construction within the settlement and surrounding area where less general statements can be made. As I have argued, since urbanisation and the construction of public buildings including amphitheatres in my view was primarily handled and led by groups and individuals inhabiting the growing towns and settlements throughout the province through their own accord, one would assume that this was also the case with the finances behind this process. Unfortunately, direct evidence in relation to the funding and construction of the amphitheatres of Roman Britain is severely lacking both in terms of the probable amount spent on the monuments and by which individuals and groups. In this instance the best option in my view is to look across the empire for specific examples. Duncan-Jones based primarily upon epigraphic evidence has attested to this, citing the cost of a theatre in North Africa easily up to 600,000 sesterces, where a medium size temple in the 2nd century would have cost between 60,000 – 70,000

sesterces (Duncan-Jones, 1985). It is evident that these were building projects on a huge scale, so the cost of an amphitheatre is bound to be very significant. An example from Dorchester for instance, shows that constructing the arena and entrances would have involved excavating 7,000m^3 of chalk rubble weighing around 12,500 tons (Wilmott, 2008, 47-56). This is however not to suggest private individuals were unable to fund amphitheatres out of their own pocket. The gift of a theatre proscenium by M. Ulpius Januarius was donated out of his own resources, also announcing he held the office of an aedile of the vicus of Petuaria recorded on an inscription found at Brough-on-Humber (Blagg, 1990, 20). Evidently, there are examples of the civic benefaction of amphitheatres specifically from wealthy individuals across the empire's provinces. Q. Naevius Cordus Sutorius Marco, prefect of the night-watch (*praefectus vigilum*) and the praetorian prefect under Tiberius provided funds in his will for the building of an amphitheatre at Alba Fucens in Samnium as demonstrated by a monumental inscription on the exterior (*AE,* 1957, 250).

Throughout Britain specifically Blagg has identified 81 examples of inscriptions in relation to construction work; 79 of these include known benefactors' names (Blagg, 1990, 18). Out of these examples there are no inscriptions that relate directly to the emperor or the imperial government funding these projects. However, this must be accepted as an especially small sample of inscriptions. Throughout Britain there are examples of corporate bodies and individuals performing acts of architectural munificence. One example is the restoration of a shrine to the Mother Goddesses in London (*RIB, 1700 and* 2), where the inscription bears no names and therefore probably represents the munificence of a community rather than the benefaction of wealthy nobles. There are also examples of what is essentially public funding through the towns, including the forum-basilica at Verulamium and the forum at Wroxeter representing cities and *civitates* in inscriptions (Blagg, 1990, 17-22). This form of civic community funding reported by Frezouls (1984, 32) makes up 17.8% of building inscriptions throughout Roman Britain. The most prevalent form of funding attested to through inscriptions is through the 'notables' such as civic magistrates, freedmen, priests and military. These groups make up just less than 75% of inscriptions directly related to building projects (Frezouls, 1984, 32). This is very much in line with the proposed 'native led' nature of urbanisation and investment into the architecture of these new Romano-British towns. In relation to other provinces such as Africa as noted by Duncan-Jones (1985) the balance between private and public benefactions appears relatively even. In this instance he seems to refer to 'Public' as money from the municipal government such as through the *summa honorariae* (Duncan-Jones, 1985) rather than private benefactions from individuals. The

reason behind this I theorise may be due to the fact that 33% of overall benefactions in Britain came from individuals specifically associated with the military in the province. This is significantly more than compared to other places such as the Gallic provinces which are so often compared to Roman Britain, as Frezouls estimates this category of military benefaction only made up around 13% in Gaul (Frezouls, 1984, 32).

In relation to the role the military played with the construction and funding of amphitheatres their involvement in my view is very much dependent upon the specific context of each monument. This shall be considered throughout my project when investigating individual examples. Although, at this stage, it is worth noting that I do not believe they played a direct role in the funding of amphitheatres outside of specific military contexts. When considering evidence for funding and construction in relation to this specific category of amphitheatres, the case for certain legionary examples is strong. Wheeler has proposed that the construction was carried out by various units of the legion, each being assigned to a separate portion of work. Upon completion of the allotted portion the unit inscribed its name as a form of record (Wheeler & Wheeler, 1928, 6-7). For example, at Caerleon Amphitheatre a building inscription in the west wall of the main north entrance (Entrance F) indicates it was constructed by the ninth cohort (RIB, 342). These inscriptions are thought-provoking and appear to place Caerleon in a unique position in the study of Romano-British amphitheatres. Whether this can be expanded to amphitheatres other legionary amphitheatres such as at Chester or even other military monuments such as the auxiliary amphitheatres at Newstead and Tomen-y-Mur is questionable. Given their contexts I would suggest that they may also have been constructed and funded by the military.

This does not mean that the funds came directly from the imperial government for an amphitheatre specifically. The element of local choice and preferences within even these military settlements is still of paramount importance in relation to the construction of amphitheatres. As I have emphasized, the lack of amphitheatres associated with military sites throughout Britain when considering the vast number of forts and military complexes would suggest that the construction of these monuments was not commonplace or a part of imperial policy regardless of the size or status of the military settlement. Inscriptions relating to public buildings often indicate primarily who or what group funded the project. A uniform example of these inscriptions relating to munificence comes from Gaul. There was an inscription located on the arch of Saintes, constructed at the eastern edge of the bridge over the road from Lyon crossing the Charente to Mediolanum, the capital of the region. The inscription records the title and donor, Caius Iulius Rufus, son of Caius Iulius Catuaneuinius, also listed are his grand

and great grandfathers. His political position as a priest of the Altar of Lyon is also recorded. The arch announces him as one of the great benefactors funding the construction of cities within Roman Gaul (ILA, Santons, 18). The very simplistic legionary inscriptions at the Caerleon Amphitheatre in terms of their content are hardly relatable to this more common type of benefactor inscription. It is also notable that no amphitheatres in Roman Britain possess these inscriptions which would indicate the source of their funding. Le Roux suggests that military involvement with building roads, aqueducts and overseeing mines is well attested to. He further mentions that it would require imperial authority to direct the legion to carry out these construction works (Le Roux, 1990). The use of soldiers for construction work does appear to have been commonplace. Le Roux specifies that this would probably not have been the case for urban amphitheatres (Le Roux, 1990).

In my view strictly military amphitheatres were most probably not specifically 'funded'; rather they were constructed by the military as a part of their expected services, for which they would have probably been provided with a usual wage. The only way in which a benefactor could have contributed may have been funding the materials used for the construction itself, but this is unclear. I believe in the case of the military amphitheatre at Caerleon evident use of the legionaries for their construction makes this the most probable case in terms of how they were funded. Additionally, it is worth recognising that if this was the case, these military amphitheatres were essentially funded by the Roman government through the military. I would not suggest that these funds were provided under the guise of an amphitheatre specifically being built, but rather with the freedom for those behind the project to choose. It seems highly probable that the imperial government was aware of what these funds were eventually used for and may provide clear evidence that the Roman administration was aware of and accepting of the introduction of the amphitheatre to Britain, even if in this case specifically for the 'military' settlements known as *canabae.* Nevertheless, this further differentiates these military amphitheatres such as Caerleon from those funded and constructed within urban settings during this period such as at Silchester and London. Even if this was the case, the lack of amphitheatres in relation to the number of military complexes including legionary fortresses such as those at York and Colchester would suggest the construction of a 'military amphitheatre' was still primarily down to choice. Individuals or groups governing the settlement may have been those behind this decision specifically. Most Romano-British amphitheatres outside of a military context in my view were still probably funded through the private investment of individuals or groups investing into both their political careers and the wider status of their town as a result. The lack of evidence for military

intervention in relation to the construction of amphitheatres outside of specific military settlements only strengthens the possibility of this source of funding. This in my view is especially evident when considering the individual architecture and forms of these urban amphitheatres that shall be analysed and discussed in detail throughout my project.

2.4: Analysis and categorisation of Romano-British amphitheatres

The question of the best way to approach the analysis of Romano-British amphitheatres has required much consideration throughout this project. Wilmott's "The Roman Amphitheatre in Britain" (2008) which I have made great use of focuses strongly on the categorisation of Romano-British amphitheatres. I have already demonstrated this in my own way by referring to 'urban' and 'military' amphitheatres, with these categories being primarily based upon the context of the individual monuments. Categorisation based on the form of these monuments is also somewhat applicable, with the 'theatre-amphitheatre' at Verulamium. The distinction of theatre-amphitheatre is important in relation to the example at Verulamium and others of this category throughout the empire. This architectural categorisation unique to the Verulamium is due to the cultural implications of its architecture and this architecture itself being such a defining characteristic of the monument. While being classed as a theatre-amphitheatre, Verulamium also falls into the wider contextual category of urban amphitheatre.

This issue of subcategories to some extent display some of the issues with this approach. The amphitheatres of Chester and Caerleon as legionary amphitheatres within the wider and general category of military amphitheatres. To some extent their unique architecture, especially in terms of the implementation of complex masonry work (Wilmott, 2008) was a result of specifically legionary capabilities, especially when compared to auxiliary amphitheatres such as Newstead and Tomen-y-mur or contemporary urban amphitheatres. The focus on categorisation outside of general context or specific defining aspects of architecture such as at Verulamium shifts the emphasis away from the central questions of this project. It is important to respect these categories to some extent, the combination of a theatre and amphitheatre at Verulamium is the definitive feature cultural of the monument itself and should be recognised. Unlike other subcategories it is not representative of more available resources, funding or technological capability. It is important to also note, the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium just like all Romano-British amphitheatres is still a unique representation of its localised context and culture. Ultimately, in relation to this project the defining aspect of these monuments is that they are amphitheatres and are fit for holding events, games and spectacles.

When investigating and comparing the Romano-British amphitheatres throughout the period of Roman rule, in my view considering the initial introduction and later spread and emergence of amphitheatres over Britain requires a focus on their chronology. As discussed previously, the spread of public monuments and urbanisation in general throughout Britain was primarily left in the hands of individuals and groups within the *civitas* capitals without imperial assistance in terms of funding or the transfer of knowledge in relation to construction techniques. As such, one must assume that the construction of amphitheatres also was not purposefully assisted or influenced by the Roman authorities. Due to this, it seems that the transfer of knowledge in relation to the construction techniques required to build amphitheatres and even awareness of these methods came from elsewhere. This depends very much on the specific amphitheatre as I shall investigate in detail in Chapter 3. It seems probable that the spread of amphitheatres during the process of urbanisation was somewhat spontaneous as knowledge and influence spread through the province. In this sense, the construction of amphitheatres could be looked at primarily through chronology as I suggested in the case of Silchester Amphitheatre and the possibility of it being directly inspired by the first example constructed through the military at Dorchester (Putnam, 2007).

Within this model, the categorisations of these amphitheatres while important is less of a concern in relation to how spectacle culture specifically spread through the province. For the example of Silchester being directly inspired by Dorchester Amphitheatre, one must consider whether the probable military construction of Dorchester Amphitheatre is relevant in relation to the influence it may have had upon those at Silchester nearly two decades later. This in essence encapsulates one of the primary questions I am attempting to answer throughout this project i.e., to consider the view of those in Britain who invested specifically into this aspect of spectacle culture. The context and construction of Dorchester Amphitheatre shall be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, but it is evident that the project was by no means small or even average in scale (Bradley, 1976). This is a crucial aspect at Dorchester Amphitheatre due to the monument being based upon a transformed Neolithic henge monument (Bradley, 1976). This characteristic can however be applied to every amphitheatre across Britain to differing degrees. As discussed earlier the presence of these monuments would certainly be noticeable for all those passing through or by the towns in which they were constructed. This may be even more notable in a symbolic sense for amphitheatres constructed by the military specifically such as Dorchester. The monument displayed the power of the Roman military in a logistical and physical sense as a primary architectural example of *Romanitas* and the Roman 'ways of life'. This would in my view certainly enhance the symbolic and status related

importance of amphitheatres, especially for those eager to demonstrate their willingness to invest into the new Roman administration. However, it is probable that as the awareness and use of amphitheatres spread through Britain, their direct association with the military is likely to have faded. Throughout this project, I shall be investigating primarily the construction of Romano-British amphitheatres chronologically. While the categorisations applied by Wilmott (2008) are significant I shall not be privileging the distinction between these such as military or urban amphitheatres, but rather exploring their evolution chronologically and further based upon the amphitheatre's individual contexts.

This is not to suggest that there is a direct link between each amphitheatre, or that the spread can be tracked chronologically as each example is constructed. It would be surprising if the introduction of amphitheatres was this simple and this also implies a specific connection to some extent between all settlements in which amphitheatres were constructed. This is not to say for certain that this is not possible, though aside from influence within Britain itself, the possibility of influence and knowledge being transferred from outside the province appears very likely in my view. The strongest evidence in favour of this is the architecture of amphitheatres throughout Britain. If the process was a simple as people learning from and being influenced by only those constructed prior within Britain, it would not be possible to account for the unique architectural techniques used within the construction of amphitheatres such as the example at London. London Amphitheatre in my view was most probably constructed after Silchester Amphitheatre chronologically, around the A.D.74 (Hingley, 2008. 76). However, as shall be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, the monument was vastly different from those at Silchester and Dorchester in relation to architecture and what can be confirmed in relation to the planning of the building project. In my view it is not possible for the architectural and construction technique displayed at London Amphitheatre to have been learnt or transferred from either Dorchester or Silchester. In this instance, the only other option is the knowledge must have been brought from outside of Britain.

This may have been more probable due to the nature of London as a town over the post-Boudican period and this very usefully demonstrates the importance of the context in which these amphitheatres are constructed. The growth and redevelopment of London after the near destruction of the towns by Boudica in A.D.60/1 was dramatic, demonstrated by the seemingly widespread construction of public buildings in the A.D.70s including the amphitheatre (Perring, 2011, 261). The size and growth of London even prior to the Boudican revolt is noted in relation to trade and industry most probably due to the towns location in relation to the River Thames. By the time of the revolt, the town had grown to an estimated population of 10,000-

15,000 (Perring, 2011, 253). Due to this, individuals and groups from surrounding provinces or indeed anywhere in the empire seem to have been motivated to travel to and inhabit London during this post Boudican revitalisation of the town. This can be demonstrated through the "Bloomberg writing tablets" discovered in London dating from A.D.50-80, 90 of these have been translated (Tomlin, 2016). Those behind the transfer of knowledge in this way are also not necessarily the same individuals or groups who funded and constructed the amphitheatre at London, they may just have been involved in the planning process. This seems highly probable in my view and reveals the intricacies behind the construction and wider context of Romano-British amphitheatres in terms of their origins, funding, and planning.

This issue of contextual change across the province is also a key factor behind my categorisation of amphitheatres as "early" or "later", based on the whether or not they were constructed before A.D.100. A primary reason behind this is the introduction and to a significant extent mainstreaming of masonry construction of public buildings during this period in the early second century within urban contexts. The architectural difference of these 'later' amphitheatres alongside the contextual changes throughout their associated settlements as the Romano-British administration flourishes over this period makes their comparison to those constructed initially very difficult in my view. To some extent, this signifies a progression past the initial introduction of these monuments and towards integration and intended permanence of this aspect of Romano-British culture, demonstrated by the choice of masonry construction. As shall be highlighted in Chapter 4, this 'later' period also in many cases such as with London (Hingley, 2018) and at Verulamium (Niblett, 2001) represents these Romano-British towns prospering economically and culturally. These 'later' amphitheatres were a product of this. During this period from the early second century the settlements associated with these amphitheatres all went through phases of large-scale architectural re-development and expansion, including the construction of these amphitheatres themselves. As such, I view these periods of 'early' and 'later' amphitheatres as distinctly different phases contextually, economically and to some extent culturally within this period of Roman rule. This was a result of the further integration of the Romano-British administration, significant increases in cultural, political and economic interconnectivity within Britain and advances in architectural and technological capabilities, providing those behind the construction of these monuments with even more options to express their engagement with this new culture.

It must be noted that multiple amphitheatres that were originally constructed prior to A.D.100 during the original emergence and spread of these monuments underwent later phases of construction and significant modifications within this 'later' period, such as London (Hingley,

2018) and Silchester (Wilmott, 2008). While the first phases of these amphitheatre shall be discussed at length in Chapter 3, dealing with their original construction and the impact they had on the introduction of amphitheatres to Britain and this early process of cultural change, their later phases shall be focused upon in Chapter 4. This allows me to consider the later phases of these amphitheatres alongside other examples within the same time period and provincial context as discussed previously. This is also applicable to the monuments categorised as 'military amphitheatres' outside of strictly urban contexts. The military were integral to this process of cultural change and the integration of the Roman administration to Britain. As such, their settlements and amphitheatres also underwent phases of vast contextual and architectural changes during these later periods of Roman rule, seemingly for many of the same reasons that urban towns did. To what extent the influence of the military even if unintentional continued to be so significant into these later periods of the 2nd and 3rd centuries is also a key issue to consider, after the integration of the Roman administration throughout the 1st century.

Considering Romano-British amphitheatres through this model, based primarily upon how and by which groups they were constructed by chronology, and in comparison to one another, I believe best allows me to consider them under the guise of creolisation. Despite the probability of direct inspiration by previously constructed amphitheatres, even military examples such as Dorchester, those constructed in urban environments are still in my view both architecturally and contextually unique. This is primarily due to the freedom which those behind these building projects had in relation to the form and architecture of amphitheatres. They were able to design and build them based on their own preferences and needs, and this is something I shall demonstrate throughout this project.

Chapter 3 – Early Amphitheatres of Roman Britain:

3.1: Introduction

This chapter deals with the initial introduction of amphitheatres into Britain. This includes urban and military amphitheatres constructed prior to A.D.100 which can be considered 'early'. This group consists of urban examples at Silchester, London and Chichester and amphitheatres constructed by the military at Dorchester, Caerleon and Chester. I have elected to investigate these in chronological order through the period of roughly half a century. This has proven very useful when considering the transfer of both architectural knowledge as well the motivations promoting local groups to fund and construct these new amphitheatres throughout this period. I shall continue to investigate all examples throughout this section using this model, considering how those behind their construction could have gained both the knowledge required and the awareness of amphitheatres in general as a desirable monument. This model also allows me to investigate the evolution of amphitheatres throughout this early period. The comparison between early urban examples such as at Silchester and later urban amphitheatres such as at Chichester will further prove useful when examining this subject. A key issue to consider throughout this chapter is what caused the evolution of amphitheatre architecture throughout this period, which could be viewed as an improvement in terms of architecture, technology, and construction capability. I will primarily be investigating to what extent these amphitheatres are a product of their individual settlements in terms of context, culture and outside influences; additionally, how they transformed as Britain evolved under early Roman occupation.

The analysis and comparison of these structures' architecture and layouts on an individual level are vital when investigating the physical evidence of spectacle culture in early Roman Britain. Through the lens of 'creolisation', it is viable to view these amphitheatres as large-scale physical examples of the integration of spectacle culture into Romano-British societies during this early period as discussed previously. This is especially relevant considering my proposed theories surrounding who was behind their construction and funding. Urban examples constructed by those not affiliated with the military within these new settlements are representative of a distinctly new Romano-British culture. One of the main aspects this investigation aims to examine is to what extent this can be observed and confirmed by their architecture and the construction techniques used. Additionally, it is important to consider what events may have taken place within this range of amphitheatres. Through the examination of physical architecture and context I hope to explain the reasons behind their construction and what or who they were constructed for. Both of these issues shall heavily

factor into my theories relating to what events may have taken place within these early amphitheatres.

This investigation primarily relies upon my examination of excavation reports. However, this introduces specific issues that must be flagged up at this stage. Several of these reports and their associated excavations were carried out close to a century ago. Prominent examples of these include the preliminary report of the Chichester Amphitheatre (White, 1936) and excavations carried out by Wheeler & Wheeler at Caerleon (1928). Due to the age and nature of these reports, it appears evident that there are some assumptions and theories suggested which may not be academically viable anymore. The lack of findings or scale of the excavation itself may also be an issue. White even mentions in her report relating to Chichester specifically "owning to the meagre characters of the finds it would be unwise to put forward a precise date" providing a wider date range of A.D.70 – 90 (White, 1936, 157). Fortunately, in many cases, more recent work has been carried out which I will make use of such as Wilmott and Garner's investigations into the amphitheatre Chester (2017). This example specifically was crucial in overturning significant observations concerning the Chester Amphitheatre originally made by Thompson in 1976, which I will discuss later. The lack of definitive examples and artefacts is especially notable when considering what events may have taken place within these amphitheatres. Although, there are some ideas that can be suggested, at this stage this aspect is highly theoretical, and primarily based upon context, artefact and architectural analysis and comparison to other contemporary amphitheatres throughout the empire.

3.2: Dorchester Amphitheatre

3.2.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

The site at Dorchester known as the "Maumbury Rings" has been known to the antiquarians from the 17th century and was used as a public execution site until 1760 (Wilmott, 2008, 104). It was described with "great detail and enthusiasm" by Stukeley who even drew a supposed reconstruction of the monument (1723). Interest in the amphitheatre and its origins grew through the 19th century and excavation funding was raised by the British Archaeological Association and the Dorchester Field Club (Wilmott, 2008, 104). The work was undertaken by Gray, though he was unable to publish his report (Wilmott, 2008), as such a final report of the excavations was published by Bradley (1975). This is the main report that I shall be using throughout my own investigation of Dorchester Amphitheatre. Despite its age there does not appear to have been more recent excavation or as detailed consideration of the monument. Bradley's report is highly detailed and provides a great deal of contextual and architectural

information surrounding the amphitheatre. Furthermore, he provides his own insight into the reasons behind this monument's construction and specific architectural features as well as acknowledging the wider debates surrounding the Dorchester Amphitheatre in the 20th century. While more modern published materials on this amphitheatre are lacking, the detail provided by Bradley's report is excellent and of great use to the questions I am considering throughout this thesis.

Similar to multiple other settlements in Britain, Dorchester prior to the Roman invasion, was an Iron Age tribal centre of the Durotriges. Wacher identified that this tribe put up significant resistance against Roman forces (Wacher, 1995, 323) unlike at Silchester and Chichester. It was recorded that thirty battles were fought, two warlike tribes were conquered, and twenty oppida were captured (Suetonius, *Vespasian*, 4). Regardless of whether these numbers are strictly true, they indicate that the Durotriges were not openly welcoming to the invading Romans. It has been theorised by many scholars such as Wacher (1995), Putnam (2007) and Bradley (1976) that there was a significant military fort occupying the site at Dorchester before the Roman town's development. Bradley lays out the three main arguments for this; the alignment of the Roman road from Weymouth harbour, the right-angled south-west corner of the later defences and the amount of military equipment located within the walls (Bradley, 1976, 75-9). Much of this is unproven, and no fort has actually been identified, however, there are many issues which may point towards the hypothesis surrounding the Dorchester Amphitheatre's military origins.

Dating and investigating who funded and constructed the amphitheatre at Dorchester are issues that are especially reliant upon the question of the possible military origins of the amphitheatre. The majority of the dating evidence in the form of pottery and coinage offers a very wide range of dates. However, Wilmott places the date of construction of Dorchester Amphitheatre around the mid-Flavian period (Wilmott, 2008, 55), based upon one of the possibilities suggested by Bradley (1976). This essentially discounting the possibility of military construction and planning. I would disagree with Wilmott's proposal here; it is certainly worth considering how one might explain the presence of the earlier dated examples at the site of this amphitheatre if we are to believe that it was constructed during the mid-Flavian period. A notable example would be the datable items located in the lowest silts of the northern entrance; these consisted of base of projectile points made from iron, common around nearby forts, and two Claudian coins (Bradley, 1976, 74). Alongside these seven coins were found on the site, three being Durotrigian and four being Claudian, three of which are imitations, although still of the Claudian date (R.C.H.M, 1970, 553). We can disregard examples found

such as pottery and coinage after the *terminus ante quem* of the mid-2nd century, due to the amphitheatre being abandoned around this time. All pottery found within the pits of the amphitheatre itself consisted of largely unmodified Durotrigian pottery forms, possibly associated with one sherd of Corfe Mullen ware, a type produced also in the Claudian period (Bradley, 1976, 73-5). A thought-provoking amount of the material evidence relating directly to the amphitheatre at Dorchester appears to be of a very early post-conquest date but also related although sometimes tenuously, to the military. The best-stratified material throughout the site appears to be from a surprisingly early date, and Bradley has suggested due to filling of the post-holes and post-trenches the site cannot have been constructed after the early Flavian period (Bradley, 1976, 73-5). However, this is further complicated by the presence of 'unmodified' Durotrigian pottery alongside Roman wares.

Bradley suggests two main views relating to the origin of the amphitheatre. Either, the structure was built in the early years of the Roman conquest, likely prior to the town of Dorchester, or it was built purposefully to serve the town and likely as a part of a construction policy relating to the town's development (Bradley, 1976, 75-9). If the first theory is to be believed it would also be indicative of the structure's military origin. Putnam suggested due to the very early material evidence the amphitheatre was likely constructed in the A.D.50s specifically to serve the army stationed in Dorchester at the time, further implying that Dorchester may have been the headquarters of the *Legio II Augusta* (Putnam, 2007, 28-32). Frere also proposed Dorchester as one of the probable bases of *Legio II Augusta*, until the regrouping of the legions following the departure of *Legio XIV* from Britain in A.D.67 (Frere, 1987, 74-93). It is not precisely known when Dorset was conquered by the Romans, though it has been proposed that it occurred early into the invasion, around A.D.44, the town itself perhaps being established A.D.65-70 (Redfern, DeWitte, 2011, 270-5). Wacher also proposed the development of the Romano-British town to have begun around A.D.60 (Wacher, 1995). This would suggest the area in the meantime, although likely still containing a pre-Roman Iron Age settlement was under Roman military occupation acting as a temporary frontier.

If Dorchester had acted as the headquarters of this legion during that time as indicated by Putnam and Frere it would not explain the civil phase of the amphitheatre. Although, if a starting date of the amphitheatre's construction of around A.D.70 is adopted it would be hard to explain some of the stratified items on the site. Spears and arrows may, of course, be found in a civilian arena, but it would be difficult to explain the Claudian coins or account for the other items common in a Roman military context (Bradley, 1976, 76-9). It is understandable that after the initial conflict and apparent military activity in the area surviving examples of

artefacts from a military context may be expected. It may even be the case that some were left over from events which took place within the amphitheatre during its civil phase. However, it is apparent as Bradley pointed out that they appear especially numerous and furthermore have been found in the deepest part of the site. Likewise, the lack of a road toward the town from the amphitheatre itself may be indicative of the amphitheatre's military use, and it originally not being constructed specifically for the town (Bradley, 1976, 76-9).

It would be very strange if the amphitheatre was constructed prior to the town at Dorchester. In Bradley's excavation report (1976) he seems to emphasize the fact that this amphitheatre was not constructed or designed for long term use. The construction being somewhat careless and exposing chalk walls to the elements may have been a sign of this. This is probable when considering the amphitheatre's proposed early date of abandonment, suggested to have been in the mid-2nd century (Bradley, 1976, 73-9). The structure therefore appears not to have been constructed as a permanent monument. The lack of evidence relating to maintenance and the lack of a later masonry phase of construction is certainly notable. The masonry reconstruction of timber amphitheatres can be seen as the normal progression within Britain, and Bradley identifies the lack of this sequence at Dorchester to signify a lack of interest (Bradley, 1976). However, Dorchester Amphitheatre is unique architecturally in multiple ways. In particular, the structure appears to be based on a renovated Neolithic henge monument which suggests an opportunistic construction. This renovation involved a huge reconstruction, during which the interior of the enclosure was removed to a depth of 3m, resulting in 227,000 cubic feet of chalk rubble, added to the new stump of the Neolithic bank, the estimated weight would be 11,350 tons (Bradley, 1976, 38-9). Due to the Durotriges evidently putting up harsh resistance to the Roman forces, this transformation of the Neolithic henge may also have been intended as a display of Roman power by the military. Even though the Neolithic henge may not have still been in use, it was certainly still a large and noticeable landmark during the Iron Age, so the overtaking and refurbishment into an amphitheatre displayed the power of the Roman military in a logistical and physical sense. The amphitheatre at Dorchester could be regarded as a primary architectural example of *Romanitas* and the Roman 'ways of life'. It does appear this practice was certainly a possibility when investigating the amphitheatre at Dorchester.

There are multiple factors here to consider; the early material evidence, possibility of the early legionary base and the architecture of the amphitheatre itself. I shall discuss the architecture specifically in section 3.2.2, although it is worth considering at this point that the amphitheatre at Dorchester appears indicative of an intentionally temporary structure (Bradley, 1976). Bearing these issues in mind, it is hard to see how this amphitheatre could have been

constructed purposefully for the town of Dorchester. It is apparent that there are multiple factors which clearly point towards a more military origin for this amphitheatre e.g., the large number of artefacts linked to the military, and the widely suggested theory of a fort being present at Dorchester prior to the town. It is also vital to consider the fact that if this was the case, Dorchester would be the first amphitheatre in Britain at this point. This introduces the issue of the transfer of knowledge, considering also the evidently colossal task of transforming the Iron Age Henge in a pragmatic sense. How may the Iron Age tribes in Dorchester during this very early period have been capable of this? Or why would they wish to do so, especially if this was constructed before the Romano-British settlement. Of course, this does not rule out local construction as a possibility, but it does certainly strengthen Putnam's theory of a military origin. This hypothesis relies upon the amphitheatre being constructed prior to the town, to serve the Roman army occupying the area and then later incorporated into the town of Dorchester shifting towards an urban role (Putnam, 2007).

Working from this theory, what can be assumed relating to the amphitheatres' sources of funding and then construction? It is perfectly possible that this amphitheatre was funded and constructed by the Roman military. As I mentioned in the preface of this thesis, military benefactions especially relating to encampments and forts are common in Britain, often identified through inscriptions as noted by Blagg (Blagg, 1990, 17-22). However, other examples of military amphitheatres such as at Caerleon and Chester are, when compared to Dorchester, far grander in terms of construction and decoration. The main answer to this I would argue is the seeming lack of permanence of the Dorchester Amphitheatre as I indicated earlier relating to the structure's early military significance and early date of abandonment in the 2nd century (Bradley, 1976, 73-9).

In terms of planning and construction, the main issues that must be addressed are the irregular construction patterns, although these may be explained by the apparent temporary nature of the structure; as well as the largely unmodified Durotrigian pottery forms located in the lowest silts of the site. If there was Iron Age activity in this location before this time, the area was likely already somewhat occupied prior to the town itself before the abandonment of Maiden Castle nearby in A.D.70 (Bradley, 1976, 76-9). It is likely that once defeated the remaining members of the tribe were absorbed into these Romano-British settlements as soldiers, citizens, or likely slaves (Scheidel, 1997, 156-169). The presence of the original Durotrigian pottery forms indicated simply that these forms were still in use, possibly by the Romans or remaining members of the Durotriges. It does not have a direct impact relating to who constructed the amphitheatre itself, rather that these forms were present at the time of

the original construction. However, it is also notable that the Durotriges' pottery forms continued in popularity through the Roman period (Putnam, 2007, 19). In my opinion, the arguments suggesting military construction and funding are significant and individual or group benefactions from members of the Roman military are probably the most likely method of funding as noted by Blagg relating to military construction in general (1990). In terms of planning and construction, the lack of grandeur displayed by the Dorchester Amphitheatre, especially when compared to other amphitheatres with originally military origins, may be explained by the temporary nature and unusually early construction of the monument. Although the majority of the structure's life was spent serving the town of Dorchester, its early abandonment in the 2nd century A.D. along with the lack of refurbishment or even a masonry reconstruction appeared to portray a lack of interest by the population of the Romano-British settlement (Bradley, 1976).

3.2.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Dorchester:

The context and origin of the Dorchester Amphitheatre are certainly unique. This section aims to investigate to what extent the architecture of this amphitheatre further reflects its context. Looking into the evidence of planning through the dimensions of this amphitheatre again exemplifies its unique nature in terms of construction and context. The arena was one of the largest in Britain measuring 58.2 x 48.6m (Bradley, 1976, 52). However, this was probably due to the size of the henge the amphitheatre was based upon rather than a purposeful choice. The arena appears to have been the first feature of the amphitheatre to be laid out, primarily due to the fact that the banks already existed due to the henge. It is notable that those behind the construction of the Dorchester Amphitheatre went to the tremendous task of transforming the arena shape, converting the circular henge into a large oval arena (Bradley, 1976, 38), arguably forcing a more 'Roman' shape onto the structure (Fig. 3.1). The oval shape of Dorchester's arena appears to have been based on three circles (possibly due to the existing circular shape of the henge) as shown in figure 3.2.
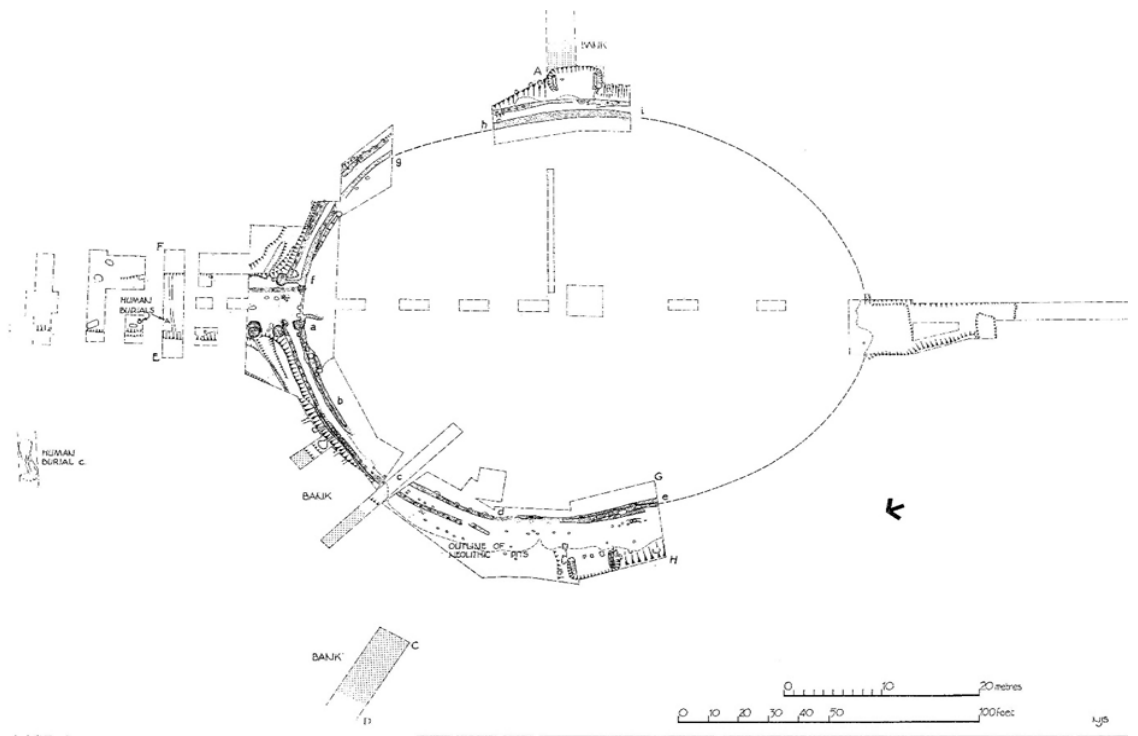
Figure 3. 1, plan of the Dorchester Amphitheatre at the time of its abandonment, Bradley, 1976, 39
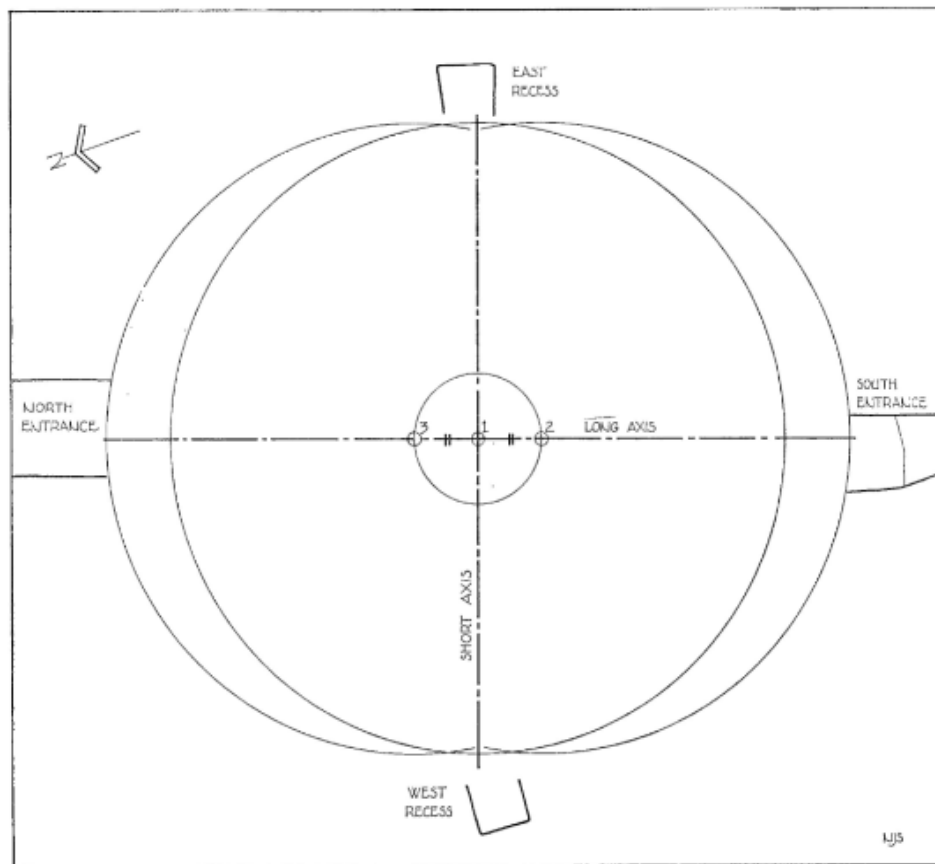
Figure 3. 2, outline reconstruction of the Dorchester arena layout, Bradley, 1976, 55

This use of this technique and the will to transform the arena into this shape may further be due to the theorised military construction of the Dorchester Amphitheatre. Despite this amphitheatre's architecture appearing purposefully temporary in nature there are still some identifiable basic construction techniques. A solid example of this is the formation of the banks. These were constructed as the arena was excavated and hollowed out; the spoil used to construct these surrounding banks for the *cavea.* Of course, at Dorchester this spoil was piled over the banks of the Neolithic henge totally burying the Neolithic bank (Bradley, 1976, 38). This same basic technique is identifiable at both legionary amphitheatres such as Caerleon (Wilmott, 2008, 144) and early urban examples such at Silchester (Wilmott, 2008, 98-9). In this case, perhaps Dorchester served as inspiration and an example for these amphitheatres to some extent, especially when considering the distinct probability of the amphitheatre at Dorchester's role as the first constructed in Britain.

In this respect Dorchester Amphitheatre falls more in line with urban amphitheatres as it does not appear to have possessed an outer wall. This is a notable architectural difference when compared to the other amphitheatres constructed by the military at Chester and Caerleon. Unlike these, the architecture of Dorchester Amphitheatre is indicative of a somewhat purposefully temporary structure. This appears elsewhere throughout the empire when considering amphitheatres associated with auxiliary settlements, forts and encampments. The auxiliary amphitheatre discovered at Micia (Romania) had a very short period of use in the Severan period before being destroyed by a fire and not rebuilt (Sommer, 2009, 52). Amphitheatres constructed in similar seemingly temporary military contexts to Dorchester Amphitheatre throughout the empire, rarely seem to go through multiple phases of construction and have significant periods of use, the only example noted by Sommer (2009) being at Porolissum (Romania).

It has been suggested that initially, the amphitheatre at Dorchester only had one entrance, the southern entrance not being a part of the original design (Bradley, 1976, 40-1). This northern entrance did provide access to the arena, but not to the *cavea*. Access for the spectators was presumably obtained over the bank itself; this may explain the lack of an outer wall (Bradley, 1976, 52). Bradley further noted that the layout and placing of components appear "erratic" (Bradley, 1976, 54). The layout suggested for the arena is barely matched by the course of trench-posts with their irregular alignment. Furthermore, the structure is not aligned correctly along the northern entrance or the long axis. This is accentuated due to the recesses on the short axis not aligning properly either (Bradley, 1976, 54). There is similarly little evidence of its upkeep or maintenance. The exposed chalk of the northern entrance was left vulnerable to

erosion and the sidewalls of the east recess were reduced by the erosion of the arena edge (Bradley, 1976, 40–50). All of this suggests that the monument was intended to be temporary.

However, despite this the structure possesses some particularly unique architectural elements. One of the most significant and thought-provoking features at Dorchester is the two concentric post trenches around the circumference of the arena, with the outer trench breaking for the west and south recesses but not the east. These formed a 'gangway' or corridor between 61 and 91cm wide at different points (Bradley, 1976, 46). Bradley has put forward several possible interpretations for the role of this feature. It may have been a safety barrier for the audience during animal shows as discussed by Jennison (1937, 155ff); the best-known similar example of this would be at the Roman Colosseum (Bradley, 1976, 53). Another explanation posited by Bradley is the use of this gangway as a "service corridor". Access to this could be obtained through the north entrance without going through the main gate and entering the arena. The size of the corridor would not have permitted larger scale public use and certainly would not have allowed access to seating (Bradley, 1976, 47-8). This theory does seem somewhat unlikely, since the width of the corridor would not allow individuals to carry anything significant through it and it is certainly not large enough to lead animals through to access the arena. The fact that it broke for the west and south recesses is also mysterious, possibly indicating that they possessed a different role than the east recess. However, it does little to help identify the use of the corridor itself.

Although we do not know the purpose of this corridor for certain, in the context of this project, the component itself is still extraordinarily significant. No other amphitheatres in Britain appear to have possessed this feature. The best comparison would be the timber amphitheatre at Birten, Xanten in Germany where the arena was encircled with two concentric rows of posts. These were arranged at intervals of 2m and formed a 1.5m wide passage (Lehner, 1910, 259-260). This amphitheatre was located 70m south of a Claudian – Neronian military camp (Lehner, 1910, 258). Lehner further suggested that the amphitheatre was constructed at about the same time as the camp itself and was used for the soldiers' own entertainment (Lehner, 1910, 259-260). If this was the case, then its similarities to the amphitheatre at Dorchester go further than just the concentric post pits around the arena circumference. The amphitheatre at Dorchester, as I have already attempted to establish, was also probably built to serve a military camp. The "Birten Arena" perhaps had more in common with Dorchester than any amphitheatre located in Britain in terms of contextual similarities.

3.2.3 Conclusions:

The probable military origins and context of the Dorchester Amphitheatre appear to make it unique in the realms of early Romano-British amphitheatres. Its role as being the first constructed suggests that it may have paved the way for the other early amphitheatres constructed during this period. Additionally, the structure is certainly unique when compared to other early Romano-British amphitheatres; evidenced through architectural elements such as the "service corridor" (Bradley, 1976) and the technique used to create the oval arena (Wilmott, 2008, 64). The impact Dorchester Amphitheatre had can be perceived through the similar simplistic architecture and construction techniques used at the early urban amphitheatres constructed soon after such as Silchester. All the amphitheatres constructed after Dorchester during this period were either urban or legionary examples, signifying a significant divide. Both types are somewhat distinct from Dorchester Amphitheatre in context and construction. This is primarily due to the nature of the Dorchester's construction. It appears to have been originally constructed as a temporary amphitheatre to serve the army, and later took on a civil role when the town was established around A.D.60 (Wacher, 1995). The amphitheatre at Dorchester uniquely bridged the urban/military architectural divide due to it being the only Romano-British amphitheatre which served both roles. It is noteworthy that it served both of these roles in this very early period before A.D.100.

A vital issue to take away from this is the role that Dorchester's amphitheatre played relating to the transfer of spectacle culture and the introduction of amphitheatres to Britain. Considering the probable construction of the amphitheatre prior to the development of the town, it is the only example where individuals from the associated settlement were not behind the amphitheatre's construction. This amphitheatre in this sense may be perceived as distinctly 'Roman', especially when viewed by those residing in the town of Dorchester. It may have embodied Roman power and architectural capability, particularly if we consider the fact that it was constructed from a transformed Neolithic henge. In my view, this amphitheatre, due to its early date of construction, is likely to represent where and when the transfer of early knowledge and the initial interest in this aspect of spectacle culture occurred. If this was the case, Dorchester served as inspiration structurally but also culturally during this period by influencing, and perhaps inspiring, the construction of other early urban amphitheatres.

3.3: Silchester Amphitheatre

3.3.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

Silchester Amphitheatre was first identified by Stukeley (1776) though his original proposals in relation to the form of the monument compared to Dorchester Amphitheatre were inaccurate (Wilmott, 2008, 98). The site was not excavated until it was taken under state guardianship in 1979 (Wilmott, 2008), with the report being published by Fulford in 1989. Wilmott (2008) has commented that Silchester is the single most extensively excavated and best published site in Britain, and that it is the best understood 'urban' amphitheatre (2008, 98). I would agree with this sentiment in 2008 when Wilmott proposed this. More recently, Silchester as a settlement has been the focus of a number of significant excavations and publications that are of great use and interest. From 1997-2014 the University of Reading has conducted The Town Life Project at Silchester. This was an 18-year excavation of one block of the Roman town known as Insula IX. Multiple reports from 2014-2019 considering the individual features and structures throughout this area have been published, including the baths, tilery, and temples. While none of these focus on the amphitheatre specifically, understanding its immediate context and the town itself is very useful in relation to the culture the monument represents. It should be recognised that Fulford has been at the forefront of publications and research into the Roman town at Silchester throughout this period. His book *"Silchester Revealed"* (2021) has provided vital information relating to the founding and evolution of the town over the Roman occupation in Britain. However, it should be emphasised that despite this great deal of academic interest, barely 1% of the early Romano-British town has been investigated (Fulford, 2021). The information available remains vast, though to what extent findings in this small section can be extrapolated is still debated. Despite the fact that the amphitheatre itself has not been the direct focus of recent work, the excavation report by Fulford (1989) still provides a great deal of useful and accurate information relating the monument specifically. Alongside the recent work and research into the town our understanding of this monument contextually also appears to be improving rapidly.

Silchester prior to the Roman invasion was already a place of some political importance, acting as the tribal centre of the Atrebates (Fulford, 2021, 42). Given the size of the "inner earthwork", an enclosed area of 83 acres, it has been assumed that the settlement was significant in the Iron Age; based on win amphoras and Iron Age coins occupation seems no earlier than 20.B.C (Fulford, 2021, 32-6). The leader of the Atrebates in the late 1st century B.C was Commius, who was originally an ally of Rome, though later escaped from Roman forces Gaul in 50.B.C (Fulford, 2021, 28-9). Examples of coinage produced during his reign carrying

Commius have been found in small number in central Southern England. These influences appear to have lasted; later coins struck are known naming three individuals who claimed to be his sons Timmius, Eppillus and Verica, dating from 10.B.C to A.D.20 (Fulford, 2021, 28-32). Within the later Roman walls there are Roman materials, Iron Age coins and artefacts predating the conquest. These include distinctive pottery sherds from the Roman world such as Arrentine from Italy (Fulford, 2021, 32-6). Boon suggested evidence of continental imports such as pottery and a small series of Gaulish base-metal coins are linked with pre-Roman trade (Boon, 1974, 40-41).

The specific reasons behind the founding of Silchester are unknown, though the geographical importance of the settlement of the city offers some insight (Cunliffe, 2012, 19). Silchester occupied a "liminal zone" between three power blocks, the communities of Wessex chalklands to the south, those of the Upper Thames and Cotswolds to the west and the newly empowered elite of the Lower Thames and what is now Essex to the east (Cunliffe, 2012, 19). This was perhaps done purposefully due to the changes occurring within Britain during the 1st century B.C highlighted by Cunliffe (2012 18-19). The settlement's own hinterland was not especially fertile, but it was able to "thrive on the productivity of others" primarily due to its location (Cunliffe, 2012, 19). In relation to trade, Strabo (*Geographica*, 4.5) writing around 20.B.C mentions Britain bears grain, cattle, gold, silver and iron. Fulford (2021, 43-4) suggests that Silchester was possibly a significant hub to which these kinds of goods were brought, traded and exported via the Thames or off the south coast. Additionally, Silchester was located 10 miles from the rivers Thames and Kennet, offering the possibility and ease of moving further into Southern Britain (Fulford, 2021).

In relation to Romano-British Silchester, the military presence seems to have been short lived, there is no trace of a formally organised Roman fort. It is thought that the soldiers would have made use of the existing timber framed buildings and infrastructure. Fulford (2021, 51-5) also suggests that during this brief post-conquest period the population would have fled or been enslaved, returning once the Roman military had moved on. There appears to have been multiple significant phases of development over the 1st century during the reign of Nero and up until the death of Cogidubnus, with the town absorbed into the administration of the province. His death is believed to have occurred around A.D.70 - 85, although it is possible, he died around A.D.78 (Boon, 1974, 42-9). The pattern of construction at early Silchester while under the rule of Cogidubnus is especially noteworthy and somewhat unique during this early period. There appears to have been an intense period of construction during the 1st century A.D. (Wacher, 1995, 271-2). Most notably, there does seem to have been an imperial link to

Silchester through Nero. Fragments of tiles stamped with his name that were produced at the brickworks at Little London 1.5miles south have been found across the town but nowhere else in Britain (Fulford, 2021, 58). The reason for this is unknown, though Fulford (2021, 58-61) proposes that perhaps Silchester after the Boudican revolt acted as a temporary headquarters of the provincial administration; and it must be noted that Nero sent a senior member of his secretariat, Polyclitus to enquire into the rebellion. He may have used the stamp for construction of buildings that he commissioned on Nero's behalf (Fulford, 2021, 58-61).

Regardless of the reasons behind the use of this imperial stamp, the tiles spread over the town and architectural evidence suggests that there was a significant building program over this period as noted by Watcher (1995). This included the bathhouse, the amphitheatre, and numerous domestic and commercial buildings, many constructed with distinctive, red-tiled roofs (Fulford, 2021, 72). Fulford refers to this as the "Nero project", presumably meaning that it took place during Nero's reign (2021, 72). However, this does not suggest that Nero was responsible for this development in Silchester, especially considering that the client Cogidubnus was seemingly rewarded with these lands (Fulford, 2021, 58-9). However, as noted earlier, barely 1% of the early Romano-British town has been investigated, around 0.5 hectares (1.2) acres (Fulford, 2021, 72). The use of these Neronian stamped tiles does not indicate that Nero was responsible for commissioning or funding this building program directly, rather that these resources were made use of by those who potentially did. The development during this period should not be confused with a strictly Roman town architecturally or in terms of material culture. For the first 40 years after the invasion, this was noted through the continues and ubiquities use of Iron Age looking handmade pottery for storage and cooking (Fulford, 2021, 73-5).

Wacher mentions that during the 1st century A.D. the disorganised Iron Age settlement was transformed with the introduction of a street grid (Wacher, 1995, 271-2). Fox identified the now widely accepted theory of an earlier street grid than the one previously recognised (Fox, 1948, 172). Dating evidence for the first and earliest street grid points to around A.D.85 (Fulford, 2021). However, a number of significant buildings across the town did not align with this grid. In Insula XI and the western boundaries of the central compound containing a late Iron Age hall and its mid-1st century successor remained unchanged until the 3rd century. The north-west to south-west alignment of the new group of residential buildings, arguably the successors to the earlier halls, corresponds very closely with the sunrise at the mid-summer solstice and sunset at the mid-winter solstice. This was also the case with a small group of dwellings to the south (Fulford, 2021, 78-80). Fulford suggests that those houses that

perpetuated these earlier alignments may have been of descents of Late Iron Age people. Furthermore, that the lack of conformation in the central area of Silchester may even suggest a slip between old residents and incomes to the town (Fulford, 2021, 79-80). This is hinted at by a group of fragmentary inscriptions in Purbeck marble from a small temple in Insula XXXV to the south-east forum, recording gifts by a guild of peregrini literally 'foreigners' to the town (Fulford, 2021, 80).

Boon suggested that up to one-third of the buildings did not conform to the Flavian Street grid, while some of the most significant examples such as the public baths appear to have been adapted after their initial construction (Boon, 1974, 42-9). The original construction of the public baths at Silchester appear very early around A.D.54-68 though it is not known if they were finished before being replaced in the Flavian period (Fulford *et al.*, 2019). Cotton dates the later street grids construction having been between A.D.90 – 120 (Cotton, 1947, 121). The date of the Flavian street grid further coincides with the construction of the first forum basilica at Silchester in A.D.85 (Fulford, 2021). The construction the forum basilica alongside the laying out of street grid represent the setting up of the structure of the administration in Silchester. This development further associated with the breakup of the client kingdom of Cogidubnus after his death noted earlier (Fulford, 2021).

Without a street grid or an official rank, it is hard to see why the imperial Roman government would have been the entity behind the construction or funding of public buildings during this period at Silchester. This includes all examples that did not appear to conform to the later street grid noted by Cotton (1947) including the aforementioned bathhouse and also the forum identified by J. Joyce (Hingley, 2012), possibly the amphitheatre and more recently a collection of three Romano-Celtic temples believed to have been possibly completed in the early A.D.70s in *Insula* XXX (Fulford *et al.*, 2017). Le Roux has suggested that the primary features of Romano-British towns which the imperial government probably funded, were usually the street grid and other necessary structures (Le Roux, 1990). If Le Roux is correct, it would be very bizarre that these public buildings were constructed prior to the street grid if the Roman government were responsible for this building programme during the 1st century A.D. It stands to reason that the street grid would be amongst the very first additions to the city of Silchester. This would suggest that this first building programme was more likely funded through local patrons not connected to the imperial government. Furthermore, the early construction of these public buildings may be representative of wealthy benefactors funding the construction programme, displaying their own needs and interests. It is worth considering

that they may have been pushed towards funding these more 'Roman' structures by Cogidubnus and other nobles.

Wilmott has identified, and rightfully so in my view, that the construction of the amphitheatre itself is not suggestive of professional 'Roman' planning or construction (Wilmott, 2008. 64). This is an issue that I will discuss in specific detail in section 3.3.2, although in relation to who may have constructed and funded the amphitheatre the evident simplistic architecture is a contributing factor to my own hypothesis. The unsophisticated and somewhat unique architectural aspects of the construction of this amphitheatre can certainly be taken as suggestive of local construction. Though it must be noted that this relates to the outdated view of Silchester acting as a Roman colony rather than being 'Romano-British' specifically. The location of Silchester highlighted previously especially may have been a contributing factor to an influx of people as well as potential knowledge in relation to construction techniques during this early period. Considering the amphitheatre specifically at Silchester in terms of capability, it is highly probably that local peoples within Silchester involved in this program of early construction projects may have been responsible. In terms of the motivations behind the amphitheatre's construction the group or individuals responsible may well have taken inspiration from the earlier amphitheatre at Dorchester as I suggested in section 3.2 However, this also begs the question of who was able and willing to fund such a project at Silchester.

When it comes to identifying who funded the construction of this amphitheatre, there are two issues of paramount importance to consider. Firstly, the likelihood of it being constructed under the reign of Cogidubnus and secondly, the fact that it was most likely constructed prior to the installation of the new phase of the street grid. It is apparent that Cogidubnus was heavily in support of the Romans. He even took the name Tiberius Claudius Cogidubnus, appearing to have been granted Roman citizenship (Boon, 1974, 42). It can be argued that Cogidubnus willingly and purposefully pursued the 'Roman ways' of life. I do not believe it would have been possible for Cogidubnus himself to have funded the entire programme of public building evident during the 1st century. The immense cost of public buildings makes this highly unlikely; an alternative is provided through the inscription of the temple to Minerva and Neptune at Chichester which specifies that temple was funded by the "guild of smiths" (Bogaers, 1979, 243). I would hypothesize that it is likely Cogidubnus encouraged wealthy individuals within his kingdom to fund these projects, especially due to his close affiliation with the Romans and their 'way of life'.

Down suggests it is doubtful that Cogidubnus actually received masses of funding as a reward for his loyalty. However, he did control one of the main early Roman ports at Chichester, controlling a heavy flow of goods and money from Gaul and Italy. Furthermore, the industrial development of the area at Chichester, mineral and agricultural resources of the Weald in Sussex and Kent, and the coastal plain would have contributed largely to the wealth of Cogidubnus and other nobles (Down, 1988, 17-27). It has further been proposed that some Atrebatic nobles borrowed heavily from Gallic moneylenders at high interest rates, to finance their villas and possibly public building projects (Black, 1987). There is notable evidence for significant industrial activity at Silchester in relation to primarily tile production but also traces of iron smelting (Fulford, 2012). Considering the vast evidence demonstrating nobles and wealthy benefactors often funding public buildings throughout Britain, my own theory is that the amphitheatre as well as other early public buildings such as the bathhouse and temples investigated by Reading University, constructed prior to the official Roman street grid, were funded through the benefactions from wealthy individuals who resided in Silchester under the reign of Cogidubnus.

3.3.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Silchester:

Silchester in my view was the first strictly 'urban' example of a Romano-British amphitheatre, the construction date was placed between A.D.55 – 75 by Fulford (Fulford, 1989, 17). The structure as a whole was possibly inspired by the amphitheatre at Dorchester. This may also be the case for specific architectural features, an example being the method of access to the *cavea* as I referenced in section 3.2.1 (Wilmott, 2008, 100). Although looking further, Silchester exemplifies, I would argue, the first instance of what may be considered a culturally Romano-British amphitheatre, not constructed by the Roman military as I have argued was the case earlier at Dorchester. In relation to this, the significance of the multiple unique architectural features of the amphitheatre at Silchester must be considered. As at Dorchester, the first feature constructed chronologically was the arena; the primary timber phase at Silchester unusually had a very nearly circular arena measuring 43 x 42.4m (Fulford, 1989, 13) (Fig. 3.3). In line with Dorchester, the common practice of excavating the arena and forming banks from the spoil was used. However, at Silchester this does not appear to have been enough, and a large amount of extra material had to be imported to finish the bank's construction (Wilmott, 2008. 98-9). This could be for several reasons, from the limits of the landscape to the lack of proper or accurate planning by those behind the amphitheatre's construction. Either way it is indicative of an imitation or transfer of knowledge relating to the construction of this amphitheatre, although with a somewhat different result. Similarly, to Dorchester, the

amphitheatre at Silchester did not possess an outer wall, but this is a notable theme with all strictly urban amphitheatres in Britain (Wilmott, 2008, 62-3). Additionally, there are the two recesses provided on the east-west axis (Fulford, 1989, 13), which were also noted at Dorchester as indicated by figure 3.2. It has been theorised that these recesses at both Dorchester and Silchester may have served as *nemesea* (Wilmott, 2008, 180), the rooms serving as a shrine to the goddess Nemesis (Deniger, 1997). Unfortunately, there is no conclusive evidence of this. Silchester Amphitheatre was constructed originally with two entrances, north and south (Fig. 3.3) (Fulford, 1989, 19-25). The southern entrance during the primary timber phase was 10.35m long and 3.3m wide (Fulford, 1989, 20-1). Comparatively, the northern entrance passage at Dorchester Amphitheatre was 26.8m long (Bradley, 1976, 40-3). However, this may have been due to the thickness of banks of the Neolithic henge. Although, even at other early urban amphitheatres such as London the single excavated entrance passage was around 17m long and 5m wide at the gateposts (Bateman, 1997, 54). Silchester may appear notably smaller in general compared to the average of 1700m^2 proposed by Golvin for arenas in the western Empire (1988, 357), since the Silchester arena from my own calculations has an area of 1424.2m^2.
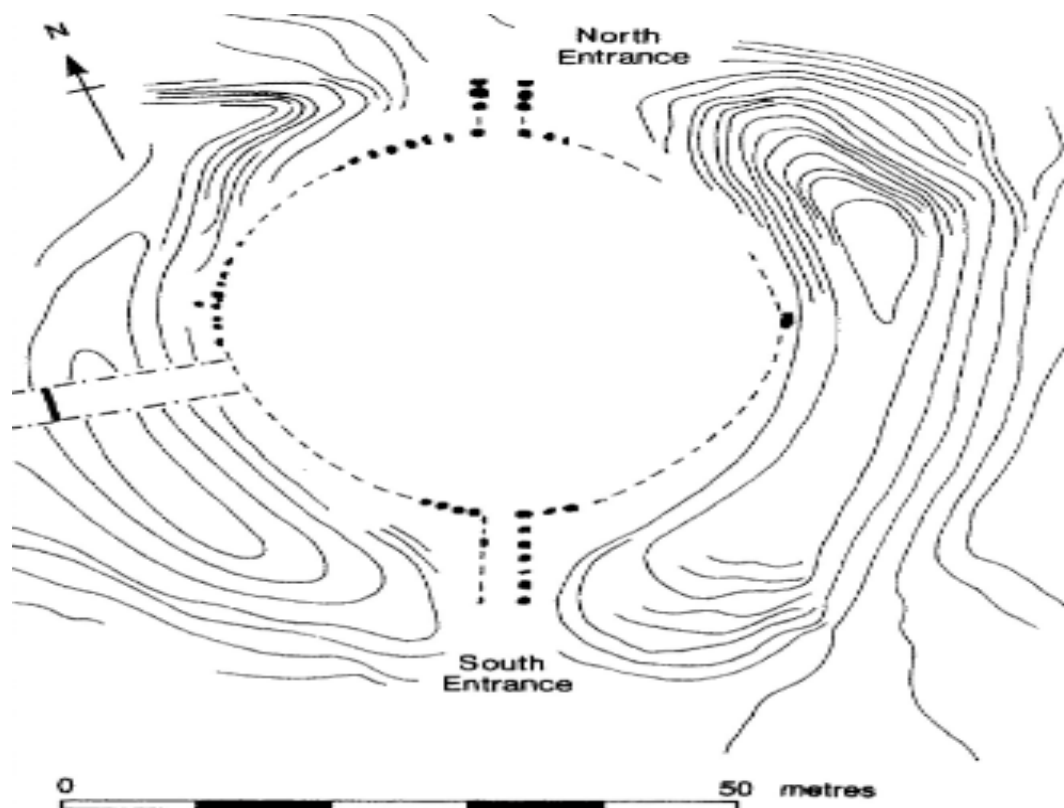
Figure 3. 3, plan of the first timber phase of Silchester Amphitheatre, Wilmott, 2008, 99

The near circular arena and plan is one of the most significant architectural features of the Silchester Amphitheatre. Romano-British amphitheatres during this early stage and throughout the Roman period possessed oval or elliptical arenas; the only exception is the earliest timber phase at Silchester. This introduces the question of why the arena was planned like this. Wilmott has identified that the construction overall, including this bizarre near circular plan is certainly not suggestive of professional Roman construction (Wilmott, 2008, 64). I agree with this theory, as I outlined in section 3.3.1. However, a further suggestion by Fulford that the near-circular arena plan was due to the ignorance of the builder (Fulford, 1989, 180-2) appears to me somewhat misguided. This suggests the idea that those behind the construction of the amphitheatre were simply unable to construct the oval which they desired, a notion based entirely on presumption and on the traditional sense of a Roman amphitheatre. Those behind the construction must have possessed a certain level of knowledge relating to construction techniques in order to plan and build these monuments even if they are to a less impressive architectural level. As I suggested, there are notable comparisons to the Dorchester Amphitheatre, and it is hard to see why those planning and constructing the Silchester Amphitheatre would be incapable of even attempting to form an oval arena if they wished. It is certainly worth considering the theory that the simple construction may be indicative of what the surveyor desired out of the structure, seeing no need for an oval arena; rather than suggested constructing an oval area was outside their capabilities or simply down to "ignorance" (Fulford, 1989, 181-2).

3.3.3 Conclusions:

The amphitheatre of Silchester seems to be relatively simple in terms of construction and planning. This appears to be the result of context i.e., the monument being constructed alongside the Romano-British settlement of Silchester. The early construction projects and architectural munificence under Cogidubnus were vital forms of political participation and expression during this period. The Silchester Amphitheatre may simply be another example of this. It appears that the architecture and evident planning of this amphitheatre were not of what could be considered professional Roman construction (Wilmott, 2008, 64). This structure has several notable architectural features, primarily the circular plan of the arena as well as its smaller size compared to many other Romano-British amphitheatres. These unique features and construction techniques further demonstrate the theory of Silchester representing the first distinctly 'Romano-British' amphitheatre in a cultural sense. The Silchester Amphitheatre acts as a physical representation of the transformation of spectacle culture within Roman Britain even at this very early stage. Rather than being constructed by the Roman military, the

Silchester Amphitheatre appears to be more of a reflection of the needs and desires of the surveyor and or those who hired them. Additionally, representing the needs of those within the settlement at Silchester, in this sense exemplifying the idea of creolisation even during this very early period.

It is also worth considering that during this period of construction the only other amphitheatre in Britain was at Dorchester. It appears likely that the amphitheatre at Silchester could have been inspired by the Dorchester amphitheatre. This is mainly owing to the simplistic architecture and construction of both examples: notably the same method of access to the *cavea* over the bank and the way both lacked an outer wall, but additionally more common place construction techniques such as the formation of the banks from the spoil excavated from the arenas. The attempt to make use of this technique at Silchester and the need to import spoil to finish the bank (Wilmott, 2008. 98-9) may be an example of a lack of capability or a precise transfer of knowledge related to this technique specifically. A further issue that I shall consider through the following sections is to what extent Silchester may have acted as further inspiration to Romano-British urban amphitheatres during this period. Its place as the first of this type constructed is significant, and I believe is reflected through the structure's simplistic architecture.

3.4: London Amphitheatre

3.4.1. Context, Construction and Funding:

The London Amphitheatre was discovered during brief excavations in 1987 during the redevelopment of the area, this project located fragmentary Roman remains at the bottoms of various trenches that formed parts of a single building; this was identified as the amphitheatre (Bateman, 1997, 51). In 1992 excavation of the amphitheatre specifically began, sponsored by the Corporation of London. The last major period of excavation of the amphitheatre specifically took place in 1996 (Bateman, 1997). Bateman's report (1997) relating to this period of excavation has provided a huge amount of information related to the amphitheatre contextually and architecturally. The primary limitation in relation to the first phase of the monument is the lack of evidence due to its demolition before the reconstruction in masonry in the 2nd century. Many of the timbers from the original amphitheatre survive only as post-holes or robbed-out slots, though due to waterlogging on site there are also some well-preserved examples (Bateman, 1997, 53). More recently, academic interest and publication has focused on the widely debated issue of the origins of Roman London as a settlement.

Again, on this issue there is vast amount of available published material as shall be demonstrated throughout this section.

The origin of Roman London has been an issue debated by scholars for over a century and remains a subject of keen interest. I would argue as many others such as Wallace (2015) have suggested that London was a unique settlement within Roman Britain in terms of origin and form. A key aspect to consider here is to what extent this was also reflected through the amphitheatre that was constructed around three decades after the initial founding of London (Hingley, 2018, 76). There appears to be little evidence of Iron Age occupation at the site and Iron Age kings did not take an interest in this area of the later settlement (Wallace, 2015, 4). This highlights an important difference from other Roman settlements in the south of Britain that were based on the foundation of Late Iron Age British *Oppida,* supposedly acting as power-centres of the Iron Age tribes prior to the Roman invasion (Hingley, 2018, 9-10) such as Silchester and Dorchester. However, prehistoric finds are common and material evidence suggests that London was occupied in the Bronze Age with a noticeable hiatus in local activity during the Iron Age (Holder and Jamieson, 2003). Dendrochronological evidence, coinage and pottery prove the site was inhabited during the A.D.50s (Wallace, 2015, 20); e.g., dendrochronological evidence at One Poultry suggests that the main east–west road was constructed during or after the winter of AD 47/48 (Tyers 2008), and ceramic evidence suggests occupation beginning around AD 50/55 (Davies and Tyers 1983; Davies et al., 1994; Tyers 1996). The layout and construction of the early town additionally allows us to provide further theories relating to the groups responsible for its founding.

The earliest town was split up into three main communities of people: those at Ludgate Hill, Cornhill between the northern side of Cornhill and Road 1, and those living beyond the burial area along Cornhill Road 2 (Wallace, 2015, 61-2) (Fig. 3.4). These areas are vastly different from each other and may be indicative of different cultures within these areas of early London. The presence of round buildings constructed near Ludgate Hill Road 1 supports the idea of there being indigenous people. Whereas the dense settlement where nearly all buildings and roads shared the same alignment on Cornhill emulates continental towns and Roman military installations in Britain (Wallace, 2015, 61-2). This is represented through the symmetry and orthogonality of Road 1 and Road 3 in conjunction with the settlement boundaries (Wallace, 2015, 151). We can be confident that centre of London at Cornhill was founded no later than A.D.48 due to the dating of the timbers used in the construction of the roadside drains of the west bank of the Walbrook, an early bridge over the Thames possibly constructed by A.D.52, as well as road surfaces associated with structures evidently destroyed in A.D.60/1 (Perring,

2011, 252-3). The timber wharf, likely constructed in A.D.52, straightened the line of the riverbank and provided a terrace for loading and unloading ships. Evidence of Waterfront 1, found on 12 Arthur Street, with a post and plank revetment, was dated by tree-ring analysis to A.D.55-6 (Hingley, 2018, 28-9). This suggests that these wharves were set up swiftly after the settlement's initial foundation as an integral aspect of London's early role as a centre of trade and commerce. There are clear archaeological examples of industry, such as the ironsmith's shop at the Ticket Hall, as well as a large number of tiles that were incorporated in early Roman deposits. The latter suggests that kilns would have been in operation, although it is essential to note that goods such as this were also imported from sites across southern Britain (Hingley, 2018, 45).

Wallace has suggested that it is likely that Cornhill was formed by individuals with significant power and resources, although not associated with the Roman military or imperial government (Wallace, 2015, 61-2). She provides a compelling hypothesis here, the most probable theory that Cornhill at least was founded by individuals from the continent looking to recreate the familiar (Creighton, 2006) or the indigenous elite adopting characteristics of the urban form to forge and substantiate their relationship to imperial authority (Woolf 1998, 2000). This is seen as somewhat common place in Gaul, with those in power abandoning ancestral sites and founding new towns making use of significant amounts of resources. Gallo-Roman settlements moved at the wish of the local elite and new towns were founded to fit roads and networks between around 70.B.C and A.D.50 such as "Augustodunum" (Woolf, 1998). The lack of structural or artefactual evidence to support military origins of the settlement through an early Claudian camp or military supply base further make this theory proposed by Wallace more probable in my view. Furthermore, the lack of structural, spatial or artefactual similarities to other settlements constructed by civilians with the aid of the military such as at Waldgirmes in Germany (Wallace, 2015, 151) further adds weight to this proposal. Wallace suggests that London was originally founded by Romano-Gallic citizens, with official support or permission from a *procurator;* perhaps prior to or during the original construction of the bridge over the Thames and road networks primarily driven by high-status groups forming a new Romano-Gallic town (Wallace, 2015, 155). This hypothesis describes a model and style of town somewhat unique within Britain. The building techniques especially at Cornhill further demonstrate the fact that these individuals were already somewhat accustomed to 'Roman' style construction and layout.
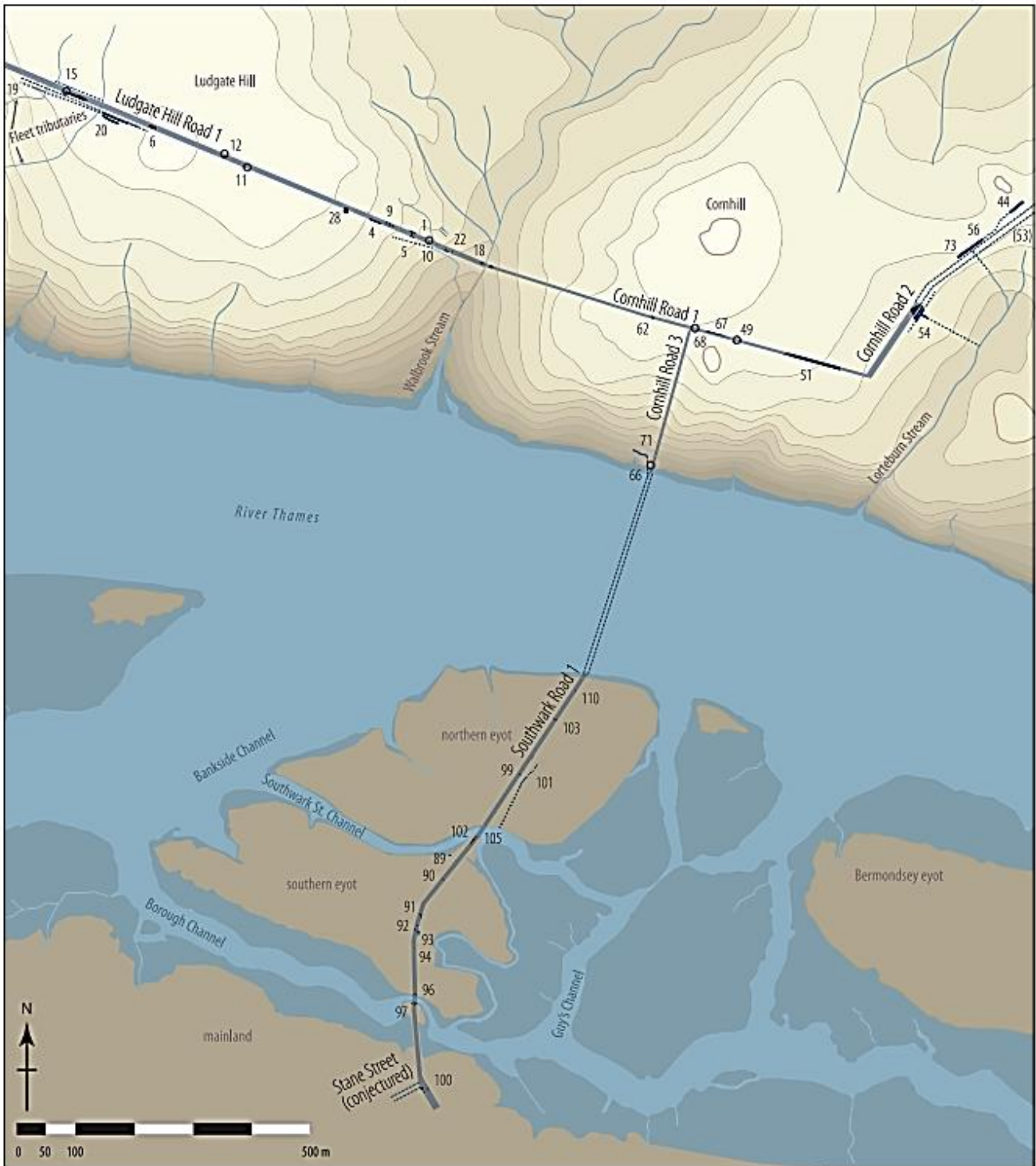
Figure 3. 4, Roman roads and associated drainage features showing the different areas of early Roman London, Wallace, 2015

A key aspect to investigate here is to what extent the unique origins of this settlement may have correlated to the form of the amphitheatre and the culture surrounding it. As I have mentioned, the importance of trade and industry within London even during the pre-Boudican phase is evident through building practices. This may answer the question of how those behind the funding could afford to finance such a large-scale project; the grandeur of which will be examined during section 3.4.2. The amphitheatre does not appear to have been under construction until around A.D.74. This date was established through tree-ring analysis and topographical changes in the area, such as the tipping of topsoil that occurred earlier in A.D.70 (Hingley, 2008. 76). Notably this was over a decade after the near destruction of the settlement during the Boudican revolt of A.D.60/1. This introduces a further issue, to what extent the origins of London affect this post-Boudican revival of the town in which the amphitheatre was constructed. By the time of the revolt, the settlement of London had grown to an estimated population of 10-15,000 (Perring, 2011, 253). It appears evident that by this time London had grown and evolved on a larger scale, perhaps more than the original founders intended. Wallace has proposed that the original building work within the settlement was undertaken in a tentative and "piecemeal fashion", the early plans not keeping up with the "explosion" in population (Wallace, 2015, 155). I would argue that by the time of the redevelopment of London after the Boudican revolt, the town had essentially transformed culturally and physically. As I have demonstrated, the population increased at a dramatic rate, with indigenous people and those from around the empire appearing to have flocked to London due to its importance relating to trade and industry.

The idea of London entering a new phase of life after the revolt revolves heavily around the sudden evident focus on the construction of public buildings in the A.D.70s. This is in stark contrast to the settlement before the revolt which possessed little in the way of lavish architectural munificence. The main example during this period prior to the revolt is believed to be a 'proto-forum' (Wallace, 2015, 102-3). This may be suggestive of a more 'official' or a stronger power structure during this new phase of London. Wallace commented relating to Pre-Boudican London that the settlement lacked the monuments that would demonstrate the inhabitants' "understanding of, acceptance of, and desire to emulate the models of Roman towns in southern Gaul and Italy" (Wallace, 2015 101-2). There are multiple reasons for this, possibly the building was halted due to the Boudican revolt, or perhaps the primary focus within London during this period was industry, trade and economic worth. This was evidently demonstrated by the early construction dates of buildings relating to these practices.

In terms of this new phase of London, the city acquired most of its earliest public buildings during the Flavian period, including the amphitheatre in A.D.74 (Hingley, 2008. 76). Additionally, a forum-basilica is suggested to have been constructed around A.D.75 – 80, a riverfront bath complex at Huggin Hill and quays dating from A.D.72 onwards (Perring, 2011, 261). The construction of the amphitheatre starting prior to the forum is thought-provoking since the forum is frequently viewed as the most important political structure within Roman cities and often referred to as the heart of the city. Watkin additionally referred to the forum as the structure which the stability of the state was believed to depend on. The structure seemingly held society-wide importance acting as a place of exchange, a marketplace, a public meeting hall and even the setting of religious ceremonies and sacrifices (Watkin, 2009, 11). However, again this only further focuses on the question of which individuals or groups were behind these construction programmes, especially during this period of redevelopment; were they the same groups responsible for the founding of the town? It could be argued that over this period of redevelopment the town took on a more familiar 'Roman' form, more comparable to other continental towns.

This second phase of London's development following Boudica was also connected to the arrival of Vespasian's governor, Petillius Cerealis in A.D.71 (Perring, 2011, 261-3). Perring suggested the sudden emphasis on the construction of public buildings can be attributed to a coordinated programme designed to consolidate the political authority of the new imperial regime in London. This further implies that early buildings such as the amphitheatre were closely associated with administration and the army (Perring, 2011). The idea of imperial funding and construction of the amphitheatre is somewhat understandable, especially when considering the use of imperially stamped timbers. Bateman suggests the eight tiles or bricks with the procuratorial stamps found in the immediate vicinity of the amphitheatre may prove the structure was built through state initiative (Bateman, 2011). Perring notes that it is also significant that there is no trace of imperially sourced materials identified in the remains of the forum, further suggesting that the two structures may have had different sources of patronage (Perring, 2011, 262). If this was the case, the fact that the amphitheatre was constructed prior to the forum may not be as significant as originally thought. Although it is possible that this order of construction was due to priority placed upon the amphitheatre, it is also perfectly possible that it was coincidental, or just due to different priorities by the individual patrons who funded the construction programs. However, it is important to understand that the use of imperially stamped materials such as timbers in the amphitheatre is not proof of imperial or

government patronage, rather than just the possible purchase and use of these resources by the builders or patron.

It may also be worth considering the construction of the Colosseum in Rome during this period. This is also significant due to the arrival of Vespasian's governor being directly linked to the second phase of construction at London, which included the first phase of the amphitheatre. The Colosseum was under construction in Rome by A.D.72, under Vespasian (Hopkins, 2011, 2). The Colosseum's construction represented the shift in focus of the emperors during the Flavian period. This monument could be seen as a defining building project during this period; perhaps so much so that it encouraged local elites throughout the empire to emulate it. The timing of the Colosseum's construction may also be connected to the building of London's primary amphitheatre, although this is purely an observation.

Due to the very close dates of the construction of both the forum and the amphitheatre, the order in which they were constructed may have simply been down to a lack of resources or a workforce necessary to construct both simultaneously. Another theory is that the amphitheatre was deemed more of a necessity due to its religious and ritual significance, evident by the structure's location in a likely 'ritual zone'. Bateman has suggested the amphitheatre acted as a 'liminal space' woven into the existing cultural and religious life of London, having been constructed on the margins of a mortuary landscape in the upper Walbrook Valley (Bateman, 2009. 159-160). This further introduces the idea that the amphitheatre was constructed in a space already of religious and ritual significance. Although before A.D.70 there is no evidence of significant building work in the vicinity of the amphitheatre, Hingley has proposed people may have been meeting here perhaps around the pond at 30 Gresham Street, and that the amphitheatre may have officially monumentalized a location which was already an area of ritual importance (Hingley, 2018, 79-80).

The possible cultural and religious necessity prompting the construction of the amphitheatre prior to the forum may suggest at least, individuals actually residing within London at the time were responsible. The forum was certainly of greater political and administrative significance, though in my view not as important in relation to the wider culture, religion, and leisure of London's population. Hingley's contribution, the theory surrounding the amphitheatre being woven into existing religious and cultural landscapes (Hingley, 2018) is especially relevant. It is possible the Walbrook Valley was a place of religious significance before A.D.70. The amphitheatre could have been constructed there on purpose due to the structure's importance not only regarding the ability to host assemblies and festivals but also, as Hingley

stated, the London Amphitheatre symbolized and contained the boundaries between life and death (Hingley, 2018, 79-80). A structure believed to have been a temple from the late 1st century, found at 30 Gresham Street, that was destroyed in the Hadrianic fire of the A.D.120s, raises the possibility of the southern banking of the timber amphitheatre being lowered to provide a view of this temple. This is important when combined with evidence of a second small temple, with an inner "cella" and surrounding portico, slightly to the east. This appears by Hingley's estimations to have aligned radially with the curve of the amphitheatre and formed part of the religious precinct of the south (Hingley, 2018, 79-80). Ritual deposition of human remains associated with water and marshlands across London have been identified. Excavations at 20 – 30 Gresham Street revealed human burials along with redeposited and disarticulated bones from ponds, streams, pits, demolition surfaces and a road surface. This suggests that a small cemetery was located close to the amphitheatre (Hingley, 2018, 79-80), perhaps even specifically for those who fell victim to the bloody games held within it. A total of 39 partial or complete human skulls have been located; deposition of remains took place possibly as early as the A.D.40s and continued until around A.D.200. Further investigation suggests these body parts had been collected from elsewhere in the settlement and ritually deposited in the Walbrook Valley (Redfern, Bonney, 2014, 224). These findings add significant weight to the religious and ritual significance of the Walbrook valley. There is "overwhelming evidence" of antemortem and perimortem trauma indicating ritualised violence, Redfern and Bonney putting forward the idea these human remains may have been defeated gladiators or victims of execution in the amphitheatre (Redfern, Bonney, 2014, 224), although it must be acknowledged that this is merely a theory.

I would hypothesize that the amphitheatre surfaced as the ideal structure to be constructed within the area and local building possibly explains the early date of its construction. The amphitheatre is possibly even more significant regarding London due to the city's origins. I would argue that by this period of redevelopment after the Boudican revolt London had become far larger and prosperous than ever originally intended. The large-scale construction projects during this period reflect this and may have been an attempt to transform the landscape of the town to better suit its significance to the administration within Britain as a cultural centre. London drew in wealthy individuals from around the empire alongside merchants, Roman citizens, and probably indigenous people as well; all with the amphitheatre acting as the first large scale structure dedicated to assembly, entertainment and in this case the amalgamation of this variety of cultures. Overall, I believe the funding and construction of the primary timber phase of the amphitheatre in London was part of the public building

projects during this post-Boudican construction phase. Specifically, the amphitheatre was possibly constructed prior to other examples such as the forum out of cultural and religious necessity. Those behind its construction, due to London's origins and place as a major settlement relating to business and trade, may have already been accustomed to Roman practices, religion, and entertainment.

3.4.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at London:

As I have established, a defining element of Roman London is the settlement's unique origin. To what extent is the unique nature of Roman London represented architecturally through the amphitheatre there? Unfortunately, much of the timber phase of this amphitheatre has been lost within the archaeological record, although Hingley (2018) has provided to some extent, plans for the structure. Yet this example has placed a lot of emphasis upon the drainage and surrounding area (Fig. 3.5). Furthermore, due to the masonry rebuild, the primary timber phase in London appears to have been mostly deconstructed and incorporated into the rebuild, somewhat shrouding the timber phase aside from what can be identified through the dating of timbers. The site chosen for the amphitheatre was on the eastern side of the brickearth capping on the western hill of London. To the east, the ground fell away towards the Walbrook stream 200 metres away and to the south, the ground sloped down to the Thames. The amphitheatre was oriented due north to south, and so was noticeably discrepant from the street grid (Bateman, 1997, 53). This may have been due to the Roman preference of positioning the 'tribunalia' (raised seating platforms known as the seat of judgement) of amphitheatres due north to south, and in support of this Golvin cited 23 examples of amphitheatres where this is a clear preference (Govlin, 1988, 357). Another significant factor relating to the site of the amphitheatre itself is how the structure makes use of the local topography of the landscape; the structure was built into the hillside taking advantage of a natural depression in the landscape (Hingley, 2018, 76-8). This is common throughout the empire, with significant examples found in Spain such as at Merida. Specifically discovered at Badajoz and thought to have been constructed in the very late 1st century B.C, the southern end and western side of the monument were cut into a hill slope (Cabello *et al.*, 2009). The amphitheatre made "maximum" use of the topography of the landscape to such as an extent that these topographical features defined how each are of the areas of the monument were constructed and used (Cabello *et al.*, 2009, 17-19). The later enlarged phases of this amphitheatre were even attached to the Roman walls of the settlement, noted by Cabello *et al.* to not be too unusual when compared with similar buildings at Arles in Gaul as well as later Gallic amphitheatres by the 3rd century at Mets and Trier (Cabello *et al.*, 2009).

This was never the case even with the later phases of London Amphitheatre as shall be discussed in Chapter 4. This practise of attaching amphitheatres to the city walls has not yet been discovered in Britain at all. At London the topography and position of the monument within the existing landscape was also of critical importance. This decision to make use of the topography of the land could be due to multiple reasons, of which the two most probable in my view are that this would assist in the construction, providing a natural depression for the arena; and or that this site specifically was chosen due to its place within the ritual zone. If this was the case, building the amphitheatre into this depression was the best possible choice in order to keep the structure level due to the terrain. Wilmott has suggested, relating to the use of natural depressions in the landscape that, in some cases, with an arena started already naturally below ground level there would be less need to build up seating banks (Wilmott, 2008, 62).
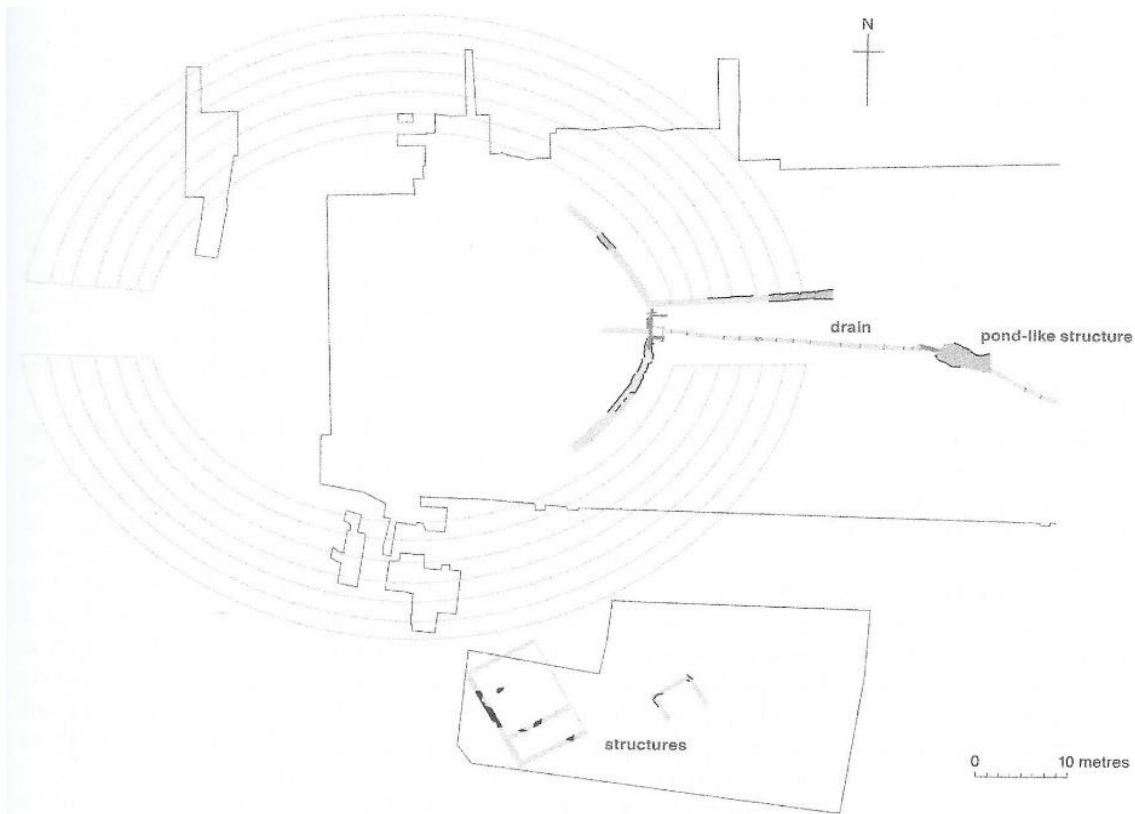
Figure 3. 5, London's Amphitheatre from A.D.91 – 125 during the timber phase, Hingley, 2018, 77

Another architectural aspect that is somewhat notable despite the insufficient evidence relating to this primary timber phase at London is the sheer size of the amphitheatre. Although excavations cover only approximately one-fifth of the structure, it is still possible to at least theorise about the structure's overall size (Bateman, 1997, 69). Bateman has suggested that

the area of the arena must have been between 1890m^2 and 2190m^2 (Bateman, 1997, 73). This is notably larger than the average of 1700m^2 suggested by Golvin (1988, 357) and of course significantly larger than the arena of Silchester as noted in section 3.2 (1424.2m^2). The size of this arena will become more notable when compared to later examples of both urban and legionary amphitheatres throughout this chapter. At this stage we can see that it is, in both cases of Bateman's estimations, significantly larger than average. However, the size of this amphitheatre at London may not be all that surprising. It is evident that there was plentiful free space to construct the amphitheatre as demonstrated by its positioning in relation to the developing town (Fig. 3.6).

Figure 3. 6, public buildings and infrastructure of London A.D.70 – 120, Hingley, 2018, 72

The layout of London as the city redeveloped after the Boudican revolt would have provided enough space for those behind the amphitheatre's construction to build the monument as large as they wished or as large as they were capable due to technological, financial and or topographical limitations. The size of this amphitheatre may also be explainable when considering the context of its construction relating to the redevelopment of London in the early A.D.70s. Considering the influx of wealth and other notable building projects during this period it would appear that in this case there was little in the realms of limitations relating to the free space and wealth available to construct this amphitheatre.

Having established the notable size of the arena at London, the question arises of how this arena was planned. Considering the previous examples at Dorchester and Silchester already reflecting prominent differences relating to planning techniques, it has been shown that the layout of the amphitheatre was based upon a surveyed ellipse or on an oval (Fig. 3.7) derived from the arcs of eight circles (Wilmott, 2008, 93). This is the only example of the technique identified throughout this period in Britain. The use of this technique at London introduces a lot of new issues to reflect on. It stands to reason what whoever planned the structure must have already been accustomed to the practice and logistics of amphitheatre construction to some extent to be aware of the more complex method for the arena layout. Especially due to the lack of prior use of this method, one must assume that whoever or whichever group was behind the planning of London Amphitheatre must have gained this knowledge from a place outside Britain, Gaul or perhaps Rome itself. The large-scale redevelopment of London and the seemingly somewhat co-ordinated building program must have attracted individuals familiar with these building techniques. There are a range of possibilities when investigating the reason behind the use of this technique at London. One answer could be limitations relating to the topography of the landscape as referenced by Wilmott (2008), perhaps making this eight-circle method preferable. This method may have been the one best known to the surveyor or those behind this amphitheatre's construction. Although, a crucial issue to consider is the possibility of this method further simply reflecting the preference of the surveyor, similar to the case of the unusual architecture of the near circular arena at Silchester.

Additionally, excavations at London Amphitheatre have only produced a single passageway (Wilmott, 2008) (Fig. 3.7), presumed to be the entranceway. Although of course this may be due to the lack of excavation, the presence of a second entrance passage on the opposite side is purely theoretical at this stage. The passageway found at London is significantly larger than that found at Silchester due to the notable difference in overall size. In terms of related architectural techniques, in his reconstruction of Silchester Amphitheatre N. Sunter has

suggested that the paired posts were braced apart at the top and that the seating tiers may have continued over the top. Bateman mentions that a similar style of construction may perhaps be envisaged at London Amphitheatre, although the extra width may make this difficult (Bateman, 1997, 62). I would be hesitant to suggest that London, architecturally was inspired by the construction of the amphitheatre at Silchester primarily due to the massive architectural differences including the size and more complex architecture at London Amphitheatre. It is possible that in a cultural sense, Silchester and prior to it Dorchester inspired those who were capable and wealthy enough in Britain to construct these amphitheatres. However, taking into account the unique context of London I would view this as unlikely. It may also be worth considering the importance of the Colosseum as I referenced in section 3.4.1 in terms of inspiration.
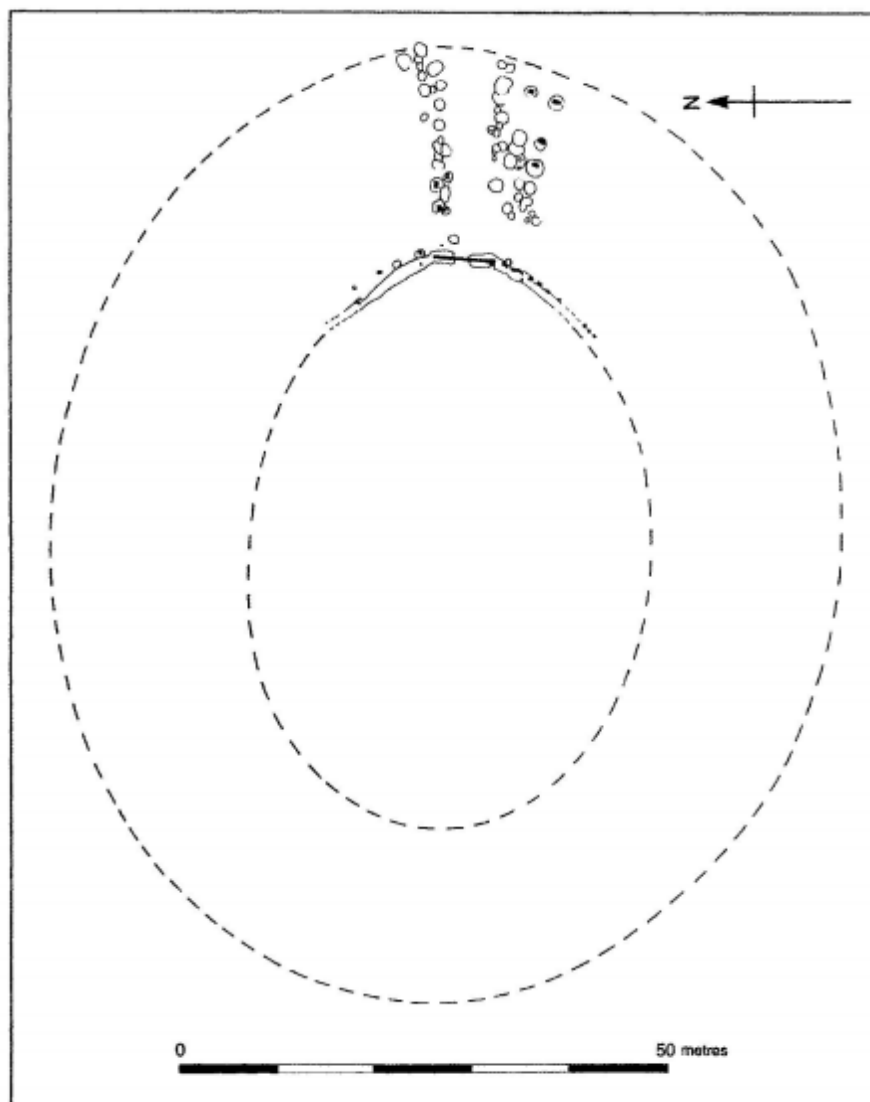
Figure 3. 7, the plan of the primary timber phase of London Amphitheatre, Wilmott, 2008, 94

3.4.3 Conclusions:

I would argue that it is evident that to a large extent this amphitheatre is a representation of its context architecturally, although the lack of specific detail available due to the incorporation of much of this timber phase into the later masonry rebuild as well as the lack of total excavation makes the investigation somewhat problematic. As I established throughout this section, London as a Romano-British settlement appears notably unique. Firstly, in terms of origin the settlement was seemingly founded by Gallo-Roman settlers already familiar to some extent with Roman practices (Wallace, 2015). Secondly London as a settlement appears to have been founded chiefly due to its location in relation to the Thames and subsequently its importance relating to trade and industry.

However, this evidence is from around two decades prior to the construction of the amphitheatre, and the settlements near destruction by Boudica. The rapid redevelopment of London in the A.D.70s and the building programs of which the amphitheatre appears to have been a part demonstrates that a significant amount of wealth was present in London during this period. Additionally, this may indicate that the settlement was still a place of great importance within the province. This would be the simplest explanation in relation to the funding of the amphitheatre. The size of the amphitheatre appears to reflect the sheer amount of funding and space available. In terms of the identifiable architecture itself, the most significant feature in my view is the arena, not only for its size but also the apparent technique used to lay out the oval shape. The implication of the use of the eight-circle technique (Wilmott, 2008) cannot be understated, especially due to the complexity of such a method during this early period. It does not appear possible that the technique could have been transferred from Dorchester or Silchester. It in my view is probable that those behind the planning of this amphitheatre arrived in London after the Boudican revolt, taking part in the large-scale building and redevelopment, possibly from Rome itself or provinces already accustomed to amphitheatres. Nevertheless, this is the only use of this technique in Britain. It is evident that this amphitheatre reflects both the cultural needs of the settlement, as well as the economic draw and wealth present there. The structure's placement in the 'ritual zone' is certainly significant. Although, from the available evidence relating to this primary timber phase, this ritual or religious worth is not clearly represented architecturally.

3.5: Caerleon Amphitheatre

3.5.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

Caerleon Amphitheatre remains as the most accessible and complete legionary amphitheatre excavated in Britain. As late as 1908 H. Allcroft listed it as a 'probable' amphitheatre (Wilmott, 2008). In 1909 the Liverpool Committee for Excavation and Research in Wales and the Marches carried out the first formal excavations. In 1926 funds made available by the Daily Mail and the Loyal Knights of the Round Table of America were used to excavate the whole site (Wilmott, 2008, 143). Work was overseen by W, Wheeler, Nash-Williams, Myers and T.V.Wheeler over the significant period of excavation (Wilmott, 2008, 143). There has been a significant amount of published material on the amphitheatre, specifically the site report by Wheeler and Wheeler from 1928. Since then, there has been a great deal of published work and academic interest in Caerleon as a whole, the legionary fortress and the accompanying settlement. This includes analysis of the fortress by Nash-Williams (1940) and Boon (1972). More recently Evan's (2010) analysis of Caerleon has provided a great deal of insight into the development of the settlement architecturally and contextually, considering the founding, expansion and evolution of Caerleon as a whole. Although as with other examples, the amphitheatre itself does not appear to be the focus of current academic interest or publications, though as displayed by Wilmott (2008) the information available from Wheeler and Wheeler's original excavation reports is still foundational to our understanding of the monument.

The context of the amphitheatre at Caerleon is vastly different from those I have already discussed. Constructed alongside a legionary fortress the amphitheatre served the Roman military through its entire period of use. It is one of the two legionary amphitheatres that I shall be investigating through this early period prior to A.D.100. Excavations indicate that the fortress itself at Caerleon was laid out in the A.D.70s, to replace an earlier establishment at the River Usk . A series of rectangular timber buildings and beam slots outside the western defences have been identified as belonging to the construction camp (Evans, 2010, 161-2). At this this time the legion present within the settlement is believed to have consisted of around 5000-6000 infantrymen in the usual Roman fashion (Wheeler & Wheeler, 1928, 5). Evidence from the site suggests it acted as the base for the 2nd Augustan Legion. This legion's name appeared on many of the stamped tiles found during excavations (Nash-Williams, 2016, 1). Most notably, due to a bronze *trulleus* bearing the stamp ALA I TH found in the officer's house in Insula XI (Evans, 2010, 161). Nash-Williams has even advocated that the arrival of this legion to Caerleon "marked the culmination of the Roman conquest of Southern Britain".

Furthermore, identifying the establishment of this military settlement acted as the first step of the overall organisation of Wales as part of the imperial frontier (Nash-Williams, 2016, 1). Occupation of the area can be traced back to the Iron Age as evidenced by the substantial remains of the hillfort at Lodge Hill around 1-mile north-east of the amphitheatre. This hillfort was one of the largest of its type in South Wales. Evidence relating to the abandonment of this hillfort suggests the date to be roughly contemporary with the construction of the Roman fortress. The introduction of this Roman settlement effectively ceased the use of this nearby hillfort (Pollard, *et al.,* 2006). This may be attested to as a show of Roman dominance to some extent perhaps similair to the transformation of the Neolithic henge at Dorchester. The abandonment of this Iron Age hillfort and the construction of a military fortress in its vicinity could have been an act of physical and architectural dominance by the Romans.

Outside the defences, to the south-west, a considerable settlement grew taking the form of a *canabae*. As Mason suggested this would greatly impact who was permitted or rather encouraged to reside within this settlement. The population would have been primarily those closely associated with the military but could also be expanded to include civilians engaged with commerce (Mason, 2002, 53-5). The system of government within these settlements appears to have allowed a considerable degree of freedom and independence relating to the administration. Much like Millet's (1992) proposal in relation to urban centres, power was wielded by appointed *decuriones.* These individuals oversaw the construction and upkeep of vital systems and construction. This included projects such as roads, streets and the water-supply (Mason, 1987, 144-5). The settlement was developed further after A.D.80 with the construction of a bath-building soon after the amphitheatre. Both of these public buildings were situated outside the fortress itself near the south-west gate; they are believed to be the first stone structures within the legionary settlement (Nash-Williams, 2016, 4). This may illustrate a distinct divide between the legionary fortress itself, and the extensive suburbs outside its walls. These occupied the level ground between the fortress and the River Usk. To the south-west of the legionary fortress around the road towards the River Usk, there were the legionary brickyards and pottery kilns. Alongside these there were also temples and places of recreation like bath-buildings and the amphitheatre itself (Nash-Williams, 1940, 22-5). Furthermore, the existence of legionary tileries and potteries is attested to by the plethora of tiles displaying the legionary stamp (Nash-Williams, 1940, 22).

There is further evidence of construction identified through inscriptions found at Caerleon. An inscribed stone located in this area of civilian 'suburbs' identifies the temple of Diana, while other inscriptions imply the presence of shrines dedicated to the Persian Mithras, and the

Syrian Dolichenus (Nash-Williams, 1940. 22-4). Another example is the inscription dedicated to Mithras located in the bath-building outside the fortress to the east (RIB, 322). The inscriptions relating directly to the construction of the amphitheatre itself are especially remarkable. I shall analyse these in-depth later within this investigation into the amphitheatre at Caerleon. Relating to this, it is particularly interesting to see the wealth of inscriptions located at Caerleon compared to other Romano-British settlements. Blagg has identified that out of the 10 dedicatory inscriptions by military personnel in the South of Britain six were from Caerleon, including two legionary prefects and the three *primipilares* (Blagg, 1990, 20).

Mason has suggested that these *canabae* were settlements of considerable wealth and size (Mason, 1987, 144-5). In the case of Caerleon specifically, the wealth of the settlement is apparent from the clear evidence of benefaction and building work. However, the quality of structures and architecture at Caerleon is also indicative of the settlement's wealth and lasting importance. It is apparent that this Roman settlement, even the civilian 'suburb' outside of the legionary fortress, was constructed as a long-term settlement. This also appears to have been the case for the amphitheatre itself, especially when compared to the earlier example constructed by the military at Dorchester. The first phase of the structure was unique within Britain at this point; it was made up of a stone outer wall, vaulted entrances and a timber-framed stand for the *cavea* (Wilmott, 2008, 143-4). In its earliest phase, the fortress was provided with earth and timber defences and timber internal buildings. One of the earliest structures that have been excavated were the baths at Insula V constructed out of concrete. A precise date of construction is unknown, though it seems work was still being carried out when a large basilica was added around A.D.77 (Evans, 2010, 164-5). Additionally, the principia complex had a monumental entrance projecting across the *via principalis,* scant dating evidence from the *basilica principiorum* suggests an early to mid-Flavian date soon after the founding of the fortress (Evans, 2010, 164-6). From excavations, it has been determined that the amphitheatre was probably constructed around A.D.80, close to the fortress between the south-west gate and south-west corner (Wilmott, 2008, 143). Evidence of the use of masonry for construction around this time extends beyond the just the amphitheatre. A *terminus post quem* for the replacement of the defences in stone has been suggested as dated A.D.86 (Evans, 2010).

Relating to the question of who constructed, planned and funded the Caerleon Amphitheatre, the answer appears relatively clear. The case for legionary construction and planning is very strong (2.3). It is evident through Blagg's work that within Caerleon and Roman Britain in general, a significant number of public buildings were funded through individual high-ranking

military benefactors (Blagg, 1990, 20). However, the available inscription not naming a specific benefactor, rather stating that the monument was constructed by the 9th cohort (RIB, 342) perhaps makes this less likely in the case of Caerleon Amphitheatre. Furthermore, the potential cost of Caerleon Amphitheatre must also be considered. Duncan-Jones has estimated a theatre in North Africa cost easily up to 600,000 sesterces in the 2nd century (Duncan-Jones, 1985, 29). This appears to be referencing an urban example, meanwhile the amphitheatre at Caerleon due to the notably impressive architecture, size and decoration probably cost significantly more despite being constructed in the 1st century.

This is not to say it is impossible that an individual or a group could have afforded to fund this project, rather due to the amphitheatre conclusively being constructed by the legionaries it stands to reason that they received the usual wage to carry out the work. This introduces another vital aspect to consider when investigating the construction and funding of these military amphitheatres. Those in charge of the 2nd Augustan Legion must have been aware of the construction of this amphitheatre outside the fortress and were the mostly likely individuals to have ordered its construction. Le Roux's (1990) statement relating to the need for the imperial government's permission to use legionaries to carry out certain building projects further implies that the imperial government must have been aware of and accepting of the construction of these military amphitheatres. This may only be the case with military amphitheatres due to the context in which they are constructed. Following the theory that the amphitheatre at Caerleon did carry some military importance it is even more likely that they were not specifically 'funded'; rather they were constructed by the military as a part of their expected services (Le Roux, 1990). The only way in which a benefactor could have contributed may have been funding the materials used for the construction itself, but this is unclear.

3.5.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Caerleon:

Due to the context and probable military construction of the amphitheatre at Caerleon some assumptions surrounding the structure's architecture can be made. Primarily one would expect this amphitheatre to be of better architectural quality than those constructed at urban Romano-British settlements. Although this was not necessarily the case at Dorchester, which I have argued was also constructed by the military, Caerleon does not appear to have been planned and built as a temporary monument. The Caerleon Amphitheatre seems to have been abandoned along with the settlement as a whole in the late 3rd century (Wilmott, 2008, 150). It could also be argued that the intended permanence of the amphitheatre at Caerleon can be seen through the structure's architecture and the observable work that went into its

construction. Additionally, one may expect the amphitheatre at Caerleon to be more traditionally 'Roman' in terms of its architecture, due to it being constructed by the Roman legionaries and placed in a Roman military context. However, again this could also have been suggested at Dorchester Amphitheatre.

The examples I have discussed thus far were all constructed into the existing topography of the land, or in Dorchester's case taking advantage of the existing Neolithic henge. The main distinguishing feature with the legionary examples is that they were constructed as free-standing structures. Due to this the amphitheatre at Caerleon possessed a masonry outer wall; this set out a distinct boundary for the structure so that the engineers did not have to rely on the banks themselves to do so. At Caerleon, it has been suggested that the arena was laid out first because of the outer wall not being regular in width and possessing irregular curves which were not parallel to those of the arena wall (Wilmott, 2008, 144). It is notable that despite this, the spoil from the arena was still used in all these examples to construct the banks for the *cavea.* The arena was excavated and levelled off with the spoil being mainly used to build up the seating bank of the southern quadrant (Wilmott, 2008, 144). The use of this method forming the banks at both military examples discussed thus far may further legitimise it as a traditionally 'Roman' technique in relation to amphitheatre construction.

Aside from the use of this technique, architecturally Caerleon had little in common with other amphitheatres in Britain at this time. The architecture is certainly more complex and grandiose overall; a most notable aspect is the fact that even during its primary phase the amphitheatre was of masonry construction. Hingley's suggestion relating to the construction of Romano-British amphitheatres during the 1st century that building in stone would be very suggestive of imperial involvement due to cost, labour and resource requirements, seems applicable here (Hingley, 2018, 71-4). Another thought-provoking feature distancing the Caerleon Amphitheatre from those constructed during this period in Britain is the presence of an outer stone wall (Wilmott, 2008, 144). Additionally, the monument had eight entrances, a clear system of access to the *cavea* and significant decoration. The complexity of the amphitheatre is most notable when comparing the later plan (Fig. 3.8) to those available for Dorchester (Fig. 2.1) and Silchester (Fig. 3.3). While that is a plan of the final phase of the amphitheatre at Caerleon, most key features remain somewhat unchanged, such as the number of entrances, arena layout and access method to the *cavea.*
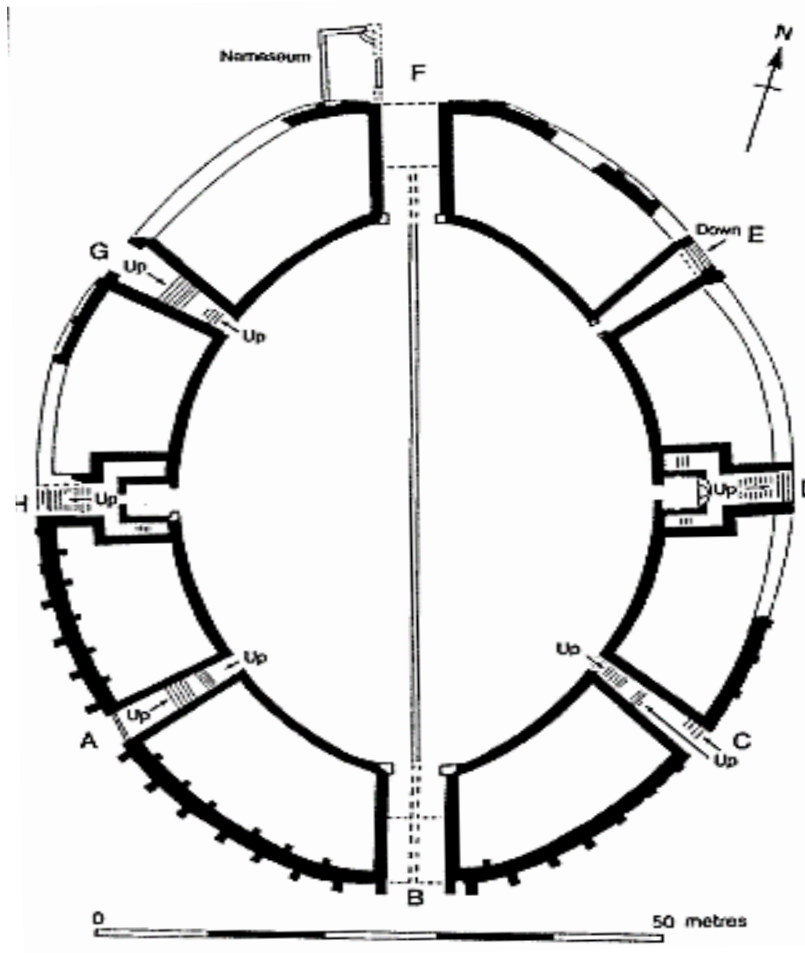
Figure 3. 8, plan of Caerleon Amphitheatre, final phase 3rd century, Wilmott, 2008, 145

The arena of Caerleon Amphitheatre measured 56.08 x 41.6m (Wilmott, 2008, 144). It should

be noted that this is smaller than Dorchester, measuring 58.2 x 48.6m (Bradley, 1976, 52) and

smaller than the other legionary amphitheatre at Chester that shall be covered in Section 3.7.

However, this may be primarily down to the limitations of the site chosen. The Caerleon

Amphitheatre lay in the south-west corner of the legionary fortress site; the structure was

limited in order to squeeze the amphitheatre in. The fortress ditch had to be filled partially and

the rear of an existing bathhouse was modified (Wilmott, 2008, 143-4). This may be a further

indication of the importance of the inclusion of the amphitheatre within this legionary fortress

site. The planning technique use to form the oval area at Caerleon is also significant,

representing first use of the 'four-circle' method in Britain. The method used to set out the

shape at Caerleon was worked out by Wright (1929). He concluded that due to the spatial

limitations of the site the optimum size could only be achieved by first laying out the short,

east-west axis. Three-quarters of the length of the short axis gave the radius of two lateral

curved centred at focal points. The same measurement provided the point at which the curve ended. Two further focal points were used as centres for the curves at the narrow ends of the arena. The creates an oval through two pairs of segmental arcs based upon four focal points (Wilson-Jones, 1993, 395) (Fig. 3.9). The 'four-circle' technique used to form oval amphitheatre arenas can be observed throughout the empire, examples include the amphitheatre of El Djem in Tunisia (Lezine, 1960, 44-6) and the amphitheatre of Purpan-Ancely in Toulouse, France (Domergue *et al.,* 2006). Additionally, the use or theorised use of this technique has been identified at multiple Romano-British amphitheatres constructed after the example at Caerleon. The two most prominent in my view, of this technique's implementation in Britain, are Chester Amphitheatre (3.7), Chichester Amphitheatre (3.6), and the later phases of Silchester Amphitheatre (4.6). The role Caerleon Amphitheatre may have had as an inspiration for these later examples and in the transfer of this technique through Britain shall be considered when investigating these monuments individually. Though at this stage, it is notable that it may have been used at both urban and strictly military examples. Furthermore, as I shall demonstrate, despite the common occurrence of this general technique, the exact method and proportions clearly change from site to site. This may be either due to a preference by those planning the structure or more likely due to restrictions within the site such as the spatial restrictions at Caerleon.
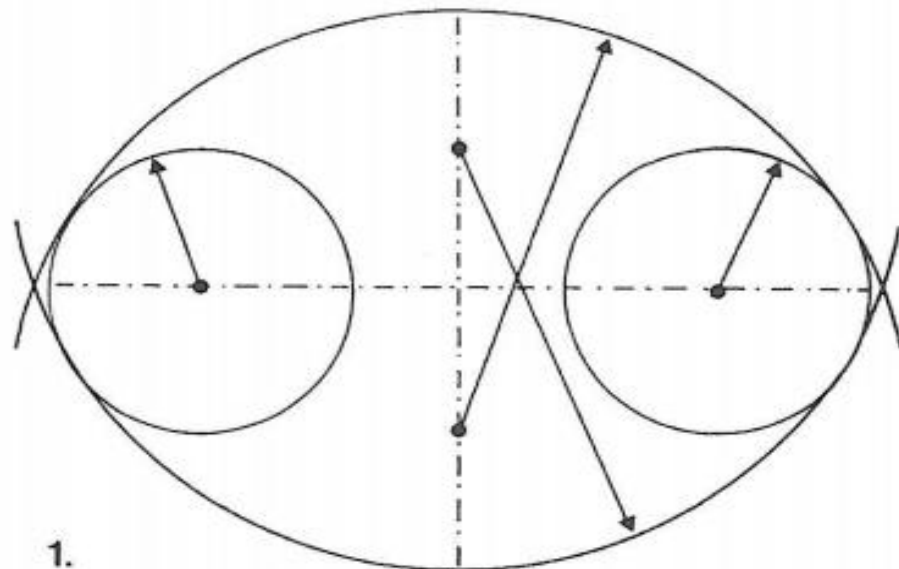
Figure 3. 9, reconstruction of the planning scheme for the amphitheatres at Caerleon using the four-circle method. Wilmott, 2008, 83

Evidently both oval and elliptical methods were known to the Roman military surveyors (*agrimensores* or *gromatici*) during this period. The construction of arenas using four circles is mentioned by the surveyor Balbus in his manual of geometry, the *Expositio et ratio omnium formarum* (10.5.1), where he wrote about the *harenae ex quattuor circulis* (arenas out of four circles) (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 150). In a sample of seven amphitheatres in the Rhine and Danube studied by Hallier (1990) both layouts have been identified with no exact model used twice (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 148-9). This technique may be more representative of the more 'Roman' form and traditional architecture of the amphitheatre at Caerleon, especially since the 'four-circle' technique was probably used to form the arena of the Roman Colosseum (Wilson-Jones, 1993, 394-5). Furthermore, the probability that this amphitheatre at Caerleon was constructed by the Roman military may cement this idea even more, with this method of arena planning appearing to be a staple of Roman military engineering in terms of amphitheatres.

This is further represented through the specific architectural features at Caerleon Amphitheatre. Especially during this early period, the construction and architecture certainly represent a far grander and possibly more traditionally 'Roman' style of construction that can be identified at other legionary amphitheatres throughout the empire. The seating itself at Caerleon was reliant on the outer wall and the seating bank was cut away, forming a flat terrace. On this terrace was a system of timber-framed seating, and slots were then cut into the terrace, radiated from the arena wall. Additionally, unlike any amphitheatres constructed in Britain up to this point, Caerleon had apparent exterior decoration. The barrel-vaulted entrances were built of tufa and banded with tile and stones. There were traces that the walls were rendered and picked out with false ashlar joints highlighted with red paint. The coping stones for the parapets of the arena wall were made in a similar fashion to the piers of the entrances, with fine oolitic sandstone (Wilmott, 2008, 148). The outer wall at Caerleon was provided with outer and inner buttresses equally spaced (2.94m), which continued as narrow pilasters around the entire circuit of the wall (Wilmott, 2008, 144). Caerleon Amphitheatre also appears to have its own *nemeseum* outside the structure but connected to the outer wall on the left of Entrance F (Fig. 3.8). The position corresponds to that of a small shrine to Nemesis in the legionary amphitheatre at Carnuntum in Germany. However, the report by Wheeler & Wheeler (1928) suggests this was not added to the structure at Caerleon until "period 3" early in the 3rd century (Wheeler & Wheeler, 1928, 119). It has been suggested that the recesses on the short axes at the urban amphitheatres of Silchester and Dorchester may have served as *nemesea* also, (Wilmott, 2008, 180) but unfortunately, there is no conclusive evidence.

The entrances situated on the long axis sloped downwards to the level of the arena and did not serve as access to the seating (Wilmott, 2008, 145). The entrances on the short axis were notably different. The outer part was formed by a ramp, sloping steeply from the outside and possibly even furnished with steps. From the base of the ramp above the level of the arena opened three brick arches. The centre one gave access to the arena through a square, brick-faced, barrel-vaulted chamber (theorised to have been a *carcer,* or beast pen). The other two arches led to stairs which broke at right angles around the chamber. In both of these entrances, the northern stair was wider than that to the south, and it has been suggested that the wider stairway led to boxes over the chamber, while the narrower stairs led to the general seating (Wilmott, 2008, 147). Considering the methods of access identified at Silchester and Dorchester this is certainly far more architecturally impressive, again, elevating the architecture and construction of Caerleon above other examples during this period.

3.5.3 Conclusions:

The amphitheatre of Caerleon was the first of its kind introduced to Britain. It appears evident that the architecture of the structure reflected its construction and context within the military settlement of Caerleon. Unlike any other amphitheatres in Britain, the example at Caerleon provides concrete evidence relating to the groups behind its funding and construction. This again also seems very much apparent from the architecture of the monument as I have demonstrated throughout section 3.5.2, especially when compared to contemporary examples at London and Silchester. Although Dorchester may also be considered a 'military' amphitheatre, the temporary and simple nature of the structure clearly separates it contextually and architecturally from Caerleon Amphitheatre.

One of the most notable issues to consider is the introduction of the 'four-circle' technique relating to the planning of the Caerleon arena. This may have influenced the later employment of the 'four-circle' technique to construct and transform later amphitheatres in Britain. The relative simplicity of this method may have made it ideal for those wishing to construct their own amphitheatres, Wilmott suggests that the simplest oval can be constructed using the arcs of four circles (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 147). The first example of Caerleon Amphitheatre perhaps provided those behind the later constructions in Britain with an easier way to form oval arenas rather than a more complex method employed at London. Using this theory, the importance of these legionary Amphitheatres relating to the transfer of knowledge involved in the construction of Romano-British amphitheatres is paramount. The transfer of these specific and arguably more 'Roman' layout and construction techniques are certainly significant when

considering the nature of creolisation, demonstrating the freedom of choice that comes with the blending of these cultures. Even if this monument can be considered 'more Roman' both architecturally and contextually, this does not mean that it is immune to or separated from the cultural change throughout Britain during this period, it is still a result of creolisation occurring organically over this period. The amphitheatre of Caerleon remains distinct and impressive in terms of size and the complexity of its construction even when compared to later stone urban amphitheatres. It is possible that it served as further influence and inspiration for those behind either the initial construction as well as the later rebuilds of the stone urban amphitheatres that I shall consider in Chapter 4. The possibility that the influence of this legionary amphitheatre may have extended to the construction techniques and cultural or architectural ideals of the 2nd century may also serve to aid the idea of the creolisation process, returning again to the primary point that this was not the intention of those behind the construction of Caerleon Amphitheatre. This is supported further by the fact that these later stone amphitheatres are still distinctly different in form and construction than legionary examples. As creolisation emphasizes, they were introduced as a new and unique aspect of Romano-British culture, specifically in this case architecture.

3.6: Chichester Amphitheatre

3.6.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

The site at Chichester has not been subject to a significant amount of excavation and some significant aspects of the monument are still very much speculation. In 1935 a potential location of an amphitheatre at Chichester was shown by G. White who commenced excavation (Wilmott, 2008, 108) with her preliminary report published in 1936. This report did provide useful information relating to the monument, although since this publication, focus on the amphitheatre specifically within published works seems to be significantly lacking. Rather, a great deal of information has been provided relating to the founding and cultural evolution of the settlement at Chichester as a whole. Most significantly this includes published works by Down (1988) and work on the excavations at Fishbourne Palace by Manley and Rudkin (2005). It must be noted, compared to previous examples analysed throughout this project regardless of categorisation, Chichester Amphitheatre is significantly lacking in relation to published material and excavation. Wilmott (2008) has provided an analysis of this monument architecturally but seems to mainly rely on White's preliminary report (1936).

An issue that is especially relevant in relation to the development and growth of Chichester is to what extent there were connections with the Romans and to some extent possible exposure

to 'Roman culture' prior to the invasion. Like Silchester, Chichester is believed have been under the rule of Cogidubnus, and towns in his kingdom such as Silchester possessed clear evidence of pre-conquest contact with Rome through coinage (Boon, 1974, 40-41) as I mentioned in section 3.3. Chichester may have even acted as the capital of the kingdom of Cogidubnus. By the late 1st century B.C., the area of later Romano-British Chichester was occupied by Iron Age tribes, yet understanding their actual distribution is very much dependent on the analysis of coinage of various tribal rulers. The settlement was also highly likely to have had trade contact with Rome prior to the invasion of A.D.43. Some of the surrounding areas, as well as areas further north in Britain, were occupied by tribes which emigrated from Gaul in the early 1st century B.C. A prime example of this was Commius who came to be ruler of the Atrebates (Down, 1988, 1-3). Two early coins were found at Chichester, one of Verica (the son of Commius) and one believed to have been a memorial coin of Commius (Down, 1988, 1-3). We know that Verica, the son of Commius, had contact with the Romans before A.D.43. The political situation during the reign of Augustus appears to have been a catalyst setting In motion Verica's flight to Rome, and Wacher mentions that Augustus even earlier had shown clear favour to Verica as the leader of the Atrebates (Wacher, 1995, 255-260).

Roman trade with Britain, specifically at this time to the Atrebate, is evident at Chichester and at Fishbourne. Down has theorised trade during the pre-conquest Late Iron Age consisted of goods coming from the Seine estuary to Chichester. A good example is one amphora found in Chichester at Chapel Street, which contained wine and was dated to the late 1st century by a stamp on the handle (Down, 1988, 5-6). Further excavations into the pre-A.D.43 ditch at Fishbourne have also yielded interesting results. The site is believed to have been occupied first in the Late Iron Age around 10.B.C. – A.D.25, before being later developed into Fishbourne Palace towards the end of the reign of Cogidubnus (Manley, Rudkin, 2005, 55). Especially thought-provoking within the finds are several finewares made by potters near Arezzo in central Italy; this Arrentine pottery, also found at Colchester, has been suggested by Dannell to be exclusively pre-conquest (Dannell, 1979, 177-84). He did counter this idea, introducing the possibility that the Arrentine at Fishbourne may have come with the invading army with provisions of older dating pottery (Dannell, 1979, 177-84). However, there is a substantial amount of pre-A.D.43 material located at Fishbourne, including 286 pre-conquest vessels discovered at Fishbourne and Chichester (Manley, Rudkin, 2005, 55-8). A square ditch located by Down in Fishbourne revealed an assemblage of pottery ranging from 10.B.C. – A.D.25 originating from throughout the empire. Animal bones found during the excavation of the Late

Iron Age ditch at Fishbourne may also be indicative of pre-conquest Roman culture present within the settlement. Pig remains make up 72% of the animal bones at the site, and it is often presumed that pigs would have been regarded as luxury animals linked to high socio-economic class (Manley, Rudkin, 2005, 83-6). Creighton has demonstrated that members of the Late Iron Age elite often travelled to Rome, gained knowledge of Roman practices, and exported them back to Britain, incorporating them into Iron Age traditions (Creighton, 2000). As proposed by Manley and Rudkin, the higher status population was expressing social and group identity through new Roman foods and customs (Manley, Rudkin, 2005, 86). In many aspects this desire to display allegiance and social status through the adoption of new culture, Roman or 'creole' could also be seen partly impacting the reasons behind the construction of the amphitheatres of Romano-Britain in general.

This issue of Roman influence within pre-conquest Chichester is especially significant when investigating the context during and prior to the Roman invasion. This situation appears somewhat comparable to the beginnings of Silchester, perhaps due to being under the rule of Cogidubnus and appearing to have welcomed the Romans to some extent. This pre-conquest involvement with Rome is evident through these material remains. However, there seems a distinct probability of military origins in relation to Chichester. It has been proposed that the first main military base camp of the Roman forces was at Chichester, as once the Catuvellauni had been defeated the next move was to take the Isle of Wight. Down pointed out that Chichester would have served as a perfect area as the "springboard" for mounting the attack. Additionally, it possessed a good harbour for supplies from Gaul and seemingly was already allied with the Roman forces (Down, 1988, 6). Although the dating is somewhat unclear, excavations have uncovered ephemeral traces of a timber-framed structure believed to be a barracks below properties on Chapel, Crane and Tower streets. Down commented that due to the regularity of the plan and associated military artefacts there is little doubt that the structure was a barracks. Military artefacts from the Chichester excavations include armour, javelins, spears, ballista bolt heads and a complete legionary *gladius* found in Chapel Street beneath a building of later Flavian construction (Down, 1988, 7-14). There is little doubt that Chichester post-conquest at first served as a major base camp for the Roman military. The troops had moved on by A.D.44-5, leaving some military structures and port installations behind (Down, 1988,16); the harbour specifically would have probably continued to serve the later town under Cogidubnus.

Unlike Dorchester, the amphitheatre was not constructed during this period of military occupation. The early military origin of Chichester did influence the population and

urbanisation of the town, but the amphitheatre was not built until at the earliest A.D.70 (Wilmott, 2008, 109-10). Although much is unknown, we do know industrial activity at Chapel Street dates to the reign of Nero (A.D.54 – 68), as does the earliest public bathhouse, and the temple to Neptune and Minerva referred to by the famous inscription at the junction of Lion Street and North Street. This inscription mentioned that the benefaction was under the authority of Cogidubnus specifically (Down, 1988, 22; *RIB,* 91). Timber-framed houses on Chapel Street are also believed to date to the reign of Cogidubnus, furthermore a dedicatory inscription was found at the corner of East Street and St. Martins Street which may have come from an imperial statue dated between A.D.58-60 (Down, 1988, 21-3).

There is clear evidence that Chichester did develop under Cogidubnus, and the town likely served as the capital of his kingdom (Wacher, 1995, 255-60). His palace at Fishbourne was constructed between A.D.70-90 (White, 1936), with Cunliffe finding evidence of imported marble from Italy and Greece as well as general finer masonry details at Fishbourne (Cunliffe, 1971). However, this may have been completed after his death. There was also evidence at Fishbourne of masonry structures pre-dating the palace. This introduces the question of under which period some of these building projects were undertaken. It stands to reason that Fishbourne Palace was at least under construction prior to the death of Cogidubnus since it is believed to be his intended residence. The date of construction does appear somewhat dubious despite White's estimations, as Down stated this conclusion should rightly be treated with caution since these were trial excavations uncovering relatively sparse dating evidence (Down, 1988, 51). At the site of the Roman baths in Chichester, excavations have uncovered evidence of very similar masonry and marble workmanship to that which Cunliffe indicated at Fishbourne (Down, 1988, 17 – 22). Down indicates that this evidence is very much symptomatic of large-scale building programmes, suggesting an intense period of building probably spanning three decades, from the late A.D.50s – 80s (Down, 1988, 18-20). Evidently, there was large scale development under Cogidubnus, especially if we are to accept the theory that Chichester was his capital. However, in terms of the amphitheatre specifically we are presented with a problem. After the death of Cogidubnus it is widely accepted that the re-planning of the town would be necessary. This is somewhat noted at Silchester also, which developed a later more uniform Roman street grid between A.D.90 and 120 (Cotton, 1947, 121). The town after the death of Cogidubnus being absorbed fully into the Roman administration, the mass reorganisation and implementation of a new street grid may have been indicative of this type of re-planning.

This introduces a significant issue regarding when this amphitheatre was constructed, although it may not specifically affect the source of funding itself. Down indicated, although with caution, that a likely date of construction for the amphitheatre would be A.D.70 (Down, 1988, 51). Wilmott suggested the date may be anywhere from the Late – Flavian to the Trajanic period up to A.D.117 (Wilmott, 2008, 110). Due to this wider range of plausible dates, it is apparent that the amphitheatre at Chichester may have been constructed either during the reign of Cogidubnus or as part of the later re-planning and construction programmes soon after his death under the Roman administration. Those living under the reign of Cogidubnus appeared to be aware of the possibilities in relation to public buildings in the 'Roman-style' and amphitheatres. In my view it is apparent at Silchester that the amphitheatre, as well as other public buildings like the forum, were originally constructed during his reign. As I previously mentioned, the masonry workmanship and imported Greek and Italian marble at Fishbourne and Chichester (Down, 1988, 17 – 22) indicate Cogidubnus was aware of and possibly a fan of Roman urban architecture, or at least was keen to demonstrate his status within the Roman administration through architecture. It is perfectly possible that the amphitheatre at Chichester was constructed under his reign, especially if we take the suggested date of his death at the latest around A.D.85 (Boon, 1974, 42-9). This gives 8 years after the earliest possible date of construction of the amphitheatre suggested by Wilmott (2008). Considering the construction or at least start of construction of Fishbourne palace also during this period it may be indicative of a larger-scale building programme as indicated by Down between A.D.50 – 80 (Down, 1988, 18-20). If this was the case, as with Silchester, funding for this amphitheatre would most likely come from wealthy benefactors in Chichester, likely encouraged by Cogidubnus. Fishbourne being under construction very close to, but still before, Cogidubnus's death displayed high levels of masonry workmanship and employed imported marble, as did the public baths on Tower street of which the earliest part dated to the reign of Nero (Down, 1988). In a similar vein, the masonry structures such as the forum at Silchester constructed before this period and during the reign of Cogidubnus are clear examples that it was possible for large scale masonry and complex structures to have been built prior to this 're-planning' of the late 1st century. This was made even more likely at Chichester by its role as the first main military camp and the evidence of industry and trade which brought wealth as well as wealthy individuals into the town very early into Roman occupation.

The other possible scenario is that the amphitheatre was constructed later, after the death of Cogidubnus and was a part of the re-planning of Chichester. Excavations of the north-west

quadrant of Chapel Street and Tower Street site between 1969 – 1974, show that the earliest timber buildings of the 1st century were covered by a large gravel spread extending south to the centre of the town. Evidence from pottery found, including 2nd century Samian ware suggested that this remodelling was still occurring in the mid-late 2nd century possibly up to 70 years after the death of Cogidubnus (Down, 1988, 28 – 40). During this time the main streets were likely laid out. Down theorised that this occurred towards the late 1st century after the death of Cogidubnus, since early streets from the military period did survive although they were likely also remodelled and incorporated into the official street grid (Down, 1988, 47-8). There is still the possibility the amphitheatre was also constructed during this period after Cogidubnus's death, most likely still through the funding of a wealthy benefactor since the Roman government have not evidently funded any amphitheatres directly in Britain. If this was the case, it may have been constructed as a celebration of acceptance of the settlement's ownership under the Roman administration. An amphitheatre or forum may have been considered an architectural indication of Roman rule. Down has suggested that during this period after the death of Cogidubnus, it is likely that public buildings such as a forum were constructed in the centre of the town. However, little is known about them aside from fragments and foundations uncovered beneath north and east streets indicating the presence of "massive" buildings. Moreover, he also clarifies that the majority of structures in the centre of the town prior to this period were built of timber and clay (Down, 1988, 29).

Even with the evidence of masonry construction projects during this period at Chichester, the amphitheatre was probably partly constructed in timber (White, 1936, 156-9). However, Wilmott points out that the original arena wall was constructed of stone and lacks a fully timber predecessor (Wilmott, 2008, 54). Though, again due to the notable evidence of masonry work in relation to other projects, this does not suggest any government or military involvement in the construction of Chichester Amphitheatre. Especially in relation to the notable evidence of construction under Cogidubnus and a highly probable awareness of amphitheatres as an option exemplified by the construction of Silchester Amphitheatre during his reign, I believe the monument was at least commissioned and funded late into the reign of Cogidubnus, and the funding sourced through wealthy benefactors within Chichester. The re-planning period after his death appeared to have lasted until around A.D.150 during the Antonine period; it has also been suggested that around this time the amphitheatre was abandoned (Down, 1988). Down suggested during this time the 'native town' was transformed under the Roman administration. This transformation took place mainly around the centre of the settlement, including the erection of the forum and other unidentified masonry structures

(Down, 1988, 21). The preliminary excavations of the amphitheatre show the structure was robbed out soon after the mid-late 2nd century, possibly for building material to reinforce the city walls or erect the bastions (White, 1936, 156-9). One theory is that this surprisingly early abandonment of the amphitheatre may have been due to the urban development and cultural shifts within the town itself. It seems highly unlikely that the amphitheatre was constructed during the redevelopment under the Roman administration after the death of Cogidubnus, just to be abandoned so soon. Although, the lack of physical evidence from the amphitheatre itself makes this difficult to discern. By contrast at Dorchester physical attributes and dating evidence relating to the amphitheatre itself makes its abandonment more understandable.

3.6.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Chichester:

An especially important architectural aspect that must be considered throughout this section is the masonry construction of Chichester Amphitheatre; the arena wall and entrances passage were originally of masonry construction, specifically of flint and mortar (Wilmott, 2008, 109). Architecturally, Chichester lacked an entirely timber predecessor in the way we have come to expect at all the other strictly urban early Romano-British amphitheatres. The reconstructions and masonry enhancements at London and Silchester both occurred after A.D.100.

In terms of planning, Chichester is somewhat mysterious in terms of what we know from limited excavations. The arena is notably large, measuring 56.3 x 45.72 (Wilmott, 2008, 108-9), which comes to around 2021.6m^2 by my calculations. This would place the arena of Chichester Amphitheatre either comparable to or larger than the arena of London Amphitheatre as estimated by Bateman (Bateman, 1997, 73). Unfortunately, the precise techniques used for the formation of the amphitheatre at Chichester are not known. The preliminary excavation report mentioned that the arena is oval, rather than elliptical (White, 1936), and the measurements do appear somewhat comparable to those of Chester (57.9 x 48.7m) and Caerleon (56.08 x 41.6m) (Wilmott, 2008). Due to the comparable dimensions, one may hesitantly suggest that the four-circle method may have been used at Chichester. While it is notable that the amphitheatre at Chichester is larger than the legionary example at Caerleon, as mentioned previously (3.5) Caerleon Amphitheatre's size was limited due to the lack of space available on the site (Wilmott, 2008, 144).

This possible use of this 'four-circle' technique at Chichester is of paramount importance, as although it is purely theoretical this would raise again the question of how the knowledge of this construction technique was present in Chichester. However, given the period proposed by Boon around A.D.70 – 85 for the death of Cogidubnus (Boon, 1974. 42-9), it cannot be

precisely determined if Chichester Amphitheatre was constructed before or after the example at Caerleon. Unlike contemporary settlements such as London and Silchester, there is little doubt that Chichester in the very early post-conquest period served as a major base camp for the Roman military. Chichester's origins as a primary large-scale military encampment may further explain the possible transfer of knowledge relating to the construction of this amphitheatre in Britain. There are several notable comparisons to the amphitheatre at Caerleon that are not shared by other urban amphitheatres during this period. White during preliminary excavations noted that the measurements of the arena wall at the Chichester Amphitheatre "compare closely to that at Caerleon" (White, 1936, 156-7). The masonry construction and possible use of the 'four circle method' to form Chichester's arena may also direct us to suggest a later date of construction than the amphitheatre at London, placing it to some extent more in line with the legionary examples in this specific respect. Given the military origins of Chichester, perhaps individuals associated with the military remained in Chichester after the town took on a more urban role; those who possessed and perhaps passed along the knowledge relating to the construction of amphitheatres in a more 'Roman' fashion.

Chichester is also the only urban amphitheatre in this period that appears to have been decorated. Evidence of material that has collapsed into the arena from the wall suggests it has been originally painted in colours which included light and dark red, pink, purple, orange, yellow, green and grey (Wilmott, 2008, 108-9). This internal decoration, specifically painting the arena wall, also provides another interesting parallel with the amphitheatre at Caerleon, where the internal face of the arena wall may have been painted red (Wilmott, 2008, 148) (Section 3.5.2). Chichester Amphitheatre is theorised to only have possessed two entrances. Although the second has not been located, Wilmott proposes it is likely at the opposite narrow end of the oval (Wilmott, 2008, 109-110). This is similar to the amphitheatre of London, where only a single entrance has been confirmed, though another is suspected (section 3.4). Additionally, the elements of masonry construction and planning methods used at Chichester may again act as evidence of the individuality of these amphitheatres.

The proposition that the Chichester Amphitheatre was probably constructed after the example at London based primarily on the masonry construction of the arena wall, the probable use of the 'four-circle' method and some architectural similarities to the amphitheatre at Caerleon makes sense in theory. This mainly appeals to the ideal of chronological architectural and technological 'progression'. However, these are still two very different settlements and contexts, and the available knowledge, materials and preference of the surveyors behind the

construction will certainly have also differed. The masonry construction of Chichester, the more complex 'eight-circle' technique of planning used at London and the notable size of both are representative of their contexts, both culturally and in terms of the possible knowledge available to those behind their construction. Just as noted at military examples like Caerleon and Dorchester, urban examples are also heavily representative of their individuality in relation to planning and construction. Somewhat regardless of the direct source of inspiration and knowledge for the construction of the Chichester Amphitheatre, it is evident that the monument is a manifestation of the desires and cultural preferences of the community in Chichester. Even if directly inspired by Caerleon Amphitheatre and/or the result of preferences and knowledge passed from the settlement's early military origins, the monument is noticeably unique architecturally, especially within the 'urban' category of amphitheatres during this early period, further demonstrating the localisation of spectacle culture in Britain.

3.6.3 Conclusions:

The two primary aspects that need to be considered when investigating the amphitheatre at Chichester are the structure's possible later date of construction compared to other urban examples, and the seemingly more complex construction represented through masonry work. The possibility of a construction date towards the end of the reign of Cogidubnus around the late A.D.70s to early A.D.80s appears highly probable. This perhaps even places the amphitheatre more chronologically in line with Romano-British legionary examples also possibly constructed around A.D.80. The extraordinary architecture and identifiable masonry work pointed out by Wilmott (Wilmott, 2008, 109) are certainly notable within this period and especially when compared to contemporary 'urban' amphitheatres. Considering the early masonry work of the Chichester Amphitheatre, it is evident that at the time of the death of Cogidubnus his palace at Fishbourne was under construction demonstrating that large scale masonry work during this period was possible. In this case, I see no reason why this is not also applicable to the amphitheatre at Chichester.

Furthermore, architectural similarities to Caerleon Amphitheatre and the significant military origins of the town both provide probable sources of inspiration and knowledge in relation to the complex construction of the Chichester Amphitheatre. While White claims that the amphitheatre at Chichester arena wall compares closely to that of Caerleon (White, 1936, 156-7) this may be coincidence, especially if we consider Wilmott's view that Caerleon had to be altered and essentially squeezed into the settlement (Wilmott, 2008, 144). Although, inspiration from Caerleon and the transfer of knowledge and preferences from the early

military origins of Silchester are not mutually exclusive. It is perfectly possible that these were both significant factors in the choices those behind the construction of Chichester Amphitheatre made aesthetically. I would suggest that the amphitheatre at Chichester may represent a very useful example relating to the evolution of Romano-British architecture, as it is the final urban example constructed prior to A.D.100, after which multiple amphitheatres I have covered here are rebuilt in stone. The complex construction at Chichester, including masonry work as well as internal decoration, may represent some more traditionally 'Roman' architectural features and techniques. However, the inclusion and use of these was primarily down to preference and awareness of the urban elites within Chichester behind the construction of the amphitheatre. This further demonstrates that even when capable to draw on these more traditionally 'Roman' forms of architecture, those behind these monuments during this early period before A.D.100 still chose to construct these monuments as manifestations of their own preferences and the localised spectacle culture of their community.

3.7: Chester Amphitheatre

3.7.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

Chester Amphitheatre was discovered by W. J. Williams in 1929, the initial interpretation of the monument as an amphitheatre was confirmed by excavations carried out in the following years after by Newstead and Droop (Wilmott, 2008, 136). Excavation between 1960-1969 by Thompson and his report seem somewhat flawed, with "wholesale" clearance of the arena destroying post-Roman evidence (Wilmott, 2008, 136). In 2004-6 excavations funded by English Heritage and Chester City Council, directed by Wilmott and Garner brought our understanding of Chester Amphitheatre to an impressive level. Their published report *The Roman Amphitheatre of Chester* (2017) has provided a comprehensive examination of the monument specifically throughout its origins and period of use. Contextually, Chester is not as well understood as the settlement and fortress at Caerleon and has not been as significant within published works.

Chester (*Deva Victrix)* was primarily a military centre much like Caerleon, exemplified by the large legionary fortress occupying the centre of the settlement. This fortress was established A.D.74-5, with an early garrison believed to have been Legion II *Adiutrix.* Soon after this date, the civilian settlement (*canabae*) was developed with the excavations carried out suggesting it was mainly concentrated to the west of the legionary fortress. Additionally, the evidence indicates notable civilian and industrial activity to the south and east (Mason, 1987, 155-163).

It stands to reason that the *canabae* surrounding the legionary fortress, of which the amphitheatre was an important structure, was probably developed very early after the legionary fortress's construction in A.D.74-5. The earliest structures were constructed mainly of timber but were replaced in the early 2nd century by more substantial masonry structures (Mason, 2002). The *canabae* settlement plans have been recreated, including notable structures surrounding the fortress itself as well as the settlements relation to the River Dee (Fig. 3.10).

Much like chartered Romano-British towns, the *canabae* possessed a substantial bathhouse and *102ould102n.* A notable military parade-ground in the eastern sector seemingly cemented the settlement's military origins and continued use. The civilian activity was concentrated either along the edge of the plateau, such as the *102ould102n* or along the river frontage (Mason, 1987, 166-7). To the south-east of the legionary fortress the land was largely occupied by the military amphitheatre initially discovered in 1929. The earliest phase of the amphitheatre was believed to have been constructed soon after the fortress (Mason, 2002, 54). The amphitheatre was constructed on high ground on the banks of the River Dee, in a commanding position where it was seen by anyone approaching from the South or West and from the river (Wilmott, 2008, 135). Preliminary excavations took place in the 1960s, but new and seemingly more fruitful excavations were carried out more recently in 2004-6. These were directed by Wilmott and Garner and produced a lot of new and valuable information (Wilmott, 2008, 135-140). Significantly, these recent excavations determined the earliest structure was made of stone as well as timber. The evidence for dating the structure, mostly coming from rubbish dumps in the primary bank suggests that the settlement was well established before the amphitheatre's construction. A reasonable estimation has been suggested of A.D.80-90 (Wilmott, 2008, 135-140). However, it is evident that the structure was further radically altered soon after. The specifics of these alterations will be discussed in section 3.7.2. The dating of this mass refurbishment was well established because a coin of A.D.96 was located in the foundation of one of the radial timbers (Wilmott, 2008, 137-40).

As to be expected due to the context of this example, Chester Amphitheatre mirrors the construction techniques of the military amphitheatre at Caerleon. Wilmott has further suggested the appearance of these structures (Chester and Caerleon) may have been similar to the depiction on Trajan's Column of the amphitheatre at Dacia with a stone outer wall (Wilmott, 2008, 145). Comparable to the amphitheatre at Caerleon my hypothesis is that the construction and planning of the amphitheatre at Chester was done by members of the legion stationed there and by Roman military engineers. This theory becomes convincing especially

when comparing this amphitheatre to others throughout Roman Britain constructed during the same period, particularly investigating specific features which display the complex nature of the construction of the military amphitheatre at Chester. The similarities in form and in context cannot be overlooked, especially since as discussed, the evidence in the form of inscriptions confirming the source of construction of the Caerleon Amphitheatre appears to be very strong.
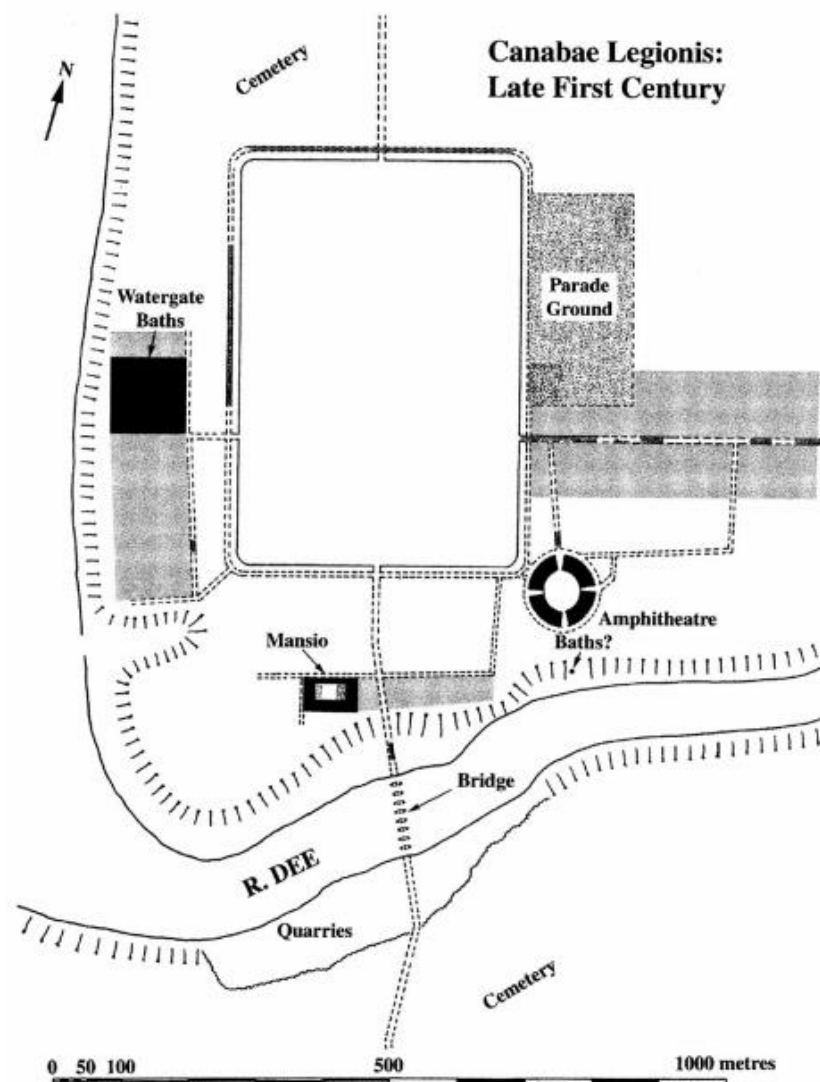
Figure 3. 10, the plan of the *canabae* at Chester during the late 1st century A.D., Mason, 2002, 55

It is worth considering to what extent one could extrapolate the evidence present at Caerleon to Chester Amphitheatre which lacks the clear inscriptions. The notable similarities between the amphitheatres in terms of context, dating and architecture cannot be overlooked. These are also the only two examples of legionary amphitheatres in Britain during this period. With both amphitheatres being constructed within the military context of these settlements, it would be difficult to suggest a different explanation relating to their funding and construction, especially when considering the restrictions relating to who could live within these settlements. Although there are architectural differences between the amphitheatres at Chester and Caerleon, which will be discussed in section 3.7.2, the forms of both amphitheatres even in their primary phases are far grander than any urban examples even later during their stone reconstructions after A.D.120. Primarily based on the context of this monument as well as the architecture that shall be discussed in section 3.7.2, I would propose Chester Amphitheatre was funded and constructed in the same manner as the other legionary example at Caerleon. Although these are the only two legionary amphitheatres discovered in Britain, this would indicate that the Roman administration was aware of and subsidizing the introduction of these legionary amphitheatres in Britain. Although, this does not mean that the Romans purposefully influenced a Romano-British culture, more probably they intended these monuments to primarily serve those within the military settlements at Caerleon and Chester only, perhaps they were not expecting this culture to 'spread' and evolve in the way it did through the creolisation process.

3.7.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Chester:

If we are to consider Chester and Caerleon Amphitheatres to be contextually similar or even the same, architectural disparities between the two amphitheatres may provide some useful further insight. As I have stressed thus far, it is vital to take into account to what extent the preference of the surveyor or those behind the construction is evident within the architecture. It is also worth considering topographical or environmental differences relating to the position of the amphitheatre and layout of the settlement as a whole. In terms of the architecture of the Chester Amphitheatre, as is the case with Caerleon Amphitheatre when compared to the amphitheatres within *civitas* capitals it certainly stands out in terms of architecture and construction. This is exemplified by the construction of this amphitheatre's primary phase in both stone and timber (Wilmott, 2008, 135-140). This is particularly unusual when investigating these early amphitheatres in Britain prior to around A.D.120. As pointed out by Wilmott, the first phases of these amphitheatres were probably constructed with a timber

frame with the outer supports embedded within the fabric of the outer wall (Wilmott, 2008, 145)

One aspect that needs to be addressed at this point with regard to dating are the refurbishments made in A.D.96 (Wilmott, 2008, 137-40). The first phase of Chester Amphitheatre was noticeably more simplistic than at Caerleon. This consisted of a stone outer wall, probably a stone arena wall (although no evidence of one has been uncovered) and an earthen seating bank. Access to the seating was probably through one of the four entrances (Wilmott, 2008, 137). To some extent this stage of the Chester Amphitheatre seems like an unfinished structure; however, there is some evidence of usage during this period. To the south-west beyond the wall of the later amphitheatre is what has been theorised to be the latrines used during this early phase for those who visited the amphitheatre. A second large cesspit was also located adjacent to the northern entrance deemed to belong to this period (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 84-9). This phase was very short-lived prior to the refurbishments noted by Wilmott transforming the amphitheatre in Phase 1B. Due to these changes being made so shortly after the initial construction and their dating falling prior to my A.D.100 cut off point I shall be primarily discussing this slightly later stage of the amphitheatre at Chester. This may be regarded to some extent as the completion of the Chester Amphitheatre around A.D.96. At this time, it became more comparable to the legionary amphitheatre constructed at Caerleon. Although, from Chester Amphitheatre's original construction it appears to have been larger than the example at Caerleon, the arena measuring 57.9 x 48.7m (Wilmott, 2008, 137). However, as noted previously, the smaller size of Caerleon was primarily due to the limited space available within the settlement (Wilmott, 2008, 143-4).

One of the largest alterations made to Chester around A.D.96 was to the seating bank; this helped to elevate it to the standard of the architecture present at Caerleon. The outer wall remained but the seating bank was cut away forming a flat terrace. On this terrace was a system of timber-framed seating. Slots were cut into the terrace, radiated from the arena wall; this was the same system presumed to have been used for the seating at Caerleon (Wilmott, 2008). Again, these large-scale alterations do appear to bring the amphitheatre at Chester more architecturally in line with the earlier example at Caerleon. The planning of the amphitheatre at Chester is also comparable to the amphitheatre at Caerleon, both making use of the 'four-circle' method to form their arenas (Wilmott, 2008, 83). However, there are again noticeable differences from the outset; unusually, the outer wall was probably constructed first at Chester (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 77). At the early stages of the investigation into the amphitheatre at Chester, it was presumed that the arena was elliptical. However, as the

excavations progressed this was proved to not be the case (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 149). The
width of the *cavea* is constant, the outer and arena walls being concentric to each other.
Analysis by Wilmott and Garner has proved conclusively that the first amphitheatre at Chester
was laid out using the four-circle method to form an oval (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 150).
Comparing the precise technique used (Fig. 3.11) it appears certainly different from that
employed to form the arena at Caerleon (Fig. 3.9).
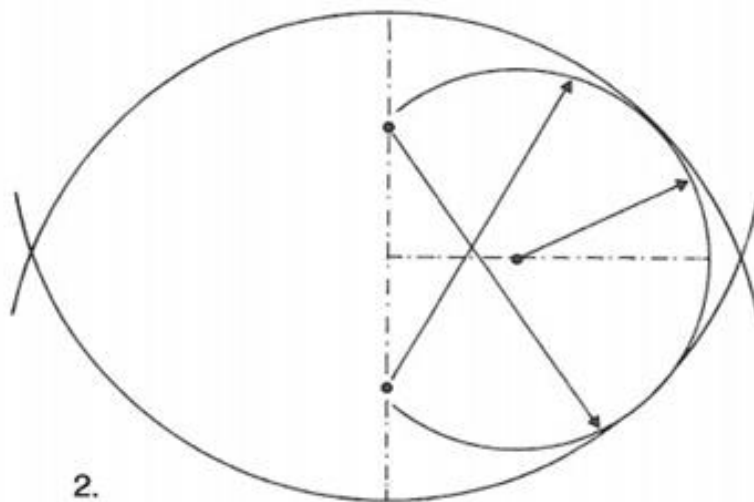
Figure 3. 11, reconstruction of the planning scheme for the amphitheatre at Chester using the four-oval
system, Wilmott, 2008, 83

Again, there could be multiple reasons for this, from the space available, the landscape or
simply the preferences of the surveyor or those who commissioned them. However, it does
highlight additionally the fact that despite the very similar context and likely same sources of
funding and construction, these amphitheatres are far from structurally identical. Both
structures did show evidence of some exterior decoration; the main traces of decoration are
from phase 1B (A.D.96) and appear to have been introduced as a part of this overhaul amongst
other elements. Three projections each 0.9m in width, one located at each end of the
foundations and one in the centre are believed to be buttresses acting as decoration.
Excavations in 1931 and in 1965-6 at Chester further indicated that the arena wall had been
rendered and possibly 'colour washed' (Thompson, 1976). Chester is also believed to have had
a *nemeseum* far prior to the example included at Caerleon, suggested by Wilmott & Garner's
recent report to have been during phase 1B (A.D.96) (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 156-7).

While the radical alterations made to the Amphitheatre of Chester in A.D.96 elevated the monument architecturally in line with Caerleon Amphitheatre; they further introduced architectural features that differentiate it, such as the *nemeseum* during this early period. An especially interesting example has been identified with the introduction of the decorative buttresses. Initially during phase 1A at Chester, it is thought access to the *cavea* was obtained through one of the four entrances (Wilmott, 2008, 137). During the alterations of phase 1B, an external staircase was built along the face of the outer wall; it stood to a height of 4m and is virtually identical to the amphitheatre at Paestum in Italy (Wilmott, 2008, 139). During this time also a service corridor running around the circumference of the structure was moved away to create a concentric zone around 1.7m wide. This new stairway was to provide access to the new upper timber seating (Wilmott, 2008, 137-8). This further provides some interesting differences architecturally between these two amphitheatres, the method of access to the *cavea* at Caerleon appears more complex in this case. A further example is that the Chester Amphitheatre only possessed four entrances (Wilmott, 2008) while Caerleon had eight entrances demonstrated in Figure 3.8. In this case again this could be down to the preferences of those behind the amphitheatre's construction or perhaps this form of access, and number of entrances at Chester were constructed due to the specific needs of the population in the surrounding settlement. Looking at the position of Chester Amphitheatre in relation to the settlement (Fig. 3.10) if the structure had eight entrances the 'diagonal' entrances would run straight into the fort. Perhaps the architects realised this also and did not construct them to preserve symmetry.

3.7.3 Conclusions:

These significant architectural differences do not call into question the groups behind the construction or planning of the amphitheatres at Caerleon and Chester. However, it demonstrates another interesting point that is vital to my project. They appear to have been the result of two separate localised projects, not a cookie cutter program ordered by the Roman state. The differences relating to architecture and the periods of construction reflect independent actions by two legions and their generals. The stark differences represent the individuality relating to the needs and wants of the legionary engineers and groups who funded and commissioned these two projects. The reasons behind their distinct forms are unknown for certain. They may be due to the limited space, resources or funding, restrictions of the chosen site, formed according to the needs of the military settlement, or simply because of the preferred aesthetics of legionary engineers who planned them. Nonetheless these

disparities embody the individuality and control those behind their construction had over their appearance and placement.

One aspect that is especially thought-provoking relating to the amphitheatre at Chester specifically are the later refurbishments in A.D.96 (Wilmott, 2008, 137). This essentially appears to have brought the structure more in line with the architectural grandeur of Caerleon Amphitheatre. However, this does introduce the question of why Chester Amphitheatre was not originally as architecturally impressive as the example at Caerleon. Of course, the reason for this is not known for certain, but one distinct possibility could be the lack of funds at the time during the original construction of Chester Amphitheatre. Additionally, as noted, Caerleon Amphitheatres appears to have been almost forced into the settlement (Wilmott, 2008, 143-4) suggesting that it was a priority; this was not as evident at Chester.

As with the case of Caerleon, the amphitheatre at Chester provides us with what could be considered a more 'Roman' example of architecture, primarily due to the context and sources of funding and construction. Comparing this amphitheatre at Chester to contemporary urban examples such as London and Silchester is very useful in identifying how these contextually more 'Roman' examples compare to those constructed within the Romano-British settlements. However, comparing Chester Amphitheatre to the amphitheatre at Caerleon further allows us to identify the differences within the more 'Roman' category of legionary amphitheatres. This highlights their individuality despite both being constructed by legionaries and within specifically military contexts, emphasizing the aspect of construction preferences and to what extent these structures are more than just a reflection of their contexts, but perhaps a manifestation of the specific needs and preferences of the surveyor behind their construction.

3.8: Early Romano-British Amphitheatres in use

Investigating the uses of these early Romano-British amphitheatres and the events which may have taken place is reliant on three main sources of information:

- Artefact analysis.
- The use of architecture and the structure of the amphitheatre.
- Events recorded within other amphitheatres throughout the empire during this period.

However, this highlights some notable issues when investigating the use of amphitheatres within Roman Britain, especially during this initial period of cultural change. Firstly, the most obvious problem is the lack of remaining material and structural evidence for some of these amphitheatres. For example, the timber phase at London has been mostly robbed out,

deconstructed and incorporated into the later masonry phases. Investigating events that took place within amphitheatres throughout the empire during this period could be a useful avenue to take. However, this does not assist in understanding the cultural differences and changes within Britain at this point. It would be unwise to presume that the events and practices which took place in Roman Gaul could be extrapolated to those within Silchester for instance due to the notable cultural differences. This is especially the case when it comes to events within the amphitheatres; these events to some extent represent a manifestation of cultural practices. However, it must be considered that it is more than probable that those of high status and notable wealth would have hosted and funded these events throughout Roman Britain during this period, perhaps taking on further Roman influence in this sense. Millett noted relating to London that local elites who sought great political and social status adopted Roman culture and ideology (Millett, 1990). The events within these early amphitheatres could further be an example of this practice. This again may be represented through the available material evidence; the amphitheatre as well as the games held within are considered vital symbols of *Romanitas* (Wilmott, 2008, 10-12).

One would also expect a notable divide between the events which took place within the legionary amphitheatres at Chester and Caerleon, compared to those within urban centres. This is primarily due to the context and individuals who would have funded and even attended the events. Wilmott has suggested due to the miltiary audience, experiences with weapons and the horrors of war a different kind of spectacle may have taken place (Wilmott, 2008, 57). However, as I have mentioned, *canabae* were inhabited by family members of the miltiary as well as those linked to industy such as traders and merchants (Mason, 2002, 53-5). All of these groups may have also attended these events within the amphitheatres of Chester and Caerleon. There has long been a noticeable connection between amphitheatres and the displays which took place within them to the military throughout the empire. The games and events are often associated closely with the military, even leading to theories that 'munera' (gladiatorial games) were used to train and teach soldiers. Boon has stated, specifically regarding military amphitheatres, it is doubtful the element of military training entered strongly into the activities within amphitheatres or the reason for their construction (Boon, 1972). The training of gladiators was understandably fundamentally different from that of legionaries. However, I disagree to some extent with Boon's statement especially in the context of these military amphitheatres in Britain. Bateman suggested the role of 'munera' was to inculcate virtues into the spectators but also a place where soldiers could learn as spectators watching various types of combat (Bateman, 1997, 82). This could certainly have

been a possibility when considering the events within the military amphitheatres of Britain at Dorchester, Caerleon and Chester.

Dorchester Amphitheatre: 3.8.1

Very little is evidence from the architectural remains of Dorchester Amphitheatre relate to the events which may have taken place. This is further complicated by the differing uses of the amphitheatre prior to A.D.100. As discussed in detail in section 3.2, the amphitheatre served both military and urban audiences throughout this early period. There are some theories related the architecture of the structure. The lack of a second phase or even apparent maintenance of the amphitheatre during this period as discussed in section 3.2 through analysis provided by Bradley (1976) is suggestive of disinterest. It is probably also indicative of a lack of overall cultural change in relation to the amphitheatre at Dorchester, or even a significant movement away from it in terms of cultural relevance and significance for the people of Roman Dorchester. For this reason, evidence after A.D.100 may be more relevant when investigating the events which took place within this amphitheatre throughout its urban phase overall.

One of the interpretations of the inner trench of the arena as a safety barrier is also supported by evidence from other sites, discussed by Jennison in the context of animal shows, (1937, 155 ff.). The best-known example is at the Roman colosseum. At a number of stone built and theatre-amphitheatres these screens were for temporary use and could be removed, a view which would not be appropriate here. The best comparison architecturally would be with the amphitheatre at Birten (Lehner, 1910) as I mentioned in Section 3.2. This would suggest the use of animals in shows, although it does not give any insight into the specific of these events.

There has been a well conducted investigation and analysis into the material remains and artefacts excavated throughout the site of the amphitheatre by Bradley (1976). Projectile points found may have belonged to the earliest phase of the amphitheatre. Bradley has suggested that their presence may support the use of the site as a training centre or a *Ludus* (Bradley, 1976, 70). There have been three human burials found on the site of the amphitheatre, two of men with "good muscular development" and one of a woman with "slender proportions" (Bradley, 1976, 71). Gray's notes mention that just north of the amphitheatre was the town cemetery, suggesting that it appears to have impinged upon the site. Two posts associated with these burials belong to the 2nd century A.D and the dates for the recorded graves in this cemetery are almost all in agreement with this (Bradley, 1976, 73-4). Burial A, a middle-aged male, is described by Wright as having a greatly developed right

upper extremity. This has led to the suggestion that he may have been a gladiator (Bradley, 1976, 72). This is a contentious debate; Bradley (1976) has put forward his own theory on this matter stating that from other valuable dating evidence it is unlikely gladiatorial events ever took place at Dorchester. Rather, the man's muscular development could easily be the result of agricultural work or forestry. Little of significance has been said about the other male burial (Burial C) in relation to what events he may have been involved in. Overall, I would be inclined to agree with Bradley concerning the man from Burial A, there is certainly not enough evidence to suggest he was a gladiator. However, it is apparent that this does not mean gladiatorial events never took place. The significance of these types of events in relation to the military in my view make it more probable that they may have taken place during the early years of the amphitheatre during its 'military' period. It must be emphasised however, the lack of evidence for this means it remains primarily theoretical. One must also consider to what extent the types of events may have changed between the amphitheatre's military and urban periods of use. Dorchester acting as the first example of an amphitheatre in Britain may have also been influential in relation to the events held within them. It is possible that the events held within Dorchester Amphitheatre during its time as an urban example were not that different from the earliest periods. This may also show a lack of interest and cultural engagement with the amphitheatre by the population of Dorchester, leading to the structure's early abandonment.

Silchester Amphitheatre: 3.8.2

A central aspect that must be considered in relation to the use of Silchester Amphitheatre is the unique layout of this amphitheatre; the structure being constructed with a near circular arena measuring 43 x 42.4m (Fulford, 1989, 13) (Fig. 3.3). The majority of animal remains come from silts and dumps raised in the arena of the stone phase, although small deposits were found from both timber phases also. Horse bones located in the first timber phase include a probable jaw and skull (Fulford, 1989, 189). Some of the finds within the layers including horse remains, which may have originally been deposited outside the arena, but then taken and dumped over the arena during the levelling process (Fulford, 1989). It has suggested that the first primary timber phase with a near circular arena was probably a response to needing a circus like structure to accommodate horses (Fulford, 1989, 193). Additionally, the use of horses within the arena has also been significantly linked to the military. Fulford correctly notes that this should not overshadow or cancel out the importance of events such as beast fights (Fulford, 1989, 189-91). The importance of the military in relation to these games is certainly an issue worth considering, especially during the first phase of the Silchester

Amphitheatre. While I would argue that the military did not play a notable role in the construction of this amphitheatre, there is still the question of to what extent they may have inspired the events held within. This is a possibility, if we are to follow the theory that Silchester Amphitheatre was somewhat inspired by Dorchester; or at least those responsible for the Silchester Amphitheatre were made aware of these structures by the example at Dorchester. Events continued from the military period of Dorchester Amphitheatre may have inspired similar events at Silchester, manifesting as these displays using horses.

Humphrey has suggested the possibility of chariot racing also taking place within the amphitheatres of Britain, citing pictorial evidence (1986, 431-7). It is possible as Fulford has suggested that this early phase at Silchester due to the arena's shape partly served as an alternative to a circus, with no examples of these found in Britain (Fulford, 1989, 189-90). However, it is worth noting circuses are long and thin in shape, not near circular as the arena at Silchester was. It is evident that the recesses around the arena were probably used in relation to events involving animals. There was no way of entering these from the rear to force animals out, but it has been suggested that they could have been accessed from above, although there is no evidence to support this from any phase (Fulford, 1989). It is possible that through the primary timber phase and later phases of the structure's life these recesses acted as 'Cult Rooms'. Other possibilities raised by Fulford are that these recesses at Silchester may have been used as refuges or waiting rooms for participants during games or to store essential equipment (Fulford, 1989, 190-2). These explanations to me appear far more probable than the use of the recesses as beast pens; yet the lack of material evidence to prove this theory provides plenty of room for the further speculation. In relation to when events may have taken place at Silchester, rubbish retained from the neighbourhood of the amphitheatre implies a fair degree of use between the late 2nd and mid-3rd century (Fulford, 1989, 192-3).

London Amphitheatre: 3.8.3

Considering the uses of the first timber phase of the London Amphitheatre is especially problematic. As discussed in section 3.4, this phase of the structure was largely robbed out or incorporated into the later stone phases of the structure. The later stone phases of the London Amphitheatre provide stronger examples architecturally and structurally in relation to what events may have taken place there. Even during the original timber phase, it is certainly worth noting the impressive size of the monument when considering what events could have taken place there. This timber phase of the building is estimated to have had a capacity for up to 7,000 spectators (Hingley, 2018, 76). We can make suggestions as to what could possibly have

taken place there relating to the architecture. For example, the original entrance was 17m long and 5m wide (Bateman, 1997, 53-5); this makes the introduction of larger animals into the arena perfectly possible. Additionally, the religious importance as discussed in section 3.4 in relation to the placement of the amphitheatre within the 'temple zone' may have influenced the uses of the structure, perhaps introducing the possibility of the monument being used for religious festivals. Direct evidence of gladiatorial games in London is sparse. Some have referenced a bronze helmet found in the either the Walbrook or Thames that is now in the British Museum. However, the style of this helmet is of "standard legionary pattern" (Brailsford, 1951, 17), not totally dismissing the possibility of gladiatorial use, but preventing this helmet from being by any means conclusive evidence of gladiatorial games

The theory In relation to London's origins that the settlement was founded and heavily influenced by Gallo-Roman settlers, already somewhat familiar with Roman style towns as evidenced by the structural and architectural layout at early Cornhill (Wallace, 2015) may have influenced the uses of the amphitheatre as well. But it does not bring us closer to identifying the specific uses of the monument during this period.

Caerleon Amphitheatre: 3.8.4

I have discussed in section 3.5 to what extent the Caerleon Amphitheatre can be considered 'traditionally Roman' in form and architecture. One may expect that the events which took place within this structure were also a representation of this. In terms of what we can theorise when examining architectural features of the structure the entrances appear especially useful. The outer half of entrance D consisted of a steep ramp which may or may not have carried steps. Above this there was believed to be a barrel vault although no evidence survives, which would place entrance D structurally in line with entrances B, C and F (Wheeler & Wheeler, 1928, 135). From the base of the ramp above the level of the arena opened three brick-headed archways; the centre of these formed a small chamber around 3m^2 which opened into the arena, originally roofed with a barrel vault. It has been suggested that "they were doubtless" used as waiting rooms for those involved with or performing in the games, or temporary cages for animals (Wheeler & Wheeler, 1928, 135). I have discussed throughout this thesis the importance and relevance of animal shows or beast hunts within the amphitheatre, which are thought to have been far more commonplace throughout the empire due to the lower cost compared to gladiatorial displays. These events are recorded to have taken place in Rome itself, in the 1st century (Dio, 66.25.1-5, Loeb; cf Suet. *Titus.* 7.3), with these animals transported all over the empire for entertainment purposes (Bomgardner, 1992).

The evidence of events within the Caerleon Amphitheatre are noticeably lacking, especially when considering the evident work and engineering that went into the monument's construction. Though, it would not be unwise to provide some theories of what events may have taken place based primarily upon the evident military context of this amphitheatre. The animal remains located at Caerleon may not back up this hypothesis, Watson commented that the majority of the bones found are broken pieces of food-animals, horse and dog being rare (1928), with 5 horse bones being located. However, as discussed relating to Silchester the use of horses appears somewhat commonplace within the arena, especially in relation to the military. One could argue that due to Caerleon's role as a military amphitheatre and connected to a *Canabae,* those behind the spectacles would place significant influence upon the 'military' or training aspect of the amphitheatre, rather than impressive events for leisure. As Bateman suggested, *munera* may have played an important role in demonstrating different types of combat or instilling certain virtues into soldiers (Bateman, 1997, 82). If this was the case at Caerleon Amphitheatre, there would be little need to spend vast amounts of money importing exotic beasts to use in the arena. Though, it must be stressed that this is not confirmed or evidenced specifically through the artefactual or archaeological record at Caerleon either. In terms of the finds within the amphitheatre, there appears to be very little that would be suggestive of certain events. Tools have been found, such as a mason's iron axe found in the footings of the inner side of the amphitheatre walls and therefore, discarded contemporaneously with the building of the amphitheatre (Wheeler & Wheeler, 1928, 169). Part of an iron spearhead has also been found within a slit socket, the blade having an ogee profile (Wheeler & Wheeler, 1928, 169), although the use of this is unknown.

Chichester Amphitheatre: 3.8.5

The lack of excavation at the Chichester Amphitheatre is certainly a notable issue when attempting to investigate and understand events which may have taken place there. Again, this may result in a reliance upon examining the origins and context of the amphitheatre to provide some theories relating to events. As discussed in section 3.6, the masonry construction of Chichester and apparent structural similarities to the military amphitheatre at Caerleon Amphitheatre may provide some insight into this issue. It appears evident as I proposed in section 3.6 that the Chichester Amphitheatre may have taken some architectural inspiration from these more traditionally 'Roman' styles of amphitheatres, such as at Caerleon. Perhaps this could further translate into similar events taking place within the example at Chichester. Although again, the lack of significant structural evidence is certainly problematic.

In terms of artefacts located at the site there are some of note e.g., an arrowhead was found in cutting B, the blade was leaf-shaped, and the socket broken, and White has proposed that it is "probably Roman in date" (White, 1936, 155). This could point towards animal hunting or beast fighting events. The context of Chichester is also important to consider, with the town taking the role of the capital of the kingdom of Cogidubnus; it is believed to have had contact with the Romans even prior the invasion in A.D.43. Artefact analysis as discussed in section 3.6, would further suggest some evidence of at least some familiarity with Roman material culture (Down, 1988, 1-3). Perhaps in this instance the events which took place within the amphitheatre were more 'traditionally' Roman as well, common examples such as beast fights or displays, and on rarer occasions *munera.* This is purely assumption based on the form of the amphitheatre structurally, similar to military examples such as Caerleon and the context in which it was constructed. However, as with the case of Dorchester, the abandonment date of this amphitheatre is surprisingly early, around mid-late 2nd century (White, 1936, 156-9). Notably, this is after the large-scale re-planning of the centre of Chichester after the death of Cogidubnus in the late 1st century (Down, 1988). This, as in the case of Dorchester, is probably representative of a lack of cultural engagement and public interest during this new phase of Chichester. White mentions that the stone of the structure was robbed out around the mid-late 2nd century, possibly for building material to reinforce the city walls or erect the bastions (White, 1936, 156-9). This further indicates differing priorities for the people of Chichester, choosing to negate the maintenance and upkeep of the amphitheatre. In this case and with the lack of notable evidence, one may propose that the amphitheatre was seldom used.

Chester Amphitheatre: 3.8.6

It stands to reason that the theories relating to events which took place at Caerleon Amphitheatre may also be applicable to the legionary example at Chester. However, as I mentioned relating to notable architectural differences between the two structures in section 3.7; it is evident that these amphitheatres were not part of a "cookie-cutter" program. There is a clear sense of individuality and preference noted in the architecture of both these structures and all other Romano-British amphitheatres. Based on this premise, one cannot assume that the events which took place within these amphitheatres was not subject also to individual preference by those hosting and funding them. The addition of a *nemeseum* during the radical alterations made around A.D.96 may be indicative of gladiatorial games (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 156-7). It has been proposed that during the Roman period Nemesis was predominantly the goddess of gladiators and other slaves (Hornum, 1934; Schweitzer, 1931). Animal bone remains from both phase 1A and 1B of the amphitheatre appear to include predominantly

"meat-bearing" elements (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 87). They are made up of 50% cattle, followed by sheep and pig (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 385). There has been a notable amount of military equipment found dated to the Phases 1A and 1B at Chester. A small, knobbed ferrule was found in a seating bank deposit for amphitheatre 1B. The addition of a small knob at the tip distinguishes this from small conical ferrules and suggests they had been possibly used when practising and drilling fighting techniques (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 314). This may be suggestive of military training, or perhaps gladiatorial training within the amphitheatre during this period. This structures association with the military I would argue makes the idea of this space being used for drills and practice far more probable than at other urban amphitheatres throughout Britain. Pieces of broken iron and copper-alloy body armour have also been recovered, the majority dating to the last quarter of the 1st century in areas A and B, outside the amphitheatre (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 316). However, due to being located outside of the amphitheatre, they cannot be linked to events which took place within it. It does appear that direct evidence of events and activities within these first phases of the amphitheatre at Chester is somewhat scarce. Though, as in the case of Chester one could theorise which events may have taken place primarily based on the context of the amphitheatre. However, it is vital to consider the unique nature of this monument at Chester and contemplate how this individuality characterised in its architecture may be represented through the events which took place there.

Chapter 4 – Later Amphitheatre of Roman Britain and the Reconstruction of earlier amphitheatres in late Roman times:

4.1: Introduction

As a continuation from Chapter 3, this chapter deals with what I have classified as "later" Romano-British amphitheatres. These are examples constructed after A.D.100. As with the previous chapter, during this period a wide variety of amphitheatres were constructed originally with urban examples at Cirencester and Carmarthen as well as in my view an original military amphitheatre at Richborough. Additionally, this chapter will deal with the reconstruction and maintenance of multiple amphitheatres including both legionary examples at Caerleon and Chester as well as major urban monuments such as those at London and Silchester; some examples even going through multiple stages of rebuilding over this later period. Additionally in my view, the example I shall discuss at Verulamium introduces an new 'category' within this thesis, the monument being a theatre-amphitheatre (Wilmott, 2008, 122-7). As with Chapter 3 these shall be investigated chronologically with a focus on probable inspirations and motivations in relation to the construction of these amphitheatres from both within Britain and potentially the wider empire.

Much of what was considered in the previous chapter in relation to the early amphitheatres of Britain is still applicable here. This includes the structure and main considerations for the later amphitheatres. The main aspects to consider are who constructed these amphitheatres, how they attained this knowledge and how they were capable of doing so, and what motivated groups and individuals to invest into this aspect of Romano-British spectacle culture. There are two primary areas in which the majority of these later amphitheatres differ. Firstly, they in my view appear to be architecturally superior and more complex to those considered in Chapter 3, apart from perhaps the second phase at Silchester Amphitheatre the legionary examples. The introduction and to some extent mainstreaming of masonry construction in relation to the construction of amphitheatres over this period not only makes these monuments very difficult to compare to earlier examples but further implies a degree of permanence and commitment to this aspect of officially Roman culture by those who constructed them. With this, in my view, advancement in architecture and building techniques, it is worth considering the scope for further variety and architectural freedom in relation to the construction of these amphitheatres. As they become better established and Britain is further connected to the wider empire, architectural limitations in terms of knowledge, resources and even awareness of what is possible may decrease, providing further avenues for those behind their construction to represent their own vision of the amphitheatre architecturally.

Secondly, it is certainly significant that amphitheatres continued to be constructed throughout this period with the latest at Richborough in my view being constructed during the 3rd century. The focus now shifts away from the original introduction and uptake of amphitheatres to Britain and their spread throughout the province, towards why this aspect of culture continued to be represented in such a grandiose, expensive, and intended permanent manner. By this period to what extent, they may be considered 'Roman' or even a product of conquest becomes even more questionable. Over the generations under the Romano-British administration, to what extent even military examples as suggested in the previous chapter specifically in relation to Dorchester could be viewed as a representation of 'Romanitas' (Wilmott, 2008) is unclear. As I have highlighted throughout this investigation, the notion of these monuments being considered strictly 'Romano-British' and a representation of both the province but also and more specifically their individual settlements is of paramount importance throughout this chapter also. The possibility of amphitheatres losing their original connection to Rome and perhaps becoming recognised as a part of Romano-British culture throughout the province is certainly worth considering.

The limitations throughout this chapter are also very much comparable to those noted in Chapter 3 (3.1). My research is heavily reliant upon excavation reports for these specific amphitheatres with some examples such as Richborough and Carmarthen lacking the significant attention paid to others within the subject. However, I am hopeful as more recent works are being carried out at Richborough as noted in The Guardian (Sherwood, 2021) and at Silchester by Reading University. An area in which detail is significantly lacking is the potential uses of these amphitheatres as highlighted in section 4.9. Again, this is primarily reliant upon theoretical analysis of the context and architecture of specific amphitheatres. This issue may be compounded by the later dates of the monuments considered throughout this chapter as the process of cultural change continues to take place over generations under Roman occupation. The events within them may further represent the individual nature of Romano-British spectacle culture specifically as amphitheatres become established within society. However, this idea may further suggest that those constructed later through the Romano-British period could be therefore considered 'less Roman' or 'more Romano-British' than those constructed prior to A.D.100. This is certainly an issue that requires attention throughout this chapter.

4.2: Cirencester Amphitheatre

4.2.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

The monument at Cirencester was first identified as an amphitheatre by S. Rudder in 1800, the first excavations took place in 1824 by J. Skinner (Wilmott, 2008, 110-111). Organised excavations began under J. Wacher in 1962, and were continued by A. McWhirr in 1966 (Wilmott, 2008). These culminated in the excavation report by Holbrook in 1988. This is a comprehensive and useful report providing a great deal of information surrounding the architecture and construction of the amphitheatre specifically. Additionally, Holbrook has continued to publish a great deal of work on Cirencester as a whole including in 2008 and 2015. Again, the amphitheatre is not the main focus of these later works. While our understanding of Cirencester continues to evolve, information relating to the form and construction of Cirencester Amphitheatre specifically still mainly derives from Holbrook's original excavation report (1998).

Like many Romano-British settlements the *civitas* capital at Cirencester (*Corinium*) appears to have originated from early military activity in the area. A fort and possible military camp were established around a year or so after the invasion, with a new fort constructed around A.D.50 (Wacher, 1995, 29). No conclusive evidence of pre-Roman activity within the walled area of later Cirencester has been identified (Holbrook, 2008, 304). However, around 4km to the north of the settlement on the west bank of the River Churn lay a series of Late Iron Age sites referred to as the Bagendon Complex (Holbrook, 2008). Prior to this, Bagendon was believed to have been the capital of the Dobunni (Wacher, McWhirr, 1982, 64). Wacher has proposed that excavations by Clifford (1961) have shown Cirencester "almost certainly" became the capital of the eastern half of the Dobunni, whose king Bodocus was one of the first to surrender to Plautius in A.D.43 (Wacher, 1995, 29). Dio indicates that at least part of the Dobunni sided with the Romans from the early stage of the conquest (*Roman History,* 60.20). Although how long activity continued at Bagendon is unknown, artefacts found in the excavations by Clifford (1961) include pre-Flavian finewares and Claudian mortaria, yet samian assemblage do not contain a significant number of Claudian-Neronian wares (Holbrook, 2008). This continued activity and the lack of forts located in the Cotswold region seem to support the proposal of this early alliance (Holbrook, 2008). With this in mind, Holbrook suggests that the notable presence of the military at Cirencester may be better interpreted as a manifestation of support for the pro-Roman elite who controlled trade through the area (2008, 311).

This early surrender and support shown towards the Dobunni by the Roman invaders may be represented during the emergence of Cirencester as a town from its military origins. This is perhaps most comparable to the emergence of the Romano-British town at Chichester from a large-scale military encampment, even showing evidence of pre-conquest connections with the Romans as I considered in the previous chapter (3.6). One could draw a similar comparison to the settlement and military origins of the amphitheatre at Dorchester. However, this process at Cirencester and perhaps also at Chichester appears to have been a fluid development, almost as if it was intended from the beginning. The development of the settlement at Cirencester appears to be focused around the fort constructed there. Whereas at Dorchester, no fort has been located; the encampment and perhaps the amphitheatre itself were seemingly constructed for temporary use. A key issue is also the construction date of the Cirencester Amphitheatre. More in line with Chichester and differing from the Dorchester Amphitheatre, the example at Cirencester was constructed only after the town was well established.

Investigating how the military settlement transformed and grew into a fully-fledged town may shed some light on this, especially when considering the motivations behind and planning of the construction of the amphitheatre. In terms of dating the development of the town, a street identified beneath the courtyard of the forum was associated with pre-Flavian and Flavian pottery and another in the southern district was with pottery datable to A.D.75-85 (Holbrook, 2008, 312). In both cases the streets were covered in dumps containing Flavian pottery and buried beneath the rampart of the 2nd century town defences. Wacher has suggested that fort was evacuated around A.D.70 and thus the construction of the *civitas* would have followed "immediately" with the town laid out within two or three decades using a regular street grid pattern (Wacher, 1995, 304). During this period a forum and basilica were constructed "with haste" (Wacher, 1995, 30); though it is worth noting that Wacher does not mention the amphitheatre specifically as part of this. While it seems that there was urban development during the 1st century A.D., the Flavian streets and other features suggests that it was replaced by the later town in the 2nd century (Holbrook, 2008, 312-3). Excavations of the public buildings, shops and houses at Cirencester suggest that the main infrastructure of the town was not laid out until around the first two decades of the 2nd century A.D. (Holbrook, 2008, 312). However, limited developer excavations at Trinity Road suggests that findings previously adduced as evidence for an annexe and *vicus* associated with the mid-first century A.D. fort might fit better as elements of a slowly developing Flavian town (Holbrook, 2015, 101). These challenges the original notion presented by Holbrook (2008) and the "familiar town plan"

which in large part was based on the early second century development of Cirencester (Holbrook, 2015, 101). Somewhat regardless, the construction of these structures as well as others such as a market separate from the forum are clear indicators of wealth (Wacher, 1995, 304-5) and highlight a conscious effort by those within the settlement to enhance the settlement both aesthetically and functionally into a proper Romano-British town.

The clear effort to lay out the new town in a new regular grid formation (Fig. 4.1) (Hurst, 2005) including presumably specific prior planning for the placement of the forum and basilica indicates an evident willingness to found and develop a *civitas* capital at Cirencester. A comparison focused upon by Hurst (2005) is the Romano-British town of Gloucester. Both settlements had somewhat similar military origins, though Gloucester retained the shape and layout of the legionary fortress that preceded the town (Hurst, 2005, 296), and became a *colonia* for retired veterans. It is hard to believe that the decision at Cirencester to transform the settlement into a *civitas* when the military presence was no longer necessary was made on a whim. Perhaps the location of the settlement as discussed earlier played a significant role in this decision; the roads meeting here can be clearly observed in Figure 4.1. The wealth present within Cirencester is well attested to through the presence of eighty known mosaics and tessellated pavements (McWhirr, 1986) of 2nd century dates. Importantly, Clarke proposed that due to the location of the settlement and the founding within a single generation of the invasion, it seems likely that this social and political power was organised along "pre-Conquest lines" (Clarke, 1996, 81). This may be connected to the very early surrender of king Bodocus of the Dobunni and, according to Wacher, their rapid investment in "Romanitas" (Wacher, 1995, 30).
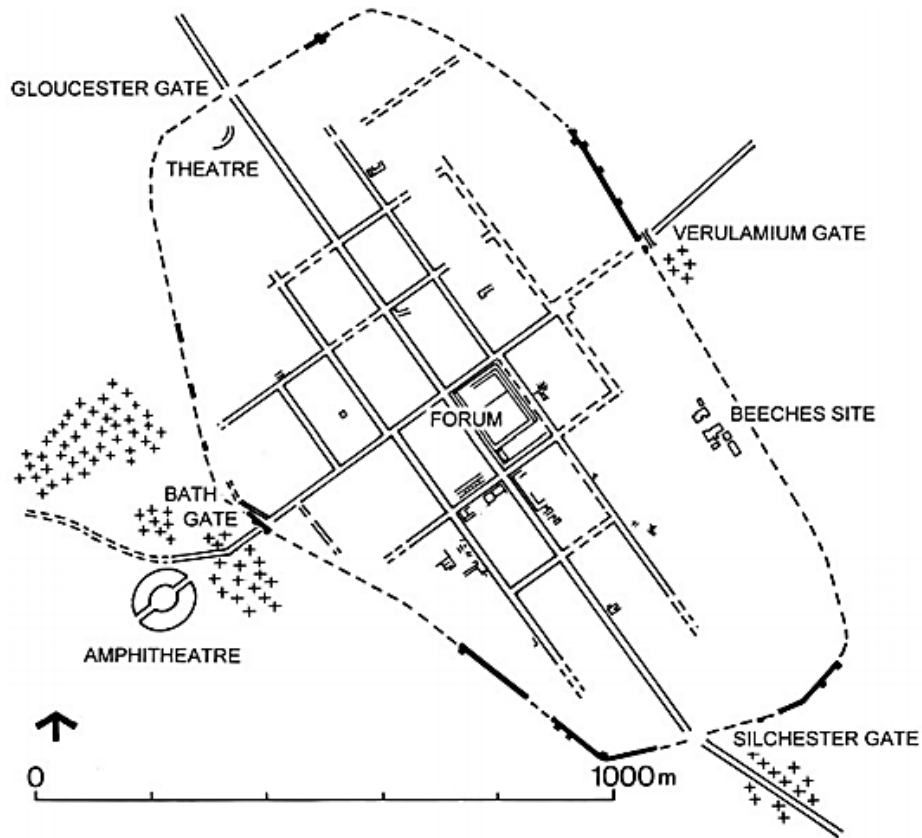
Figure 4. 1, plan of Roman Cirencester, highlighting the roads and public buildings, Hurst, 2005, 297 after Holbrook, 1998.

Originally, at the time of excavation the construction date of the basilica was proposed to be the mid-Flavian period, very much in line with the period suggested by Wacher soon after the abandonment of the fort around A.D.70-80. However, the presence of artefacts such as a "poppyhead" beaker may be evidence of a slightly later date of construction (Holbrook, Timby, 1998, 104). Holbrook has identified that this specific type of pottery did not appear in the "ceramic record" until at least A.D.85 and became more common in the 2nd century (Holbrook, Timby, 1998, 103-4), suggesting a later 1st century date at the earliest. Unfortunately, the first period of the forum lacks any significant dating evidence and as such has been ascribed to the same date as the basilica (Holbrook, Timby, 1998, 113).

Another public building of specific interest is a series of shops, though we only have a partial plan. The building according to Holbrook appears noticeably architecturally complex and may have been "in excess" of 57m long and 16.2m wide (Holbrook, 1998, 186-7). More precisely it has been suggested that the building may have been a *macellum* (covered market) (Wacher, 1962, 9). If this was the case, the example at Cirencester would be an exceptionally large *macellum* "on par with major Mediterranean towns" and in comparison, the example at Wroxeter measured 25 x 21m (Holbrook, 1998, 186-8). The lack of a full plan does make this

categorisation of this building somewhat dubious. However, if this categorisation was correct the sheer size of this *macellum* would again suggest that Cirencester was a town of significant status, additionally showing the willingness of those behind its construction when transforming the settlement architecturally into a Romano-British town. There is no useful evidence in relation to the date of the first phase of this structure due the destruction caused by later rebuilding. Holbrook has proposed that the building was "certainly" in use by the late Antonine period (Holbrook, 1998, 181).

A structure of significant interest when considering the importance and origins of the amphitheatre at Cirencester is the theatre, marked on Figure 4.1. The plan, when restored is made up from two walls forming concentric sectors of a circle. The diameter of the outer face of the outer walls is around 66m, though there is no significant dating evidence (Holbrook, 1998, 143-4). I would suggest that it was most likely constructed after the *civitas* was well established and it would certainly be surprising if such a building was funded and planned prior to the construction of the forum and basilica. Additionally, when consulting Figure 4.1, the placement of the theatre close to the walls would suggest that a space within the centre of the town was not reserved for the monument. However, this position is not uncommon regarding theatres, the location would have made it more accessible for people coming into the city to attend shows. Furthermore, this location would essentially show off the theatre to those visiting the city, a display of the wealth present within the city. Dating the theatre in comparison to the amphitheatre unfortunately is not possible. Nevertheless, the presence of the theatre further demonstrates a willingness by those residing within the settlement to delve into different aspects of 'Roman' culture, providing the population of Cirencester or visiting groups with a wider variety of entertainment. The construction of both a theatre and an amphitheatre may be indicative of a wider range of competition for local elites; putting on shows and events being a key aspect of political and social rivalry even far prior to this period (Hopkins, 1983). The construction of both a theatre and amphitheatre relating to the same settlement is very rare in Britain, though has also been discovered in other provinces such as at Badajoz in Merida, Spain (Cabello *et al.*, 2009), where the Augustan amphitheatre lay immediately east of the theatre (Cabello *et al.*, 2009).

Based on the proposed construction dates of the main public buildings analysed at Cirencester there was a clear period of development at the town. The construction of the forum, basilica and amphitheatre all took place from the very late 1st to the early 2nd century and the latest operational date of the shop complex appears to be around the mid-late 1st century (Holbrook, 1998, 181). Additionally, the supposed market or shop complex being operational by this time

would further suggest the town itself was somewhat well established. One may also presume that this was the case with the amphitheatre. Wacher has mentioned that stone construction for private buildings appears to have begun at Cirencester far before other towns such as Verulamium in the south-east "primarily due to availability" (Wacher, 1995, 310-15). This raises a point that shall be discussed later and in depth in section 4.2.2; the presence of the quarry and its transformation into an amphitheatre (Holbrook, 1998, 147). However, Wacher's point is somewhat exemplified through a masonry house in the corner of *insula xxiii* which cannot have been constructed later than the first decade of the 2nd century (Wacher, 1995, 310-15).

The major period of architectural and one would assume cultural development of Cirencester and its transformation into a *civitas* appears to have taken place between the late first and mid-2nd centuries. I would suggest that the amphitheatre was constructed as a part of this large-scale construction project that also included the forum and basilica. The issue of who or which groups funded these construction projects especially the amphitheatre shall be expanded upon in section 4.2.2 when investigating the architecture of the amphitheatre specifically. The use of masonry for the construction of the Cirencester Amphitheatre may be suggestive of military engineering and construction, especially given the origins of the settlement. It is worth considering the influence from the period in which the settlement was a fort and potential *vicus*; it should be further noted that the military presence did not disappear from Cirencester during the transformation of the settlement into a fully-fledged *civitas.* There is a considerable amount of material to suggest that a mounted garrison was established in Cirencester between A.D.50 – 65. The earliest pieces of evidence range from around the Tiberian-Claudian period though they are "unprovenanced" (Holbrook, Paddock, 1998, 306). While most of the evidence does come from the military period of the settlement, two cavalry harness strap loops seem to be of later dates. The first is of a Neronian date, however the second dates to the early 2nd century perhaps suggesting that this presence was somewhat continuous (Paddock, 1998, 306). Additional finds dating to the 3rd century such as open work studs, a pendant, a scabbard chape and a bone buckle according to Paddock suggest that there must have still been a substantial military presence at Cirencester throughout this period (1998, 306). Bishop (1991, 21-7) also concludes that there was a significant troop presence within the town throughout the second and third centuries. As I proposed at Chichester, it is certainly possible that architectural knowledge and techniques required to construct the amphitheatre may have been passed on from the earlier military origins of the settlement.

However, by this period and considering the other building projects at Cirencester, masonry work is not enough to suggest that the Roman military were involved in the project.

The use of primarily masonry work in the construction of this amphitheatre would suggest that it would have required a notable amount of funding. However, the quarry that would eventually be transformed into the amphitheatre would remedy this issue. This is not to say that the example at Cirencester would have not required a substantial amount of funding and is still a significant display of wealth and status; though making use of both the quarry in terms of its resources as well as a base structure for the amphitheatre itself would have been helpful. By contrast, at Silchester extra spoil was imported to finish building the banks due to a lack of local resources (Wilmott, 2008. 98-9). At Cirencester the convenient supply of stone, the military origins of the settlement in terms of construction knowledge, and perhaps manpower as well as the wealth present there seemingly created an ideal opportunity for a masonry amphitheatre to be constructed. This would also have been tremendously useful when considering the upkeep and maintenance of the amphitheatre and the multiple other public buildings. This is evident with many of the public buildings such as the forum, basilica and amphitheatre going through consistent stages of reconstruction and maintenance. The amphitheatre specifically, after its original construction in the early 2nd century was soon modified in the mid-2nd century with the arena wall being rebuilt in stone and the north-east entrance being totally rebuilt (Holbrook, 1998, 157). This pattern clearly indicates a consistent and long-lasting effort by those within Cirencester to support and maintain the architecture of their town. The amphitheatre is an especially interesting example of this, the monument being modified as late as the 5th century (Holbrook, 1998, 146).

When considering who or which groups specifically may have funded and planned this project, I would propose that similar groups of people who were behind the construction of the forum, basilica and possibly market were also those behind the construction of the amphitheatre. In essence I would suggest that groups of wealthy elites were behind this process, perhaps those who had previously been involved with the military or had family members who had settled in the potential *vicus* originally at Cirencester. Additionally, the settlement may have been made up of members of the Dobunni after their capital moved from Bagendon (Wacher, McWhirr, 1982, 64) perhaps providing elites with a political motivation to cement their status within the Roman administration. By this period in the early 2nd century, it seems somewhat apparent that amphitheatres are well established in Britain as a reflection of status, wealth and 'Romanitas'. The amphitheatre could be just another example of wealthy elites at Cirencester wanting a physical manifestation of their status through architecture, in line with Wacher's

observations about the forum and basilica (Wacher 1995, 30). While the specific origins of those behind the funding is unclear, the three most probable groups I propose would be those descended from members of the military from the *vicus*, members of the Dobunni or individuals moving to Cirencester due to the social and political power present there (Clarke, 1996, 81). However, by this point in Cirencester these groups may well have interlinked into the 'elite' class, as such the amphitheatre and other public buildings may actually be the result of this amalgamation. This would further an idea which I have highlighted throughout this project, the unique aspects of these amphitheatres as a representation of the culture within the towns and settlements in which they were constructed. By this period amphitheatres appear somewhat well established in Roman Britain, however the use of masonry is certainly interesting in the case of Cirencester. The knowledge of how to construct the amphitheatre may have come from the military origins of the settlement or perhaps was brought by residents from around the empire. This issue shall be considered further in section 4.2.2 when considering the architecture of the monument in greater detail.

4.2.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Cirencester:

Cirencester Amphitheatre is the first to be constructed in the 2nd century and the first example of an urban amphitheatre to be constructed originally fully in masonry. Due to this, there is a lack of amphitheatres that are architecturally and contextually comparable. Furthermore, the consistent maintenance and rebuilding of the amphitheatre and surrounding public buildings is indicative of an architecturally conscious and motivated community overall. This is especially interesting when investigating the architecture of the amphitheatre specifically with other examples in Britain seemingly being abandoned or disused within one hundred years after their original construction. The motivations behind the original construction and the notable amount of maintenance throughout the period of use of the amphitheatre may become clearer when investigating the architecture of the monument. At this stage, repairs and rebuilds are most probably due to either necessity or perhaps further competition between wealthy elites. These two may not have even been exclusive motivations; the need for repairs would have provided a perfect opportunity for wealthy elites to display their status through architecture. However, it is worth noting that the active rebuilding and modifications to the amphitheatre have distorted and, in some cases, erased original features of the monument. I shall be primarily considering and investigating the first three phases of construction, spanning from the original building of the monument in the early 2nd century to phase 3B in the late 2nd century (Holbrook, 1998).

As mentioned previously, the proposed date of construction for the amphitheatre was around the early 2nd century. The site chosen was across the line of the south-west extension of the *decumanus maximus* of the town represented by the "Fosse way" (Holbrook, 1998, 147). The side emerging from the Bath Gate clearly "respects the amphitheatre" as shown on figure 4.1, further suggesting that it was a later diversion from the original road (Holbrook, 1998, 149). However, this should perhaps be more noted as the road respecting the quarry due to the date of construction of the amphitheatre. The "exploitation" of the limestone resources around Cirencester had begun earlier during the military period of occupation. By the time of the construction of the amphitheatre the south-east sector of the *cavea* was placed against the "suitably sculptured" face of the quarry (Holbrook, 1998, 147-9). Holbrook has further suggested that this technique of placing this sector of the cavea against the quarry face was copied from amphitheatres in Gaul such as those in Frejus and Trier (Holbrook, 1998, 147-9). This may be especially relevant due to Cirencester being the first Romano-British urban example originally constructed in masonry. Additionally, it is one of the few examples in Britain constructed based on a previously man-made feature, other examples being at Dorchester and Charterhouse; it is the first example I have come across so far that was constructed based on a quarry specifically. This choice could simply be out of convenience due to the stone supply and to take advantage of the topography the quarry and the surrounding area. Furthermore, the position of the monument in relation to the Bath gate and road may have contributed to this choice; this location seems to have been ideal for an amphitheatre.
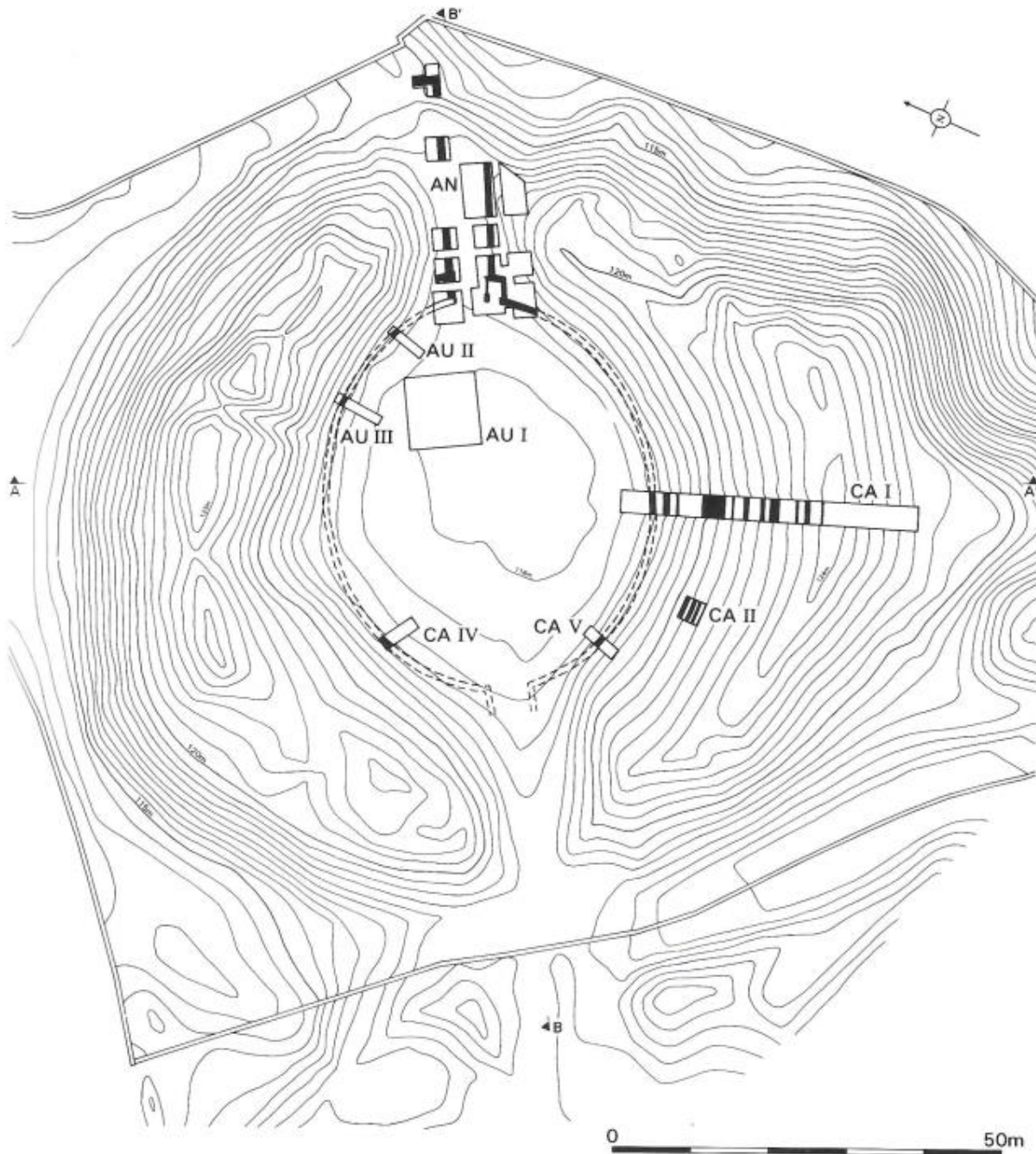
Figure 4. 2, plan of the amphitheatre based upon a survey in 1974 by the Department of Environment, also showing excavation trenches. Contours at 0.5m intervals, Holbrook, 1998, 148

Quarry waste was used for a significant amount of the construction process to level the arena floor down to around 1.6m below the surrounding ground level and to build the core of the north sector *cavea* (Holbrook, 1998, 149). The south-eastern part of the *cavea* was constructed against the face of the quarry (Wilmott, 2008, 111-2). Even with the ready supply of stone, the size and architectural features of the first phase are certainly impressive, again perhaps representing the significant amount of wealth and knowledge within Cirencester during this

period. The original banks were around 30m in width and appear to have been constructed as a series of terraces. These were created by pressing flat stones into the bank makeup (Wilmott, 2008, 111-2) and three bands of slabs running laterally through the banks were found. The banking was continuous around the elliptical arena aside from at the two opposing entrances to the north-east and south-west sides. The remains currently stand at a maximum of 8.2m high (Holbrook, 1998, 149-151). During excavation information was obtained from trench *CAI* which was located on the south-east side of the arena and extended over the full width of the mount and down the reared face of the bank (Fig.4.3). This showed that the upper surface of the bank had been terraced, retained by drystone walls on the surface. Holbrook further identified 16 possible terraces of "varying crudeness" in the trench (Holbrook, 1998, 151-2). Examples of terracing have been identified at earlier amphitheatres, most prominently that I have discussed so far was at the military example at Caerleon (Wilmott, 2008, 148). Holbrook has further suggested that these terraces would have supported timber framed seating; the 16 rows that survived in trench *CAI* had an average spacing of 0.9m there should have been enough space to have up to 28 rows of seats (Holbrook , 1998, 171-5). The terrace length adjacent to the arena was around 72m and the upper and outer terrace measured around 120m (Wilmott, 2008, 112-113).

Figure 4. 3, amphitheatre trench *CAI,* showing the terraces over the *cavea*, Holbrook, 1998, 151

The earliest evidence discovered in relation to the north-east entrance is a drystone wall on either side of the passage that retained the core of the seating bank, defining an entrance passage 6.7m wide (Holbrook, 1998, 153). Unfortunately, traces of the original arena wall are lacking, but it is represented by the cobble footings which lies below the construction trench from period 2. The lack of evidence probably due to the rebuilding of the arena wall in period 2, though Holbrook has suggested that equally the original wall could have been constructed out of timber and therefore no trace has survived (Holbrook, 1998, 153). However, deposits from the arena would suggest that the wall was even during this first phase still externally plastered. Having established the nature of the arena wall it is even more noticeable just how large of an area the seating bank covered. The ratio of the area of the bank compared to the arena is roughly 2:1, giving a similar ratio to Romano-British examples at Dorchester and Chester (Holbrook, 1998, 171) (Fig. 4.4). The fact that those with a comparable ratio are of military origin may be significant when considering the inspirations of the amphitheatre at Cirencester, especially when considering the military origin of the settlement. However, it is worth noting that the size of Cirencester Amphitheatre may have been dependent upon the size of the quarry before; this is comparable to the ratio at Dorchester being primarily due to the henge which the amphitheatre was based upon (Holbrook, 1998).
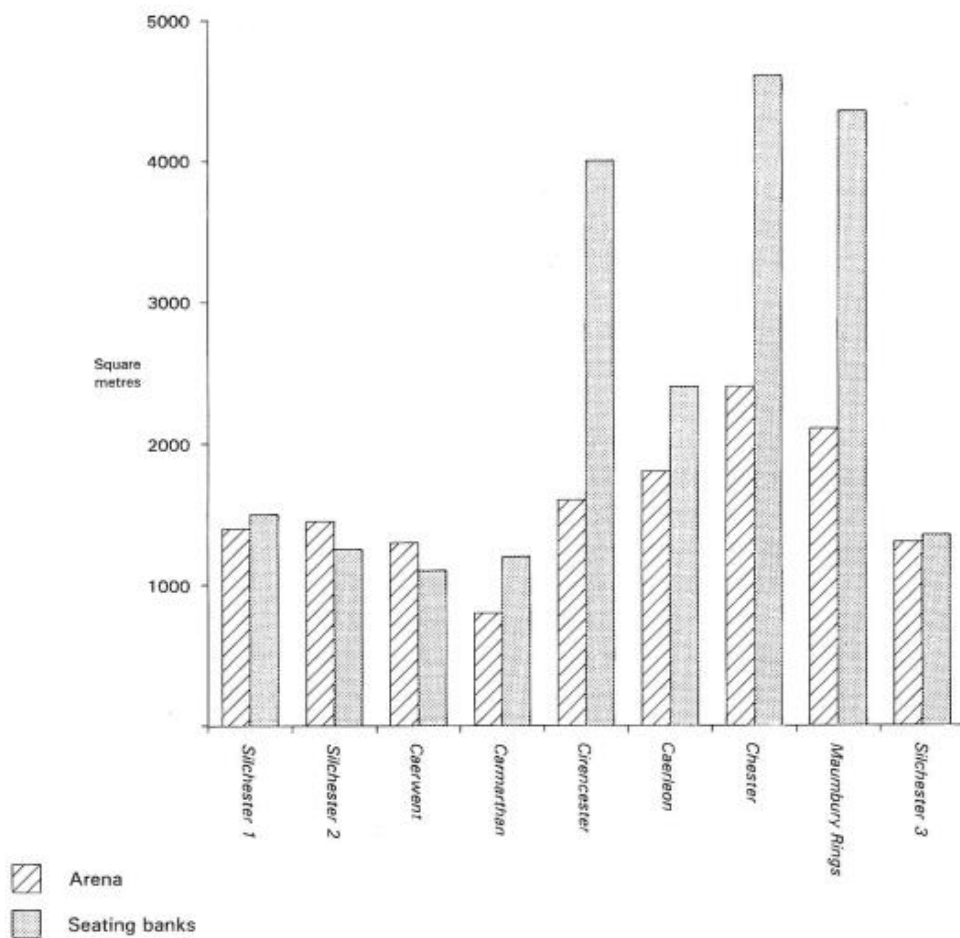
Figure 4. 4, diagram showing the ratio of the area of the arena to the area of the seating bank in multiple Romano-British amphitheatres, after I. Wheeler, 1992

Holbrook has provided some well-considered calculations when deliberating the possible capacity of Cirencester Amphitheatre during this phase. Considering the length of the seating bank and height mentioned previously, allowing 0.6m seating width gives a capacity of around 8000 people. Additionally, if the rear part of the terracing (11 terraces) were for standing and spectators stood two deep on each terrace, the capacity is raised to around 11,500 (Holbrook, 1998, 172-3). Wilmott has further commented that the rake of the terracing is consistent with a standing ground, standing two deep on the broader terraces. This is based on the terracing varying from 25 degrees for the front seven and 20 degrees for the rest (Wilmott, 2008, 112-4). The possible capacity of Cirencester Amphitheatre is certainly significant compared to other examples constructed prior from all categories. The military amphitheatre at Chester had a capacity of around 7000 (Thompson, 1976, 184) as did the early urban amphitheatre of London (Hingley, 2018, 76). Holbrook (1998) has even highlighted that the later stone phase of the

amphitheatre at Silchester only had a capacity of 3000 (Fulford, 1989, 175). Especially when considering examples throughout the empire these Romano-British monuments seem to pale in comparison in terms of capacity to those constructed in Gaul and Hispania. An especially notable example was discovered at Córdoba, Spain. The 1st century B.C. amphitheatre is thought to have a potential capacity of 30,000 – 50,000 spectators (Cabello *et al.*, 2009). In Britain, these smaller monuments may also simply be scaled to suit the population of these individual settlements and hinterlands. When considering the architectural features of the amphitheatre at Cirencester, Holbrook draws direct comparisons to the military amphitheatres at Chester and Caerleon due to external plastering of the arena walls (Holbrook, 1998, 172), these military amphitheatres may have acted to some extent as inspiration alongside the settlement's significant military origins, much like at Chichester. The size and architecture of even this first phase of Cirencester Amphitheatre seem to reflect the importance and wealth represented within the settlement after this its growth and architectural transformation from earlier military beginnings.

Holbrook (1998) has suggested that this first phase of the amphitheatre is "unlikely" to have lasted more than 50 years before some significant rebuilding in phase 2. The main dating evidence for this is provided through the layers sealing the construction trench of the arena wall rebuild which accumulated during the use of the amphitheatre. These provide a Hadrianic or possibly early Antonine date and suggest that the second phase of the amphitheatre was in use by the mid-2nd century (Holbrook, 1998, 161). Modifications made during this phase include the entire arena wall being rebuilt in stone and the north-east entrance being rebuilt including the addition of "a number of metalled surfaces" also found in the entrances (Holbrook, 1998, 157). The north-east entrance was rebuilt with six large stone imposts supporting a vault which carried the seating over the passage; the full length of the passage was around 30.1m. Additionally, large blocks which are believed to have served as jambs for the gate were added at either side of the entrance. Behind each of these there was a flight of steps which provided access to the terracing. This method of access can be most likened to the example at Caerleon (3.5) and to some extent the use of an external stairway at Chester (3.7) to allow access to the *cavea* (Wilmott, 2008). However, in earlier urban examples such as Silchester the *cavea* was accessed simply over the top of the seating bank (Wilmott, 2008), though it is worth bearing in mind that this example was constructed nearly a century prior to the second phase of the Cirencester Amphitheatre. As masonry architecture in relation to amphitheatres became more common place, one might expect further attention to be paid by

those behind these monuments' construction towards specific architectural features such as decoration and precise more ordered methods of access.

The other major alteration was a total rebuild of the arena wall. At this stage it measured 49 x 41m and was constructed out of masonry and survived to a height of 1.37m with a maximum height of around 1.8m (Wilmott, 2008, 112-3). The surviving masonry had been covered in two coatings of plaster painted in red fresco decoration with black, yellow and white imitation marbling. Holbrook has commented that the wall appeared to have been plastered multiple times with large quantities of fragments and trampled plaster painted light red with dark red "splashes", black, green and white with black bands (Holbrook, 1998, 160-1). Despite the clear work that went into rebuilding and further decorating the arena wall, Wilmott has further commented that the height of the wall appears "worryingly low" (2008, 113) and even that it is possibly wrongly interpreted. The decorative plaster certainly is reminiscent of earlier military amphitheatres like those at Chester and Caerleon. However, it was also noted at the amphitheatre of Chichester (Wilmott, 2008, 148); the origins and context of which I would propose are very similar to the amphitheatre at Cirencester.

The motives for this period of rebuilding are not known for certain, though the forum and basilica also appear to have been subject to significant alterations during this same period in the mid-2nd century (Holbrook, 1998). It is possible that this was a significant period of architectural alteration within the town, perhaps providing further opportunity for groups or individuals to contribute and make a physical mark on the development of the settlement. In terms of the amphitheatre, the rebuild of the arena wall may have been due to the need for repair, though this cannot be confirmed. The work that has gone into the decoration of the arena wall rebuild and touches such as the metalled surfaces around the entrances may perhaps be indicative of an active effort to improve the physical appearance of the monument. The rebuilding and modifications made to other public buildings during the same period such as the basilica appear to have been made due to it needing repairs. The instability of the backfilled ditches and the "inadequate foundations" caused the original walls of the basilica to crack (Holbrook, 1998, 104-8). Holbrook (1998) has further proposed that the repairs and modifications that occurred in relation to the forum as well during this period were associated with the reconstruction of the basilica. These modifications to the forum are also significant during this period and the inner portico totally rebuilt and new surfaces laid in the courtyard in the mid-2nd century (Holbrook, 1998, 113-4). The reconstruction of features of the amphitheatre I would propose was associated with the mass building and repair projects of this period in the mid-2nd century. The active effort to seemingly improve the monument

architecturally further highlights the importance of the amphitheatre during this period and the fact that wealthy individuals or groups were still willing to fund the projects in relation to the amphitheatre.

Cirencester seemingly continued to develop architecturally throughout the 2nd century. The amphitheatre specifically is a solid example of this, when considering a structure that is not involved in the administration of the town yet is still heavily invested in architecturally. This is further reflected through the next phase of modifications. Holbrook has split phase three of the amphitheatre into two smaller phases (3A and 3B) due to different but very close dating. However, Wilmott (2008, 114-5) does not appear to give a distinction here describing this just as phase 3 of the amphitheatre. 3A according to Holbrook primarily comprises a rebuild of the passage wall of the north-east entrance almost from the foundation level. This seemed to be undertaken around the mid-late 2nd century primarily based on a coin of Antoninus Pius (Holbrook, 1998, 162). These masonry walls were rebuilt perhaps due to needing repair, Wilmott proposed that this may have been due to a collapse caused by the pressure from the piled bank material. However, he continues to explain that this is "problematic" since the strength of the barrel vault "should" have counteracted such pressure (Wilmott, 2008, 113-4). This task seemed to be undertaken with no other modifications to the amphitheatre suggesting that it was due to necessity or for a specific reason; Wilmott (2008) and Holbrook (1998) both propose that this needed to be repaired at this time, which seems reasonable.

Later modifications suggested by Holbrook to be around the later 2nd century focus on a pair of side chambers added the north-east entrance, one on the north-western side and another on the south-eastern side of the arena entrance (Holbrook, 1998, 162-4) dating from period 3B. The south-east chamber was 2.4m long and 2.1m wide and had a doorway through the arena wall and also opened into the entrance passage (Wilmott, 2008, 113-4). The north-western side chamber was only partially uncovered and is 2.6m north-east to south-west internally. A "carefully formed" doorway was inserted through the arena wall with two parallel slots. The slots were 0.2m wide and placed 0.3m apart. They appear to have been left by timbers set into white mortar which overlay the arena floor (Holbrook, 1998, 163-4). This gives a potential place for timber sill-beams for a door or as Holbrook suggests a drop gate (Holbrook, 1998, 163-4). The pottery evidence from the chambers suggests their use continued after the mid-3rd century (Holbrook, 1998, 166). Side chambers such as these are present at multiple other amphitheatres around Britain. At this point the main example I have investigated was at Caerleon (Wilmott, 2008, 147).

After the addition of these side chambers in the late 2nd century (Holbrook, 1998), the amphitheatre was not altered again significantly until around the last quarter of the 3rd century. Unlike the previous modifications made in phase 2 of the amphitheatre, the monument appears to have been modified and worked on individually, not as part of a wider project of construction or architectural improvement within Cirencester; this may indicate that the reconstruction of the walls was more probably due to it being in need of repair. However, the repairs and subsequent addition of the side chambers during this period reflect the importance of the amphitheatre and suggest that it was culturally significant within Cirencester throughout the 2nd century.

4.2.4 Conclusions:

The evolution of the settlement at Cirencester from its military origins as a fort and *vicus* were certainly significant when considering the construction and perhaps funding of the amphitheatre. The most comparable town contextually is the *civitas* at Chichester as discussed in the previous chapter, the amphitheatre there also displaying what could possibly be considered military influence when investigating the architecture. It does appear that architecturally the amphitheatre of Cirencester is more comparable to earlier legionary amphitheatres rather than any urban examples constructed in the 1st century A.D. due to the use of masonry and the evidence of internal decoration. The architecture of Cirencester Amphitheatre is impressive and, in my view certainly an advancement technologically from earlier urban examples. The quarry located right beside the settlement, which the amphitheatre was based upon, certainly enabled the notably early masonry construction of both private and public buildings at Cirencester. Despite this, without the proper knowledge and capability the supply of stone would be essentially meaningless. Amphitheatres by this period appear well established throughout many provinces including Britain. However, the use of masonry in relation to the amphitheatre's architecture was until the construction of Cirencester primarily the result of military construction. The amphitheatre itself may represent a noticeable step forward architecturally.

However, it is notable that even when compared to the earlier legionary examples it appears less complex architecturally. Certain aspects such as the formation of the banks are certainly impressive as is the use of plaster and paint as decoration of the arena wall as noted by Holbrook (1998, 160-1). This may have been inspired by earlier legionary examples such as at Caerleon. Again, this was also noted at Chichester Amphitheatre, though despite these similarities and possible inspirations, Cirencester Amphitheatre is still architecturally unique at

the time of its construction in Britain. I would argue that the architecture represents both the military origins of the town and its relatively rapid evolution into a *civitas* of significant status.

4.3: London Amphitheatre

4.3.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

The later phases of London Amphitheatre were subject to the same period of excavation as the original monument and reported by Bateman (1997). As addressed in Chapter 3, the original monument was essentially rebuilt from scratch in masonry (Bateman, 1997), allowing for a significant amount of material from this later phase being preserved and noted during the excavations) from 1992-1996, sponsored by the Corporation of London. Much about the monument is still unknown, the outer limit of the monument does not appear to be known for certain. As Wilmott (2008) notes, the excavations revealed a variety of differing features occupying the area where the outer limit may have been. There does not appear to have been any significant excavation since those in the late 20th century. Academic focus is still seemingly on the town as a whole and its evolution over the Roman period culturally and architecturally. Published works relating to London as a whole still provide a great deal of information relating to the development of the town during the later period after A.D.100, most notably a full biography of London from its origins to the fifth century (2018).

Having investigated the unusual origins of London and its amphitheatre in the previous chapter, this section will cover the second phase of London's amphitheatre. The timber amphitheatre was dismantled around A.D.120, the monument essentially being rebuilt from scratch in stone and timber around A.D.125 – 130. How London may have evolved as a settlement over this period and how may this have impacted the amphitheatre? Hingley has referred to the period between A.D.120 – 200 as London's peak, specifically the period of A.D.125 – 150 (Hingley, 2018, 169). This seems somewhat apparent as London was progressing. Marsden and West in their article examining the water and food supply, as well as the quantity of 136ubish in the archaeological record, suggest prior to A.D.150, the London population was on a steady increase with a decline starting in the later 2nd century (Marsden, West, 1992). Additionally, there are various archaeological indicators of London's' expansion and technological development early into the 2nd century. Most houses constructed up until A.D.120 appear to have been made of dirt and wood. Though recent excavations show some houses built of stone in the late 1st and early 2nd century (Hingley, 2018, 88-90). In my view these are indicative of higher status individuals or elites in need of suitable housing. The construction of these masonry domestic structures may be due to an influx of higher status

individuals, people who expected this standard of housing. Though they may also be a result of the wealthy inhabitants of London possessing the funding and capability to build grander homes for themselves. The permanence of stone houses perhaps further displays wealthy peoples' inclination to mark their individual status and residence in London.

Furthermore, the settlement perhaps was given the rank of a colony during the early 2nd century. The primary evidence for this comes from a small fragment of an inscription in Purbeck marble found in a context post-dating the Roman period west of Huggin Hill Bathhouse. This inscription might have been an imperial dedication to Trajan, Hadrian or Antoninus Pius, likely during Hadrian's visit in A.D.122. The bathhouse inscription possibly belonged to another public building in the vicinity, since the bathhouse was not in use at this time (Hingley, 2018, 121-2). A further proposal from Tomlin, primarily based upon this inscription, is that London finally achieved its rank of *Colonia* as a consequence of a Hadrianic grant made on the occasion of Hadrian's visit to Britain in A.D.122 (Tomlin, 2006). However, unless a more complete inscription surrounding London's status is located this debate shall continue. In the context of my own investigation, if London had achieved the prestigious rank of *Colonia* it may have been a contributing factor when considering the motivations behind the funding of the impressive building projects of this period, including the amphitheatre. The elevation of London to this status in relation to the large-scale construction programs may have been a bit of a 'chicken-and-egg' issue. It is also possible that the architectural advancement and beautification of the city contributed to the decision to award the settlement this new status; the motivations behind the construction projects themselves are unrelated to this.

The construction of a fort at Cripplegate in the vicinity of the amphitheatre during this period demonstrates evident military presence within the settlement. This may explain to some extent where the knowledge, funding and manpower required to construct the masonry amphitheatre came from, though this shall be discussed in detail later in this section and 4.3.2. Perring proposed that the fort was used to house soldiers on secondment duties in London, including serving as the Governor's guards (Perring, 2011, 263). The fort was constructed soon after the Hadrianic fire, sometime between A.D.120 – 130. Hingley has proposed that as with the burning of London in A.D.60, this could also have been a result of a deliberate attempt to destroy London. However, he rightly discusses the lack of notable fire damage to public structures such as the amphitheatre and bath houses at Cheapside and Hugging Hill. It is highly unlikely rebel forces would target these domestic properties rather than large public buildings (Hingley, 2018, 120). It is possible that the reconstruction or repairs after this fire contributed

to construction of public buildings, though it cannot be compared to the total rebuilding of London after the Boudican revolt of A.D.60/1.

Notable and grandiose building projects within this early period were not limited to the amphitheatre, fort and domestic rebuilding. A further example was the extensive rebuilding of the palace complex at Winchester Palace in Southwark in A.D. 125 (Perring, 2011). Additionally, Hingley noted a large area in the urban centre was cleared for the construction of a new forum in the 2nd century; this structure is believed to have been five times larger than the original (Hingley, 2018, 122-3). This new forum appears to have been carefully planned, with the entrance at the head of the north-south road running from the Thames bridge. The construction of the basilica commenced around A.D.100 – 120, followed by the forum's west and east ranges from around A.D.120 – 130 (Hingley, 2018, 123-4). If this was the case the construction of this new forum-basilica would have been complete at a very similar date to the new amphitheatre. The new forum was the largest in Britain and the basilica was the largest in the north-western provinces (Hingley, 2018, 123). This forum basilica and the palace complex are very much representative of the status of London during this period. As I have discussed throughout this project the act of architectural munificence throughout Britain can be viewed as representative of status and wealth. The reconstruction of various public buildings including the amphitheatre indicates a large-scale program of rebuilding during this period. Furthermore, it displays the notable wealth available for these projects in London alongside the clear willingness by those behind these projects when it comes to funding and displaying this wealth in a permanent monumental form.

It appears evident that a large-scale building programme was occurring throughout London during this period, not just limited to the reconstruction after the Hadrianic fire but also including the reconstruction of several notable public buildings, together with the amphitheatre. Hingley also provides an updated version of his map of London's public and infrastructural buildings (Fig. 4.5). This map demonstrates the additional infrastructure that was constructed after A.D.120 seemingly focusing on the waterfronts (Hingley, 2018, 124). Furthermore, many of London's principal buildings were enlarged and improved in the Hadrianic period. Perring posited this may be due to coordinated patronage inspired by the emperor's visit and the elevated status of the city. The suggestion by Perring (2011) that these buildings programmes and the amphitheatre's reconstruction were a product of local patronage, rather than direct imperial funding, seems plausible. The elevation of London's status and the imperial visit could further persuade rich local benefactors to donate substantial funds to improve their city, perhaps making it worthy of its new imperially recognised rank. I

agree with Perring's suggestion here, especially given the context of the time with various masonry rebuilds and general architectural improvements occurring in the A.D.120s. It is evident through these projects and the context within London at the time during its "peak" (Hingley, 2018) that those within the settlement were keen and willing to invest into the architectural landscape in this way.
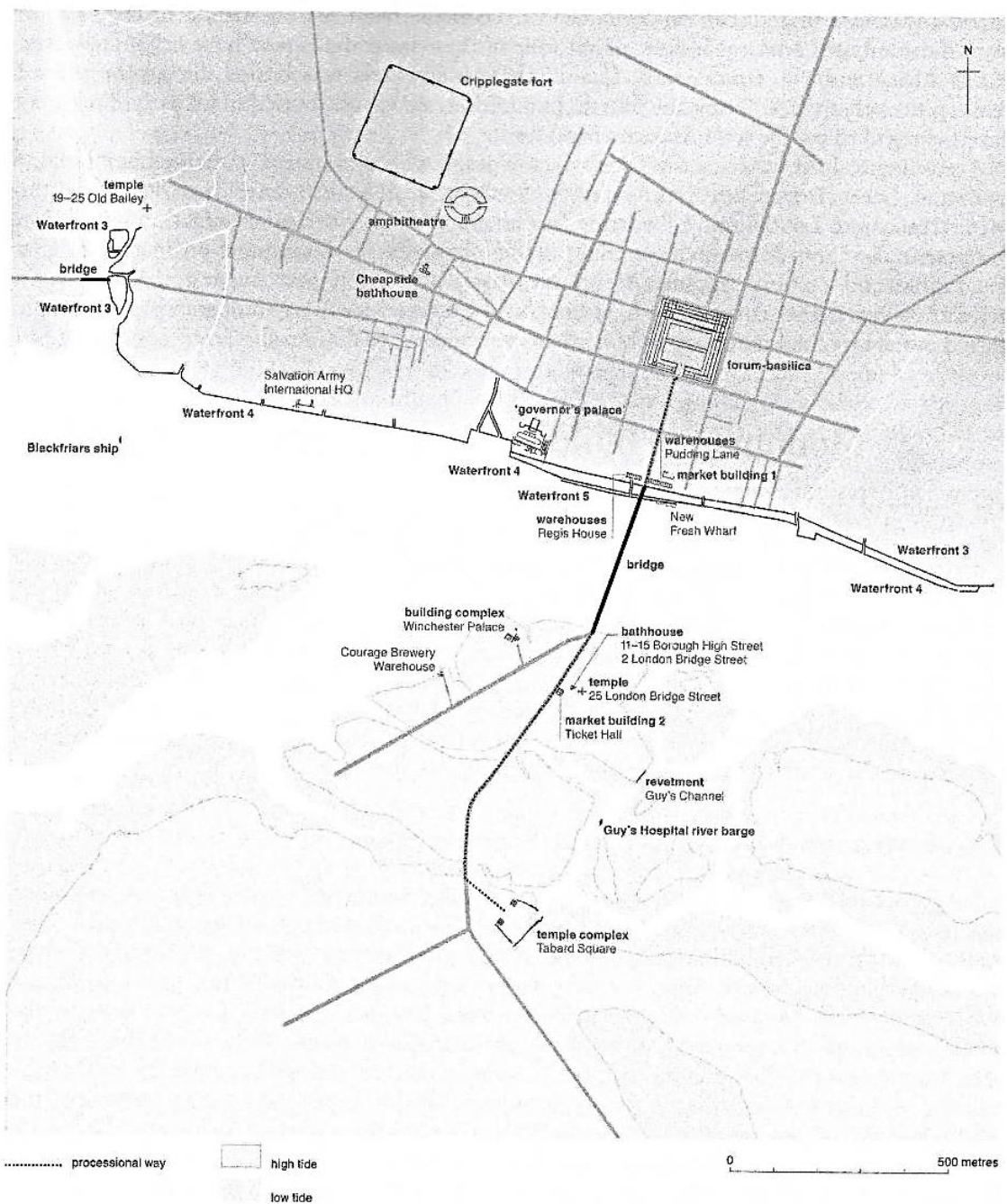

Figure 4. 5, public buildings and infrastructure of London A.D.120 – 200., Hingley, 2018, 124

In terms of planning and construction, the Cripplegate fort's close vicinity to the amphitheatre has led to the assumption that the fort and amphitheatre were connected (Hingley, 2018, 126). Hingley rightfully, in my view, dismisses this idea but does further mention that the probability that the soldiers stationed there were "engaged in the construction of the stone amphitheatre" (Hingley, 2018, 126). The masonry phase of the amphitheatre at London did share some characteristics of 'military amphitheatres', such as the use of masonry and the presence of internal decoration, the specifics of which shall be discussed in section 4.3.2. The structure still seems to me to be community and religion orientated. It is possible that the military were involved in the monument's planning and construction due to the province by this time being less turbulent than at any time before, allowing the army to be used in these construction projects rather than being constrained by military duties. While the sheer fact that London Amphitheatre was rebuilt in stone is not enough to suggest military involvement, the close vicinity of the fort makes the use of military manpower probable. Considering architectural inspiration, the only recent example constructed during this period was at Cirencester (4.2). This is significantly simpler in an architectural sense and in my view could not have served as the source of the knowledge required to construction the masonry amphitheatre at London. Discounting the military examples at Chester and Caerleon, London Amphitheatre's masonry rebuild seems to some extent as a technological advancement in terms of amphitheatre architecture in Britain. In terms of urban examples, Chichester and Cirencester may be somewhat comparable but are still notably less complex from what has been investigated through excavations. It seems that the military were not involved in the funding or the motivation behind the rebuilding of the amphitheatre, but it is possible that they were involved with the planning of the project and as useful manpower for the construction itself.

On the other hand, if the military were not involved the issue of where the technological and logistical capability for the masonry reconstruction of the London Amphitheatre came from may be answered through the status and prowess of London. As I highlighted in the previous chapter, London appears to have gained significant prominence early on which seems to have continued throughout this period, more than likely increasing if we consider the suggestion of London's "peak" (Hingley, 2018, 169). It is evident that throughout this period a great amount of complex masonry work took place, these projects were under construction simultaneously, around A.D.100 – 130. I am doubtful that one fort at Cripplegate would be able to supply enough manpower for the military to be solely responsible when it came to the construction of

these projects. Thus, there must have been others capable of working on these vast and complex building projects.

The status and prominence of London caused a notable influx of residents as the population evidentially increased as noted by Marsden and West (Marsden, West, 1992). It is possible that individuals brought the knowledge and capability required relating to masonry construction from elsewhere within the empire. Or locals with sufficient money and connections paid for these individuals to be brought in for these construction projects. This may be even more plausible at London than other Romano-British settlements due to the town's specific status and size. Additionally, as long as there were people present with the knowledge needed regarding masonry construction then even a simple workforce may be instructed and trained to do so; further discounting the requirement for the military to be involved. This appears to be the most probable explanation when considering how the complex masonry work of the London Amphitheatre rebuild was possible.

The amphitheatre itself was not just a monument to display wealth or reflect the imperial status of London. The religious nature of the amphitheatre, notably its position within the 'temple zone' as I proposed in the previous chapter, was still significant during this period. The continued ritual significance of the Walbrook Valley is demonstrated through people of London developing 'boundary practices' with cemeteries established on the margins of the settlement. Further evidence of burial practices and human remains have been located, especially in the Walbrook Valley and on the south bank of the Thames in Southwark. The Walbrook evidence shows a distinct burial practice of placing the dead into drainage ditches and the subsequent erosion of the remains by water. This may have been a custom of those from Northern Gaul, perhaps deriving from Iron Age funerary customs continuing into the 2nd century. This is hardly surprising considering the origins of London as discussed in the previous chapter (Section 3.4), though it is certainly notable that this tradition continued into this period of the 2nd century despite the significant transformation the settlement had gone through over the century. The continued ritual significance of the monument may be further evident through the identification of a small building to the south-east of the amphitheatre, possibly acting as a Romano-Celtic shrine (Hingley, 2018, 127-8).

The masonry phase of London's amphitheatre appears to be a product of the time, with the city going through mass rebuilding and general architectural improvement. The masonry rebuild may have been due to the first timber phase of London Amphitheatre falling into disrepair. Yet there is no solid evidence for this, and motivations may have also been related to

the large-scale construction programs of which the amphitheatre was a part and the probable advancement of London's imperial status. I agree with Perring (2011) that the funding of the amphitheatre originated through wealthy individuals or groups within the town. These people were probably prompted by multiple factors including the emperor's visit and imperial recognition of London's new status. This inspired people to contribute to the architectural transformation of their settlement and the 'beautification' of the town to reflect its status and prominence during this period. Nonetheless, the fact that it was rebuilt is also indicative of the importance of the amphitheatre and shows that it remained relevant during this period of London's peak.

4.3.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at London:

It appears that the second phase of the amphitheatre at London was essentially rebuilt from scratch. New ragstone walls were constructed that are believed to have been between 2.5 – 2.7 metres high (Bateman, 1997, 55-61). There is no trace of a masonry outer wall which is unsurprising. As I have mentioned throughout this project, the lack of outer walls relating to urban amphitheatres is a common theme and is to be expected to some extent at London. However, the lack of an outer wall contributes to the issue of identifying the outer range of this monument. Additionally, there is a surviving range of large stone-packed post-holes which do not share the same alignment and the north entrance differs from the south, making it difficult to set an outer limit to the structure. (Bateman, 1997, 58). Wilmott has addressed this to some extent as he noted that excavations revealed a variety of differing features occupying the area where the outer limit may have been. If the seating rake was 25 degrees and the cavea was 21m deep, this would imply an internal elevation of 9.8m (Wilmott, 2008, 92-7), this data providing a proposed height and outer limit of the *cavea*, though the exact size of the monument is not certain. The arena and the east entranceway were enlarged by cutting back into the bank behind it, and the revetment of the bank was refashioned with brick and ragstone walls to a height average 1.2m (Bateman, 1997, 55-6). This may reflect the larger population within London during this period, as noted previously.

The entire arena wall and some of the entrance ways were rebuilt at least once, though not necessarily at the same time. The walls were only around two thirds the thickness of the originals (Bateman, 1997, 56), probably since they were reconstructed with stone. Additionally, two coping stones were located within the arena, representing the arena walls eventual decay. These were half-rounded with lead mountings for an iron railing or grill at the crest of the curve (Fig.4.6). Other cuts in the stones could have connected with timber beams

behind the wall, or they may have been to support the protective netting held above the arena wall to protect spectators (Bateman, 1997, 56). Wilmott further mentions that use of wall top railings was also identified at Caerleon and Chester (2008, 112-4).

Aside from the obvious significance of the overall masonry rebuild, there are two especially notable features of this masonry phase at London. The first was the system of drainage and use of the local waterscape. The rebuild, just as with the timber phase, made clear use of the local topography due to the location of the masonry amphitheatre, specifically the narrow stream in the Walbrook valley. Initially, the timber drain followed the natural topography of the land and led down south-east. The masonry rebuilds radically changed this layout; the central drain led off due east and successive modifications led the water off towards the north-east (Bateman, 1997, 55-61). Bateman suggests the reasons for this are twofold; firstly, the beginning of the 2nd century, the drainage system seems to have failed and the area to the east became something of a boggy rubbish tip. Secondly, evidence from the south and east regarding increasing pressure to free up land for building may have also caused a need for change in drainage to allow the use of this land to the east (Bateman, 1997, 55-61). This seems somewhat likely, as outside the amphitheatre to the south-east the fragmentary remains of small buildings have been found. They possibly acted as temporary structures that may have been associated with the provision of refreshments or maintenance or security of the amphitheatre and events. Further south-east a small building may have been a Romano-Celtic shrine revealed at 54-66 Gresham Street, indicating the sacred nature of the amphitheatre environment continuing in the 2nd century (Hingley, 2018, 127-8).

The second especially notable features added to this rebuild are the chambers (*carceres*) on either side of the entrance. Each measure $11m^2$ and have two doorways 1.6m wide; one led into the arena and the other into the entrance passage (Bateman, 1997, 55-61). These can be identified alongside other features in figure 4.7. In the southern chamber, two substantial re-used rectangular stone blocks formed a threshold leading out into the arena. In the upper surface of these were two sets of parallel mortises on each side of the doorway. These seem to represent the footings for upright timber posts with a narrow gap of 40 mm between each pair. They are interpreted as the frame of a vertically sliding timber trapdoor (Bateman, 1997, 58). It is possible that these indicate the use of animals in the London Amphitheatre; this may explain the need for the protective netting possibly indicated by the presence of coping stones (Fig.4.6).
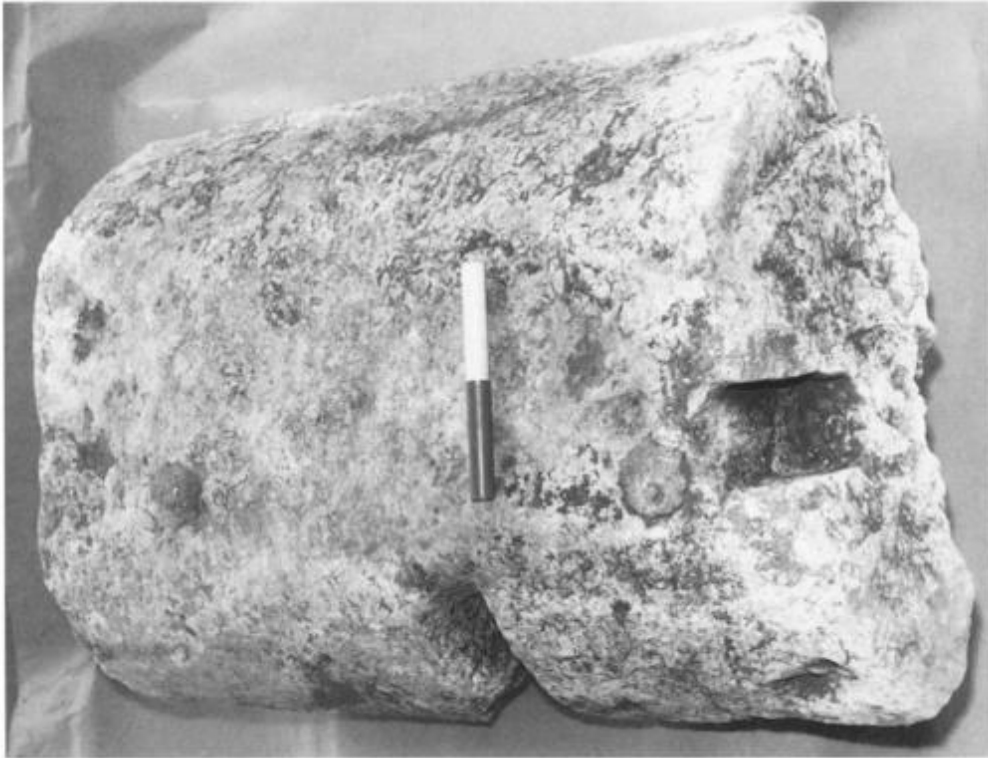
Figure 4. 6, coping stone found at the foot of the arena wall, Bateman, 1997, 56
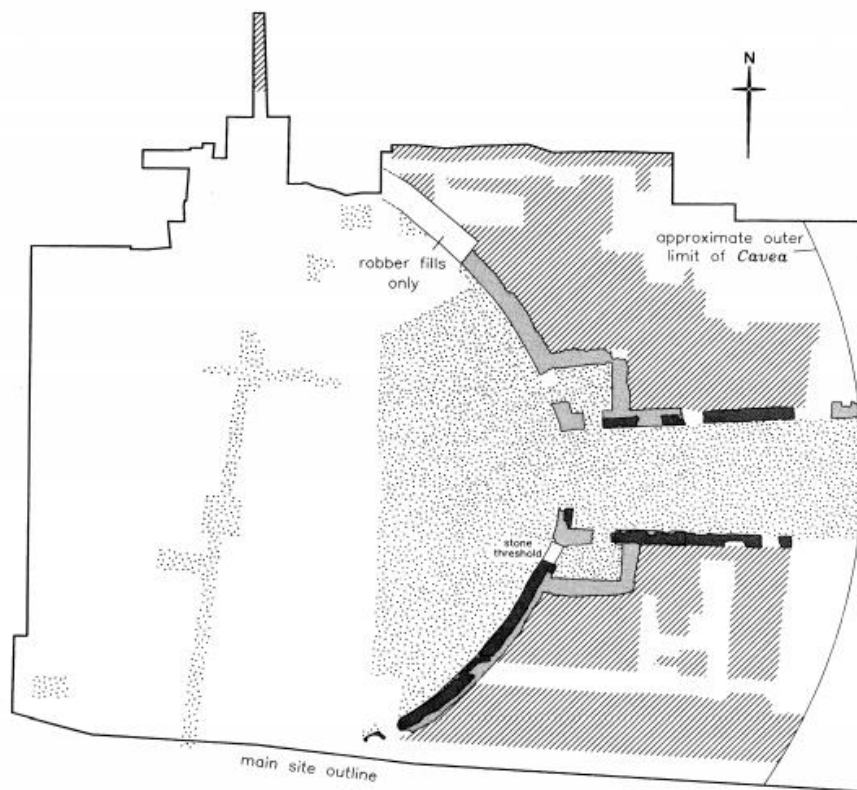

Figure 4. 7, location of principal features of the masonry rebuild including both side entrance chambers, Bateman, 1997, 57

From Bateman's and Hingley's accounts, the masonry rebuild of London's amphitheatre appears to have been far more ornate than the first timber phase. The arena walls were coated with plaster and had a decorative green and red scheme on the side facing the open space of the arena (Hingley, 2018, 127). The more ornate style and clear effort put into the aesthetic qualities of this amphitheatre can be considered purposeful as a reflection of London's prominence and status during this period through the beautification of the city. Evidence of material that has collapsed into the arena from the wall suggests it has been originally painted in colours which included light and dark red, pink, purple, orange, yellow, green and grey (Wilmott, 2008, 108-9). I would maintain as I concluded in section 4.3.1 the architecture and decoration of the London Amphitheatre and perhaps the other building projects during this period was probably a product of the knowledge and wealth available in London through the influx of wealthy individuals. This may have included individuals from elsewhere throughout the empire such as Gaul where amphitheatres of this calibre have also been constructed such as at Trier (Kuhnen, 2009) and Augst-Sichelengraben (Hufschmid, 2009).

The architecture of the later rebuild of Cirencester Amphitheatre around A.D.155-160 brought some notable similarities to London Amphitheatre; specifically, the painting of the interior arena wall with imitation marbling in black, yellow and white (Wilmott, 2008, 112-3). Additionally, this phase of Cirencester Amphitheatre perhaps included coping stones within the arena like those at the amphitheatres of London. In this instance, one could suggest that London Amphitheatre actually inspired the architecture of the second phase of the example at Cirencester, rather than the other way around. If this was the case, this further displays the notable technological and architectural prominence of the masonry amphitheatre at London, even inspiring changes to the earlier amphitheatre at Cirencester. This phase of London's amphitheatre was evidently rebuilt from scratch and appears to have been a large-scale project making use of complex masonry work. It is notable when considering the context of this amphitheatre that the arena and eastern entranceway were enlarged (Bateman, 1997, 55-6), probably to compensate for the larger population during this period. This may indicate that the amphitheatre was rebuilt with certain events or uses in mind, demonstrated by the possible uses for the *carcares* and coping stones.

Conclusions: 4.3.2

It seems apparent that this second phase of London's amphitheatre reflected the changes to the settlement as a whole during this period. I am very much inclined to agree with the

proposal by Hingley (2018, 169) that the town of London was at a "peak" during this period and the amphitheatre appears to represent this. The construction of the amphitheatre falls in line chronologically with the other notable building projects over this period such as the forum, basilica and palace. These projects are certainly indicative of a city undergoing a transformation architecturally and perhaps in a cultural sense. It could be proposed that these were constructed in order to reflect London's new status as a *colonia*, believed to have been granted around Hadrian's visit to Britain in A.D.122 (Tomlin, 2006). However, examples such as the construction of the basilica appears to have begun around A.D.100 and completed by A.D.120 (Hingley, 2018, 123). If this was the case, this project had been completed at the time of or even prior to London's potential elevation to the rank of *Colonia* (Tomlin, 2006). This was followed by the forum's west and east ranges and the dismantling of the timber amphitheatre from around A.D.120 (Hingley, 2018, 123-4). It is certainly interesting that both of these projects appeared to begin at the same time. The fort at Cripplegate may have also been constructed during this same short period (Hingley, 2018, 120). This indicates a larger scale program of architectural advancement and transformation within London during the early 2nd century, of which the amphitheatre was a part.

The architecture of the London Amphitheatre's second phase is not only a reflection of the prominence and status of London, but also directly representative of the tastes and preferences of those behind its planning and construction. Despite being totally rebuilt, the London Amphitheatre still shares notable resemblances to the original amphitheatre in certain areas, particularly the shape of the arena, orientation and the religious context. As I maintained, the new amphitheatre appears to be representative of the state of London during the early 2nd century alongside the new forum-basilica and various other masonry building programs, representing a town at its peak. This idea of London reaching its peak may further motivate wealthy individuals and groups to improve the town aesthetically to reflect this; it is evident especially due to the short period in which these projects were undertaken that those behind them did not lack wealth for funding. The large-scale investment into the construction of public monuments, especially going to the trouble of reconstruction and improving these monuments would suggest a conscious effort to 'beautify' and improve the town; to show off the wealth and prosperity available within London during this period.

4.4: Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre

4.4.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

The Verulamium theatre-amphitheatre was first excavated in 1847 by the antiquary R. Grove-Lowe, though these were "well conducted" for the period the works did not establish a chronological sequence for the monument (Wilmott, 2008, 122). Total excavation was carried out in 1993-4 by K. Kenyon (Kenyon 1935). There does not appear to have been any significant excavation of the amphitheatre specifically since this report in 1935. However, it does appear that there is an especially significant amount of material recovered from the total excavation by Kenyon establishing the architecture and chronological sequence of the theatre-amphitheatre as shall be demonstrated throughout this section. The individuality of this theatre-amphitheatre in Britain does mean that there is not published work relating to comparable Romano-British examples. However, there has been significant focus on the comparable theatre-amphitheatres of Gaul by Klee (1975) and more recently in Augst by Hufschmid (2009). Increasingly, academic interest has been directed towards the settlement as a whole and its place within Britain And the lasting effects of the Boudican revolt. Niblett *et al.* (2006) have published extensively surrounding the excavations of the town from 1986-88, providing both a plan of the town as well as speculating about its origins and evolution both culturally and economically under the Roman administration.

The theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium despite being constructed in an urban context has been categorised notably by Wilmott separately from other urban examples. This is primarily due to the architecture and proposed function of the monument representing a 'theatre-amphitheatre' (Wilmott, 2008, 122-7). This introduces the issue how this new form of monument was constructed in Britain; both in terms of knowledge in relation the construction itself but also where the inspiration for such a monument originated. The context in which the amphitheatre was constructed as well as which groups or individuals were responsible for its planning and construction may provide an insight into these issues since one would expect that the form of this monument was a distinct choice by those behind its construction. Since there are no other confirmed examples of this category of amphitheatre in Britain, when considering inspiration or the transfer of knowledge in relation to the construction of the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium, I would propose that it came from elsewhere in the empire. This is not to suggest that the idea or inspiration behind constructing a theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium was not influenced by them being established as a worthwhile project and representation of status within Britain throughout the century since the initial invasion. It is certainly notable however that this type of monument, namely the combination

of amphitheatres and theatres have been identified and excavated in Gaul both prior to and after the construction of the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre (Klee, 1975). One could suggest that this category of amphitheatre was to some extent well established in Gaul with notable examples constructed at Senlis, Sanxay and Lutèce (Klee, 1975, 517-8). As such, I will primarily be relying on theatre-amphitheatres from Gaul when considering direct architectural comparisons to the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre.

The location chosen for the settlement itself may have been a contributing factor to the type of amphitheatre constructed there. The town was only 20 miles to the north of London, with the course of Watling Street, the main road through the town leading to London directly (Klee, 1975). Considering both the notable examples of theatre-amphitheatres constructed in Gaul and the importance of London in relation to trade and communication with Gaul as I discussed in the previous chapter, this could provide a potential avenue of inspiration or transfer of knowledge. This is further predicated upon whether there was indeed a significant connection between London and Verulamium, an issue I shall consider throughout this investigation. The simplest answer when considering why this combination of an amphitheatre and theatre was constructed at Verulamium is the preference of those behind its construction. In this case, a critical question is to what extent the context within Verulamium or the nature of the settlement itself could have influenced this decision in relation to the construction of the unique theatre-amphitheatre there.

It should be noted that the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium was not constructed until the early-mid-2nd century. The proposed date from Frere (1983) was between A.D.140 – 150 and Wilmott (2008, 122) has suggested it was constructed no later than A.D.140. However, the settlement itself was established far earlier in the A.D.40s soon after the initial invasion. The region of "Verlamion" prior to the invasion even after the founding of Camulodunum in A.D.10 remained, according to Wacher, the "principal settlement" of the Catuvellanuni (Wacher, 1995, 214). Despite this, Wacher (1995) proposes that the military occupation of the site does not appear to have lasted more than a year or two after the region was conquered. Niblett (2001) has also concluded that there is little evidence of military occupation at the site. Furthermore, that it would appear the "native aristocracy" retained their wealth and status and that the Catuvellanuni in the region were treated "favourably" by the Roman administration (Niblett, 2001, 54). An especially telling quote from Niblett in relation to the impact the initial invasion had on the region reads "as far as Verulamium is concerned, if it was not for references in classical texts, we might not realise that Claudius conquered the area at all" (Niblett, 2001, 60).

This is not to suggest that the town itself did not develop during this early period. However, in a somewhat similar fashion to London, the Boudican revolt was a very significant event when considering the growth and development of Verulamium due to the town being attacked and destroyed. The settlement prior to this event was relatively small and simple making up 10 – 12ha "clustered along the south-west/north-east though road on the north-west side of the central enclosure" (Niblett, 2001, 66) (Fig. 4.8). It does not appear that the settlement was as well developed or established as London by the time of its destruction by Boudica. Aside from the central enclosure that was not yet completed there was little more than workshops and stores. A possible masonry structure has been identified on the east side of Insula XIX. Though the dating is somewhat dubious the structure has been somewhat tentatively identified as a bath house and seems to have been used until the end of the 1st century (Niblett, 2001).

Both Wacher (1995) and Niblett (2001) have mentioned that the towns redevelopment after the Boudican revolt was a slow process, the shops "certainly not rebuilt" until A.D.75 (Wacher, 1995, 224). Critically, the forum basilica complex was also not constructed until A.D.79 and west of the shops a Romano-Celtic temple was constructed by the end of the 1st century (Wacher, 1995, 220-225). The dating of the forum is based on evidence from an inscription from the opposite side of Watling Street dated to A.D.79 during the governorship of Julius Agricola appearing to commemorate a major building project (Niblett, 2001). Though it does not specifically mention the forum, it is assumed that this is the project the inscription is referring to. It seems that once underway, the reconstruction and eventual expansion of the town was undertaken rapidly. Niblett has quite rightly linked this to the swift and large-scale redevelopment of London after the settlement's destruction by Boudica during the same period. Two major routes from London to the north and west diverged at Verulamium with Watling Street running straight from London to the ports at Richborough and Dover and continuing to Chester. (Niblett, 2001, 70-1). The large project of building and development of the Neronian and Flavian period is evident through the construction of buildings I have already mentioned as well as a large *macellum* dating to A.D.85 northwest of the forum in Insula XVII covering 400m^2 as well as further logistical improvements such as the cambering and metalling of the streets by the late 1st century (Niblett, 2001, 73-8). By the end of the 1st century the town emerges as having many of the public buildings one would associate with a fully-fledged Romano-British town. (Fig. 4.9) During this period religious life in the settlement also becomes well represented architecturally, with two temples on the south side of the forum courtyard and another five identified throughout the town. All of these temples are Romano-Celtic in form, consisting of a central square or rectangular *cella* surrounded by a

portico or veranda. The form of the temple in Insula VII is notable, so called by Niblett as the triangular temple; this appears to have been due to the diagonal course of Watling Street (Niblett, 2001, 75-8).
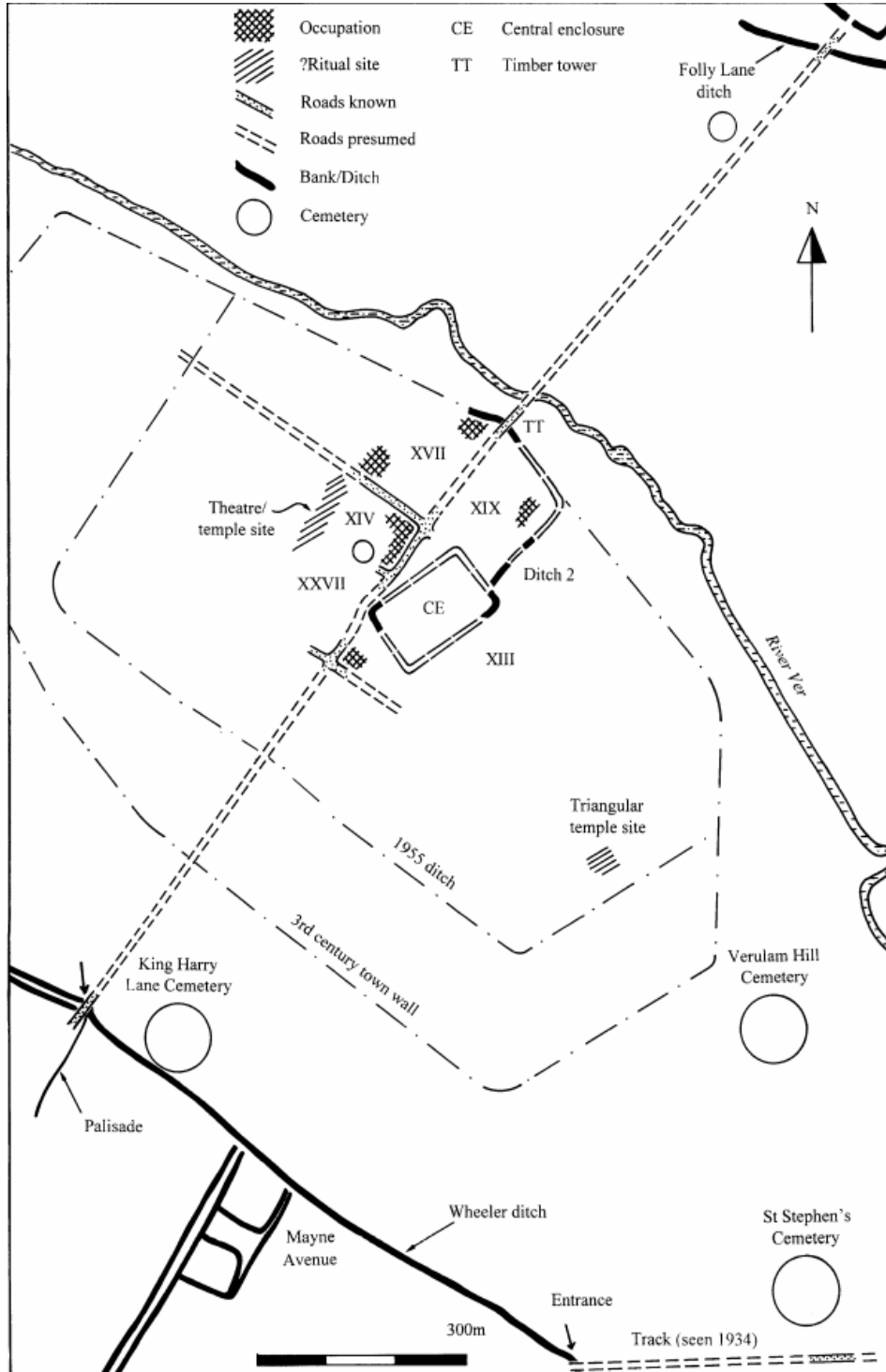

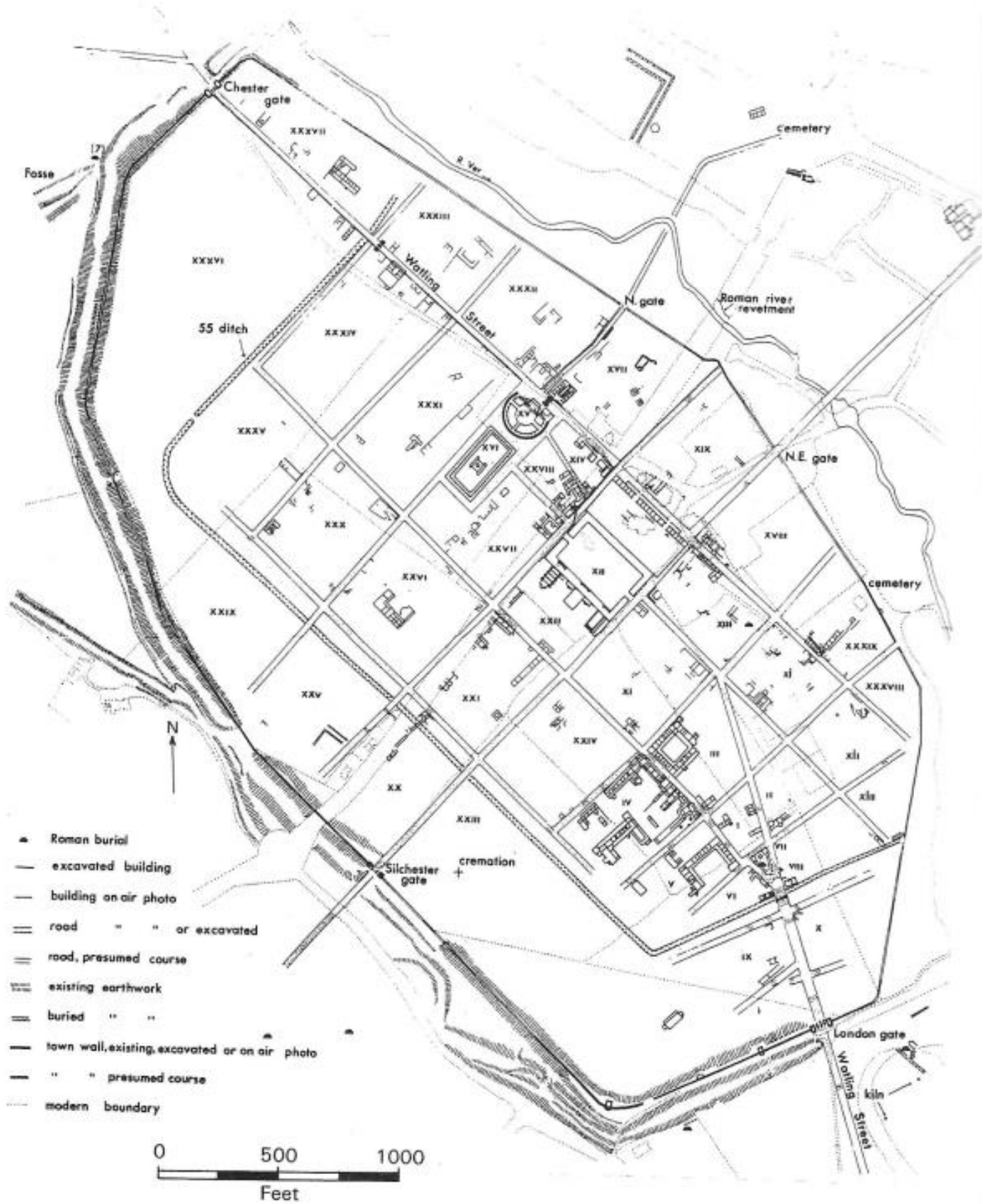Figure 4. 8, pre-Boudican Verulamium, drawn by T. Hunns, Niblett, 2001, 63.

Figure 4. 9, 3rd century Verulamium, *after Niblett,* Wacher, 1995, 218.

Construction did not stop at the end of the 1st century, and by the mid-2nd century much of the area along the street frontages was closely packed with early Antonine domestic buildings. These showed "considerable variety" in plan and were significantly larger than the earlier workshops (Niblett, 2001, 89-90). Prior to the construction of the amphitheatre, the area immediately north-east of insula XVI was an open gravelled area seemingly purposefully maintained throughout the 1st and early 2nd century. Niblett (2001) has suggested that this was perhaps used for public gatherings prior to the construction of the amphitheatre there. This may explain the later construction date of the amphitheatre itself, as to some extent this gravelled area may have served perfectly well for public gatherings and events during this 1st century. Though this also highlights another unique aspect of the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium, the monument was constructed within the town walls beside the forum basilica complex as demonstrated in figure 4.9. This also raises the issue of whether this space may have been maintained or preserved for the theatre-amphitheatre. Perhaps the monument was constructed when deemed necessary or when individuals were willing to fund and plan such a project, rather than being the intention for the area north-east of insula XVI through the 1st and mid-2nd centuries. Of course, we cannot be sure of the answer to this issue, but it seems unlikely that the open gravelled area could provide the same facilities and potential for hosting events and gatherings as the theatre-amphitheatre could. It also seems unlikely that the space was reserved specifically for the amphitheatre for such a long period. The construction of the amphitheatre may represent a cultural shift with the expectation or motivation of different kinds of public displays, and local groups or an individual seizing the opportunity to enhance their own status through the construction of such a monument. It is also worth noting that despite the later date of construction of the amphitheatre, the overall development of the town did not pause during the early 2nd century. In essence, the construction of the amphitheatre may be considered even despite the later date than other public buildings such as the forum basilica complex as a part of the overall project of development of the town after the Boudican revolt.

This introduces the issue of which groups or individuals were behind this period of architectural development and expansion of the town during this period. Niblett has rightfully noted that there is a specific absence of houses that display a high level of wealth within the town itself, despite there being clear examples of "ostentatious" public buildings most likely financed by "wealthy local dignitaries" (Niblett, 2001, 96). Due to the urban nature of the amphitheatre and the context especially the evident lack of military presence at Verulamium, I would be inclined to agree with Niblett's suggestion here in relation to which groups or

individuals funded the amphitheatre. Rather than residing within the city, many seem to have invested into villas throughout the hinterland of Verulamium over the 2nd century. Of the 16 examples of known villas within 15km of Verulamium, all of those excavated appear to have flourished during the Antonine period (Niblett, 2001, 98). The town acted a centre of sort for the surrounding region with the buildings mainly densely built down the main roads, the town never built up in a comparable state to larger Romano-British settlements such as London. The position of Verulamium as a centre with many of the roads directing towards it can also be noted in figure 4.10. It is further worth considering to what extent those behind these groups investing in the architecture of the town from the hinterland would consider Verulamium as 'their' town.

In relation to the wealth present within Verulamium, there are signs that the town may have been a site of agricultural significance, though this does not appear as clear as the industry present around Verulamium. Niblett has suggested that the town "must have been" a site for regular markets "essential" to agricultural society (Niblett, 2001 104-5). There is identifiable evidence of the sale of meat and the by-products of butchery, though this is somewhat confined to discarded shows and leather cut-offs found in a later 1st century filling of the Central Enclosure ditch in Insula XIII (Niblett, 2001). Niblett's suggestion is most noticeable when considering the grain supply to Verulamium. Multiple so called 'corn drying ovens' have been recorded at the settlement or its immediate surroundings. The construction of the granary at Gorhambury Villa in the 2nd century for storing 39,900kg of grain would suggest that Verulamium was under "arable cultivation" (Niblett, 2001, 107-8). Additionally, three smaller granaries within the town were destroyed by the Antonine fire in Insula XIII. Niblett has also rightfully commented that it is difficult to say to what extent those inhabiting Verulamium specifically farmed the surrounding area (Niblett, 2001). However, it seems apparent that it was a centre for agriculture within the region.

Additionally, the town relied on industrial activity through this period, though Verulamium did not reach its peak until the 3rd century (Niblett, 2001, 120). Multiple industries have been identified at Verulamium and the surrounding region, Wacher (1995) has proposed that the shops reconstructed after the near destruction of the town by Boudica seem to have been used by metalworkers. This idea is mirrored by Niblett, who further notes that there is ample evidence in relation to bronze working at the settlement from the mid-1st century onwards (Niblett, 2001, 106-8). A great deal of pottery was produced within the region of Verulamium as well the industry seeming to have begun in the mid-1st century in more rural areas around the town itself. By the beginning of the 2nd century examples of kilns appear even closer to the

town of Verulamium itself with five kilns located just outside the south gate (Niblett, 2001, 102-5). The position of the kilns within Verulamium itself would suggest that the economy and industry within the town was again linked perhaps to London or other settlements connected to Watling Street. At Brockley Hill almost exactly in between London and Verulamium twenty kilns lay on Watling Street (as marked in Fig. 4.10); Niblett has proposed that the pottery industry probably contributed to those occupying the area close to Watling Street rather than the town specifically (Niblett, 2001, 103). The pottery production at Verulamium appears to have been one of the staple areas of industry behind the economy and prosperity of the town over this period; the pottery production reaching its peak in the mid-2nd century as these products "flooded London and supplied forts on Hadrian's Wall" (Niblett, 2001, 103).

The peak of the pottery industry could perhaps also explain the later date of construction of the amphitheatre around the mid-2nd century. The connection between London and Verulamium is of paramount importance in relation to both the development of the town itself and the potential wealth there. The funding needed for the amphitheatre could have been a result of the thriving pottery industry around Verulamium, especially considering the peak according Niblett appeared to have been around the same time in which it was constructed. Due to the connection between London and Verulamium it is also possible that wealthy elites from London could invest their funds into the settlement considering the amphitheatre at London had already been reconstructed in masonry by this period. However, one would expect that it is more likely that individuals from the rural region around Verulamium would be those behind the development of the town architecturally, especially after investing in luxurious villas in the area.
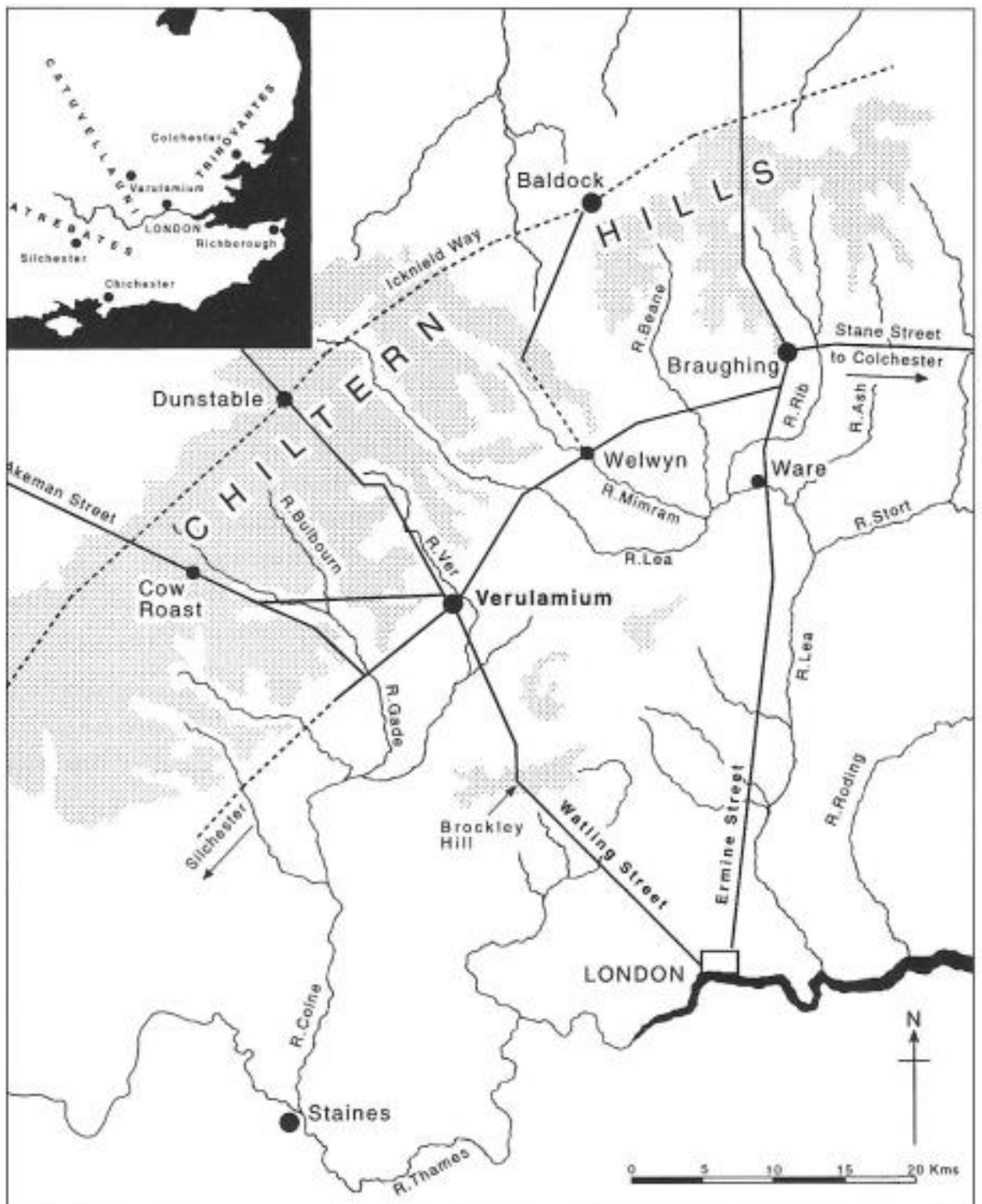
Figure 4. 10, Verulamium in relation to major Roman roads and settlements, Drawn by Philip Dean, Niblett, 2001, 30

It has been further suggested that the role of Verulamium as a centre in the region also extends to the marketplace there. Again, relying on the position of the settlement from London and on Watling Street as well as the surrounding hinterland (Niblett, 2001, 108-9). The artefacts seemingly imported here are especially pertinent when considering the possible

influences and origins of the amphitheatre with notable quantities of wares from Gaul identified by the end of the 1st century. The Romano-Celtic temples referenced earlier are typical of those in Roman Britain and Gaul as well. I would propose that Gaul was the probable source of both the inspiration for the amphitheatre as well as the transfer of knowledge in relation to the construction techniques used.

The community at Verulamium were evidently not lacking in wealth during this period, nor was the construction of the amphitheatre an anomaly; the town was going through a period of large-scale development during this century after its near destruction by Boudica. The construction of this theatre-amphitheatre in Britain is especially significant, yet again emphasizing the amount of choice and freedom the wealthy elites had in relation to the form of the monuments they wished to invest into. One can also understand, due to the importance and positioning of the settlement of Verulamium both within the region and on Watling Street specifically, why these wealthy individuals and groups, despite seemingly not living directly in the town itself, would be motivated to invest into the settlement's architecture. The monument was constructed at a time of prosperity for Verulamium's pottery industry, which would have certainly provided the wealth needed and perhaps also the motivation. I do not believe that the area for the monument beside the forum was reserved specifically for the amphitheatre, though it simply appears like the best place for it, especially if it was specifically a public gathering area prior to the monument's construction. It may further represent a change in culture within the settlement, a change in taste for the wider population or perhaps just those behind the construction of the theatre-amphitheatre; spurring them to construct a venue capable of hosting specific events.

4.4.2 The Architecture of the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium:

The Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre is the only example of a theatre-amphitheatre in Britain. I would propose that those behind its construction took inspiration from other examples constructed in Gaul such as at Senlis and Lutèce (Klee, 1975, 517-8). However, this is not to suggest that the monument was not also representative of local tastes and choices of those behind its construction, funding and planning. The amphitheatre went through multiple phases in terms of its form, the most prominent and I would argue important being the modifications undertaken between A.D.150 – 160 quickly after its original construction around A.D.140 (Wilmott, 2008, 122-6). Further minor modifications were made in the 3rd century and later in the 4th century (Wilmott, 2008, 126). Wilmott has commented that the first structure more closely resembled the form of a traditional amphitheatre, whereas the second phase

around a decade later placed more emphasis on the theatre (Wilmott, 2008, 122). Unusually the monument was built within the city walls beside the forum basilica complex as demonstrated in figure 4.9. It is still important to compare the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium to others constructed earlier in Britain when considering the inspiration for the monument. However, due to the categorisation and the form of this amphitheatre, comparison to other theatre-amphitheatres from Gaul may prove especially useful.

The first phase of the monument was still relatively unique architecturally (Fig. 4.10), since the arena was circular and 24.34m in diameter (Wilmott, 2008, 122). The only other example of a circular or very nearly circular arena constructed in Britain the first phase of Silchester Amphitheatre as discussed in the previous chapter between A.D.55 – 75 (Fulford, 1989, 17). Larger scale architectural differences as well as the long period in between the construction of these two monuments would to me indicate that the Silchester arena did not provide inspiration for the example at Verulamium. Like every other amphitheatre I have discussed, the gravel excavated from the arena, presumably the same that was preserved as the previous area for public gatherings as proposed by Niblett (2001) was used as the basis for the *cavea* (Wilmott, 2008, 122-3). The earliest element of the structure was a free-standing stone outer wall measuring 1.14m wide at the foundations and narrowed to 910mm at the top. The presence of an outer wall is especially unusual here and would more often be associated with military amphitheatres, Wilmott comparing this feature specifically to Chester Amphitheatre (2008, 122). Furthermore, it appears to have been raised up first before the arena was excavated, which allowed the gravel to be piled against it to form the basis of the *cavea* (Wilmott, 2008, 122); this is again very comparable to the construction of the military amphitheatre at Chester. Of course, this in itself is not proof of military involvement in the construction of this amphitheatre. It does go to show the unique nature of this amphitheatre architecturally, but I would not propose that this feature was directly inspired by the military amphitheatre at Chester.

The spoil from the arena was retained by the outer wall and the arena wall which was at least 1.22m high (Wilmott, 2008, 122). When considering the method of access to the seating during this phase, two large buttresses 1.75m wide projecting 1.67m from the face of the outer wall have been interpreted as supports from a wooden external staircase (Wilmott, 2008, 122-4). Interestingly, this is also comparable to phase 1B of the amphitheatre Chester as discussed in the previous chapter (section 6.2) aside from the use of timber for the construction of the stairs at Verulamium. The arena had three entrances on the west, north and south sides as shown in figure 4.11 with the north and south measuring 2.91m wide and the west being

smaller at 2.28m. The surviving height of the side wall near the arena of the south entrance

survived to a height of 1.98m (Wilmott, 2008, 124). There is no evidence of this entrance being

vaulted, though Wilmott has suggested that the whole passage may have been vaulted due to

the seating being carried over it (Wilmott, 2008, 124); this is also represented in the

reconstruction by Lowther (Fig. 4.12). The stage was positioned to the east of the arena, and

the curve of the arena was carried around the front of the stage (Wilmott, 2008, 124-5). In the

reconstruction by Lowther (Fig. 4.12) the stage seems to have been linked to the arena by a

small set of stairs. The stage itself was 14.38m wide at the front and the post-holes seem to

suggest that it was constructed out of timber (Wilmott, 2008, 124-6).
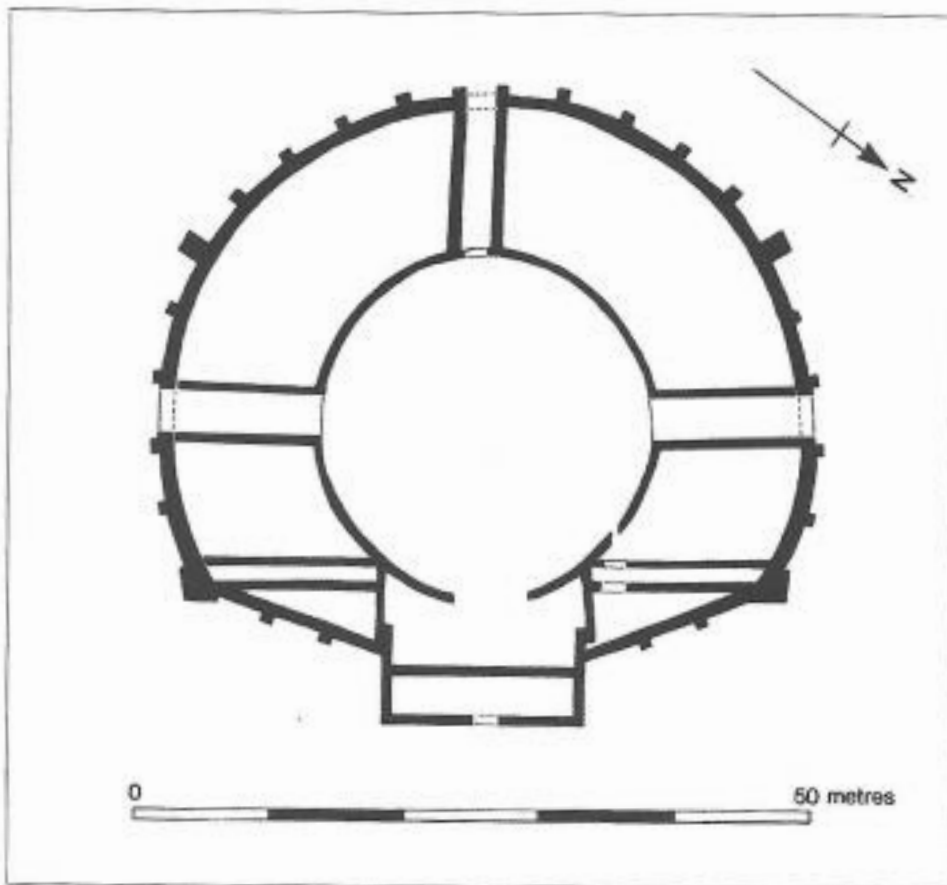
Figure 4. 11, plan of the first phase of Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre, *Chris Evans, after* Kenyon 1935 - Wilmott, 2001, 123.
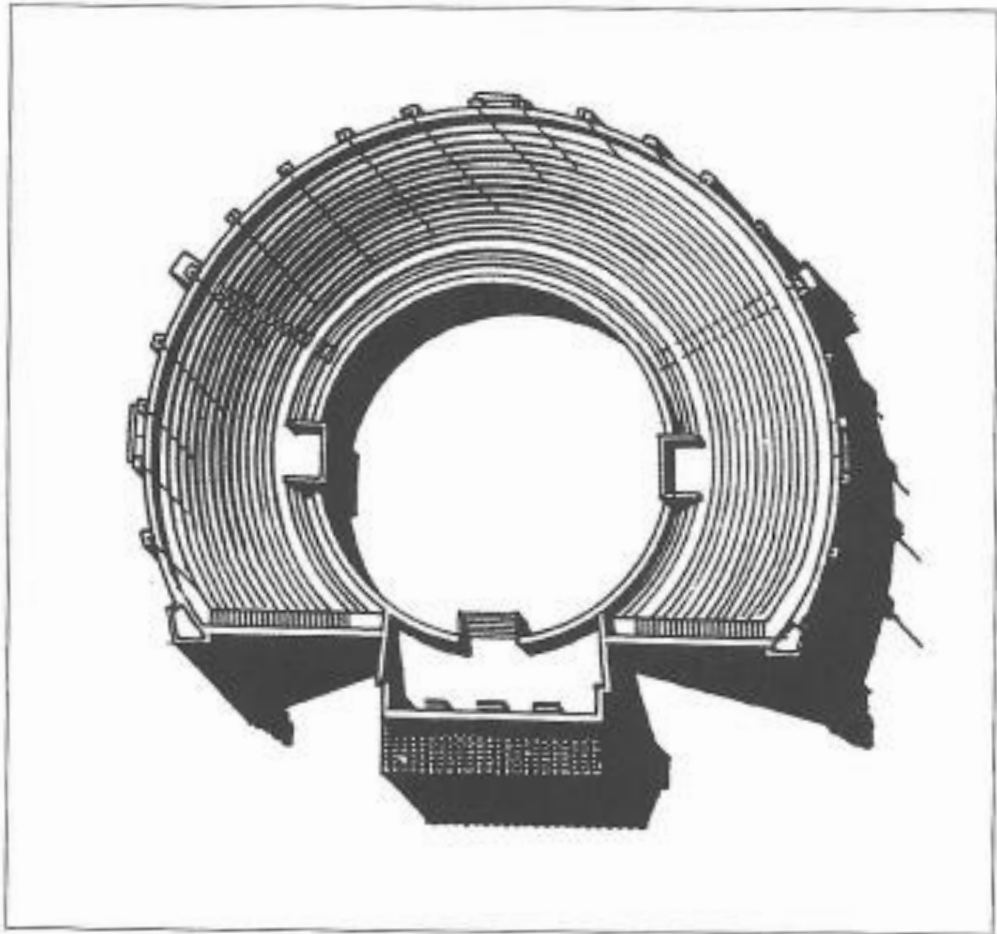
Figure 4. 12, reconstruction of the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre by A. Lowther, Wilmott, 2001, 123.

The layout appears to suggest that the majority of spectators would be concentrated on the arena, or that the arena rather than the stage was the focus of the seating arrangement. Those sitting on the north-eastern half of the building would have either no view or a very much impeded view of the stage (Wilmott, 2008, 125-6). This idea of the theatre aspect of the monument being somewhat secondary to the arena and the amphitheatre also appears in Gaul. A more prominent example is the theatre-amphitheatre at Senlis. Klee had described the "rudimentary" stage as being "unobtrusively" integrated into the amphitheatre; he commented that sightlines especially from the Southern tiers would have been poor (Klee, 1975, 517). The theatre-amphitheatre constructed at Lutèce appears to have more in common structurally with the example constructed at Verulamium (Fig. 4.13). It seems that there is more focus placed upon the stage at this example, Klee stated the performers had exclusive use of almost one-third of the building and the stage was more approximate to that of a common Roman playhouse (Klee, 1975, 519).
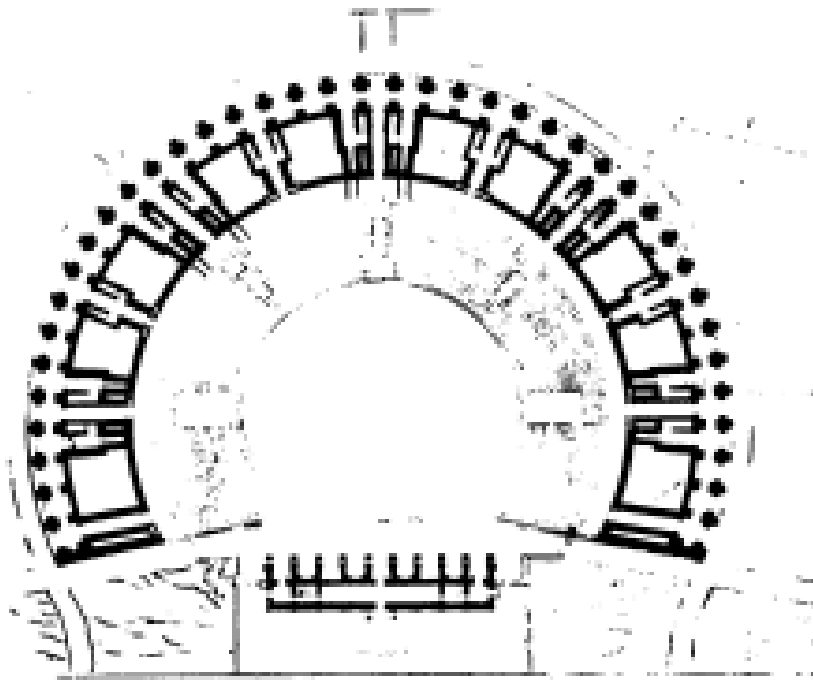
Figure 4. 13, plan of Lutèce theatre-amphitheatre, Klee, 1975, 518.

The theatre-amphitheatres at Senlis and Lutèce are described as multi-purpose facilities (Klee, 1975). Klee comments on the form of these two Romano-Gallic examples putting the specific forms of each down to the "local taste" (Klee, 1975, 520) as a major influence as to what portion of the *cavea* was devoted to the stage. At Senlis the theatre appears a secondary aspect, and the stage only made a minor incursion into the seating of the amphitheatre (Klee, 1975, 520), whereas at Lutèce the stage was a major element of the monument as shown in figure 4.13. Klee further mentioned that this was due to the nature of the settlement in a cultural sense. The population of Lutèce by the end of the 1st century would have been accustomed to a separate playhouse, thus the stage was a "major element" of the amphitheatre (Klee, 1975, 520).

The same could be suggested at Verulamium when deliberating the reasons behind the incorporation of the theatre, and the degree to which the arena or stage were the focus of the seating and the monument. This introduces the question of why the amphitheatre was altered to seemingly place more emphasis onto the stage within ten or twenty years of its original construction around A.D.150 – 160 (Wilmott, 2008, 126). It is possible that the modification of the amphitheatre was due to repairs after the theatre was damaged by the Antonine fire around A.D.155 – 160. However, neither the nearby temple nor the amphitheatre itself appear to have been damaged by the fire. The fire "ravaged" the lower part of the town though it also

seems to have destroyed the forum basilica complex and the *macellum* (Niblett, 2001, 122-4). Furthermore, even if the modifications were due to necessary repair, the changes in form would still need to be considered. There does appear to have been some rapid rebuilding within Verulamium at the same period in which the amphitheatre was modified including the workshops at insula XVIII and the *macellum*, though the replacement of this was less than two thirds the size of the original *macellum* (Niblett, 2001, 123-5). The modification to the amphitheatre may have been part of this larger scale project of rebuilding. It is notable that the forum did not seem to have been reconstructed until the last quarter of the 2nd century. Niblett draws a parallel here to the Silchester forum, which remained unfinished for more than a century (2001, 122-4). The amphitheatre appears to have been transformed before this, perhaps demonstrating the importance of the monument. Taking advantage of this period of reconstruction and redevelopment to implement these changes to the amphitheatre perhaps displays a change in local expectations and taste regarding events and performances.

The second phase of the amphitheatre was notably different from the first. The western half of what had been the arena behind the lateral entrance was covered with timber framed seating (Wilmott, 2008, 126). The stage also brought forwards, and the space between the front of the wooden seating and the stage now became a dedicated space of the orchestra. Wilmott has commented that this brings in the true sense architecturally of a "classical theatre" (Wilmott, 2008, 126), a sentiment that I would agree with. This phase of the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium appears more comparable to the example constructed at Lutèce. Additionally, 1.6m inside the back wall three stage piers were built 1.45m square, flanked by two pilasters. These further supported columns around 5.79m high surmounted by Corinthian capitals. This has been interpreted as the classic architectural backdrop or *scaenae frons* (Wilmott, 2008, 126). The stage was still wooden in construction but the access to the *cavea* was modified; the side walls of the passage were "breached", and lateral stairs were constructed leading up the seats on both sides (Wilmott, 2008, 126).

This phase of the amphitheatre evidently placed far more emphasis onto the theatre aspect of the monument, significantly reducing the size of the arena. I would propose that the main reasons for this was a change in taste, the theatre productions at the original monument perhaps proving more popular within the town than the more violent events often displayed within amphitheatres. Also, the connection by Watling Street directly to London, a town also equipped with a large functional amphitheatre during this period may have allowed those at Verulamium to branch out to other areas of public entertainment and spectacle culture. I would expect these changes, so soon after the original construction of the amphitheatre to be

primarily dictated by choice and taste. This can also be potentially noted through the transformation of other theatre-amphitheatres throughout the empire. In Switzerland, after A.D.170 the theatre-amphitheatre at Augst-Neun Turme located in the centre of the townwas demolished and replaced with the fully fledged amphitheatre of Augst-Sichelengraben with a potential capacity of 13,000 constructed in a natural depression right inside the city wall (Hufschmid, 2009, 114-115). The monument was not a modification in this case, but a total replacement.

Those behind the reconstruction or rather modifications to the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium during this period may have taken advantage of the period of redevelopment and reconstruction after the Antonine fire in order to make these architectural changes. Of course, the changes during this phase also represented another opportunity for individuals or groups to display their status and wealth within the town; this motivation should always be considered. Considering the inspiration for these modifications, this does not necessarily need to have originated from another theatre-amphitheatre. This series of architectural changes are emphasizing the 'theatre' aspect of the original monument and could be inspired architecturally from any classical theatre within the province. Although theatres are somewhat rare in Britain there are a number of examples constructed throughout the 1st century. The best known appear to be those at Canterbury, Colchester and Gosbeck's farm (Sear, 2006). It is worth noting the vicinity of these three sites around London; with Verulamium they essentially form a triangle around London.

Dunnett has suggested that the theatres of Britain can be "broadly" divided into those reminiscent of "truly Roman" (Vitruvian) architecture, which are typically masonry built with a large stage organically connected to the *cavea,* or the other more extensive category of Romano-Celtic theatres in which the stage is smaller with the focus primarily on the orchestra (Dunnett, 1971, 43). The example at Gosbeck's farm, suggested by Wacher to have also been a theatre of religious significance, due to the temple 150m south of the theatre (1995, 127), may provide a useful comparison to Verulamium contextually due to its close association with the temple in Insula XVI. Architecturally however, Dunnett has proposed that the theatre at Gosbeck's Farm does not fall into either category, being neither Vitruvian nor Romano-Celtic in form (1971, 43). This further highlights the issues of attempting to strictly categorise these monuments based upon seemingly just their architecture. My research has emphasized to me that local preference and the wide variety of architecture present within these public monuments makes this extremely difficult; contextually the theatre at Gosbeck's Farm is certainly Romano-British in my view. Architecturally it seems far removed from the example at

Verulamium. The monument was certainly more simplistic architecturally during its first phase (Fig. 4.14). It was re-constructed in masonry and turf around A.D.150 – 200 (Sear, 2006. 196) though it still does not appear comparable to the example at Verulamium. It is difficult to say if the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium may have drawn inspiration from theatres already constructed in Britain. Even after it appears that these structures are concentrated within the vicinity of London the stark difference between these theatres of both designations by Dunnett and the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium makes direct architectural inspiration difficult to believe.
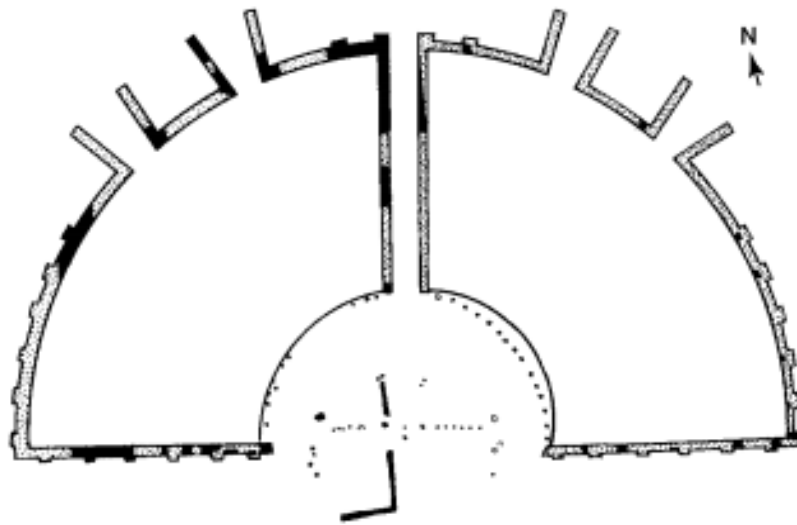
Figure 4. 14, first theatre at Gosbeck's Farm, Sear, 2006, 196.

This is not to say for certain that phase 2 or later iterations of the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre were not inspired by examples in Gaul such as at Lutèce since they are similar in an architectural sense. The example constructed between the late first and early 2nd century at Derventum (Drevant, Cher) appears noticeably similar to the later phases of the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre (Figures 8 and 9). Rather that unlike the original construction of the first phase at Verulamium, the knowledge in terms of architecture and the inspiration for the form of the monument did not necessarily have to originate from another similar monument. As I have highlighted throughout this section, I would propose that it reflects a cultural change, favouring the events that the theatre could provide.

The second plan of the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre remained until around the 3rd century according to Wilmott (2008, 126); at this time the stage was rebuilt and brought

further forwards. This would have reduced the size of the arena even further, placing more emphasis on the theatre function of the monument. It has been proposed that the changes were due to the erection of an amphitheatre in the area of St Albans, though no trace of it has ever been found (Wilmott, 2008, 126-8). There were also further modifications and a rebuild made in the 4th century (Wilmott, 2008). This long period of use or at least maintenance suggests that it was a significant monument within the minds of those at Verulamium, at least architecturally but also perhaps as a representation of local taste and spectacle culture.
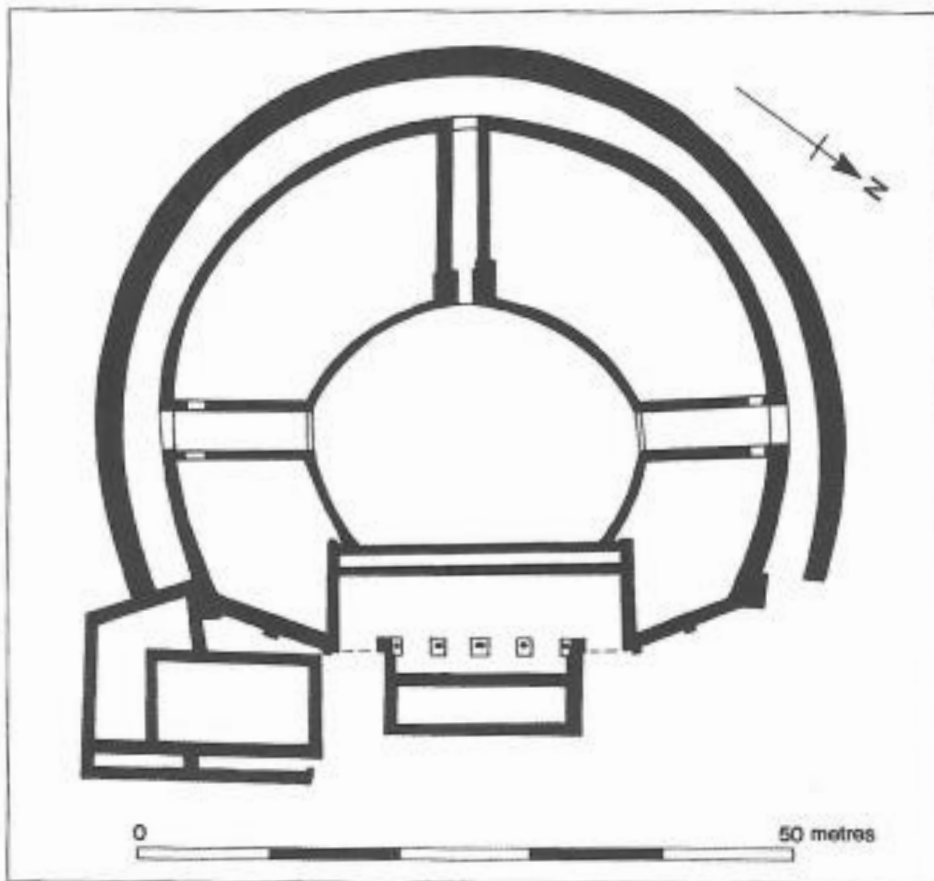
Figure 4. 15, plan of Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre in the 4th century, *Chris Evans, after* Kenyon 1935 – Wilmott, 2001, 124.
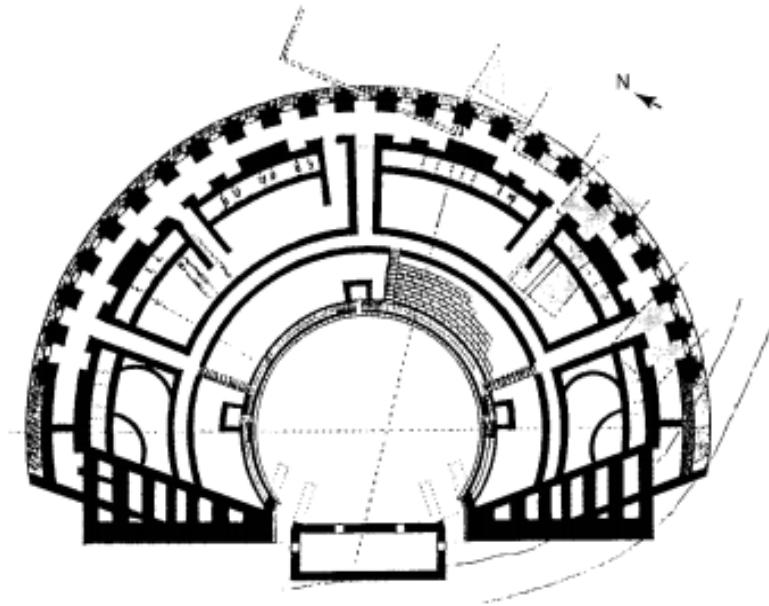
Figure 4. 16, plan of the Derventum theatre, Sear, 2006, 201.

4.4.3 Conclusions:

As I have established from the outset of this section, the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium is unique architecturally within Britain, being the only monument within this category. The physical context of the monument is also distinctive since it was constructed within the town itself, close to the forum-basilica complex and the large temple in Insula XVI (Fig. 4.9) However, the motivations behind the construction of this theatre-amphitheatre and the funding of the project are seemingly similar to other examples within an urban context throughout Britain. The amphitheatre I would propose was financed by wealthy elites and individuals who inhabited the surrounding villas within the Verulamium region. I would suggest that motivations behind the funding and construction of the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium were not notably different from other urban examples in Britain, despite the unique form. The construction of the amphitheatre originally appears to have been part of the large scale and substantial period of redevelopment at Verulamium after the town suffered near destruction by Boudica. The position of the settlement in relation to Watling Street and London was of paramount importance during this period of redevelopment and the construction of the amphitheatre itself. The wealth generated by the pottery, metalworking and agricultural industries surrounding Verulamium and on Watling Street would have sustained the financial needs for the construction of various public monuments within the town over the late-1st and mid-2nd centuries. The peak of the pottery industry during the mid-2nd century seemingly

facilitated by the towns direct link to London (Niblett, 2001, 103) lines up chronologically with the construction of the first phase of the theatre-amphitheatre.

While there are multiple examples of theatres in Britain, there are no other theatre-amphitheatres. When considering the inspiration for the construction of the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre I would conclude that it was inspired by similar architectural examples in Gaul such as the Lutèce theatre (Klee, 1975). While the idea or inspiration to construct a theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium may have been influenced by the establishment of these types of monuments throughout Britain since the invasion; the specific choice to construct it in this way was probably inspired by examples in Gaul. The Gallic influence in Verulamium is noticeable due to the theatre-amphitheatre itself as well as several wares identified around the end of the 1st century. There are numerous Romano-Celtic temples as I have mentioned, though these have been identified at sites throughout Britain. Again, the connection to London may have been significant, due to the multicultural nature of the town as well as its role in trade with Gaul. Furthermore, in the previous chapter (3.3) I discussed the possible Gallic origins of London.

One of the most important issues to take away from the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium is the display of individuality and architectural freedom. The inspiration and construction of amphitheatres throughout Britain was not a simple chronological system. Individuals and groups were seemingly free to construct these monuments as they wished. There currently only being one theatre-amphitheatre implies the form of these monuments was simply down to choice and more widespread awareness of this type of monument throughout Britain. The further development and architectural changes to Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre a mere decade or so after its original construction may be further illustrative of the monument's representation of its context and the wishes of those behind its construction. The transformation of the amphitheatre during this second phase with focus now being placed primarily onto the stage (Wilmott, 2008) appears demonstrative of the desires of the community, again highlighting the freedom of these people to construct these monuments as they wished and for specific uses.

4.5: Caerleon Amphitheatre

4.5.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

Information published relating to the later phases of Carleton Amphitheatre are reliant on the work conducted in 1926, specifically the site report by Wheeler and Wheeler from 1928. While it is a shame that more recent work on the monument has not been conducted, the site is very well understood both contextually and architecturally. Boon's (1972) work on the fortress and settlement has provided a great deal of information, though more recently Evan's (2010) report on Caerleon as a whole contributes to some extent an updated look at the settlement and fortress throughout its period of use. The amphitheatre is mentioned in more recent publications, but these all seem to mainly rely upon the original excavations and report published by Wheeler and Wheeler (1928).

The military context and nature of the second and third phases of Caerleon Amphitheatre are unique so far during this later period. One may not expect the changes within the settlement to be similar or comparable to those within the larger civil Romano-British towns considered thus far in this chapter. The settlement went through large scale redevelopment during the 2nd century. Even during the turn of the century development seemed to continue, a monumental marble inscription dated to A.D.100 indicates that a major piece of construction work was completed in that year, though what exactly this relates to is unknown (Evans, 2010). During the 2nd century a series of alterations were made to the fortress baths and a new tribunal constructed in the *basilica principiorum* in the first quarter of the 2nd century. All the barracks-blocks on the Roman gates were rebuilt in the second half of the 2nd century and the adjacent buildings behind the rampart also rebuilt to a different design. The officers house in Insula X was also re-roofed and provided with a bath suite in A.D.140, appears to have been demolished in A.D.200 (Evans, 2010, 164-6). Building work under Severus is also well attested too, with a monumental inscription recording reconstruction during this period (A.D.193-211) of an unknown structure (Evans, 2010, 164-6). The amphitheatre itself also underwent multiple stages of modification and reconstruction over this period until it and the wider settlement appear to have been deserted in the late 3rd century (Wilmott, 2008, 150).

There was a "recession" of Roman-military influence in Wales during the late 2nd century (Phipps, 2016, 19) evidenced architecturally through the disappearance or abandonment of military installations over this period. This is more applicable to auxiliary forts and installations as shall be discussed in the next chapter concerning the amphitheatres at Tomen-y-Mur and Newstead. The original construction of the legionary fortress and the settlement as discussed

in the previous chapter (3.5) are certainly not characteristic of a settlement that was constructed under the guise of being temporary. The original masonry construction of the amphitheatre further demonstrates this. A key issue to consider throughout this investigation into the later phases of the Caerleon Amphitheatre is the significance of the settlement as a whole after the invasion of Wales during the 2nd century; especially considering the wider recession of Roman forces. There were two main periods of modification and reconstruction at Caerleon after the initial construction of the amphitheatre. The monument underwent modifications around A.D.140 considered as "significant alteration" (Wilmott, 2008, 149). The final period of reconstruction is then dated to A.D.213 – 222 (Wilmott, 2008, 150). This later date may suggest that the amphitheatre was a monument of significance throughout the inhabitation of the legionary fortress and settlement at Caerleon, especially considering the desertion of the entire settlement within the same century (Wilmott, 2008, 150).

The first period of reconstruction and modifications to the amphitheatre shall be the primary focus of this section due to the comparable dates with other amphitheatres throughout this period. In a similar fashion to urban settlements throughout Britain there was certainly a general period of rebuilding and architectural modification through the early and mid-2nd century at Caerleon. The modifications to the amphitheatre may have been a part of this wider project throughout the settlement. An especially significant event in relation to the masonry building projects during this period was a widespread fire within the *canabae* in late 1st or early 2nd century. This appears to have nearly destroyed the extramural settlement as well as severely damaging the amphitheatre itself, burning down the wooden seating and damaging some of the entrances. The rarity of tile debris according to Boon suggests that the buildings destroyed had been covered in thatch or shingles (Boon, 1972, 35). This would assist in dating the fire to before the majority stone reconstruction of multiple buildings and explains one of the reasons behind the notable spread of the fire. Reports have suggested that the amphitheatre was reconstructed soon after this event around A.D.125. However, the dating evidence is based primarily upon an early coin of Hadrian. Boon has suggested if the filling that this coin was located in was correctly ascribed to the second phase of the amphitheatre, and if other alterations are grouped together, the work on the monument cannot have begun until A.D.140 (Boon, 1972, 44-5). Evans (2010) has also suggested that the first phase of modifications to the amphitheatre were most likely carried out in the second quarter of the 2nd century. Boon has further commented that many building projects that have been ascribed to the early 2nd century originally must now be "assigned" to the mid-2nd century in their stone form. It is further emphasised that this applies to both extramural and internal buildings

constructed "*de novo*" or "restored" (Boon, 1972, 45). If this was the case, the reconstruction of the amphitheatre appears to have been a part of this wider project of rebuilding. In this instance, one could suggest that the rebuild was out of necessity due to the damage by the fire. However, the alterations made to the amphitheatre and the fact that it was reconstructed at all, would suggest that it was a monument of public significance throughout this later period at Caerleon.

An additional question to consider is why despite the fire occurring in the early 2nd century, the rebuilding and modifications made to the amphitheatre did not occur until around A.D.140. Boon has suggested that the legions committed heavily to the construction of Hadrian's wall which in turn brought about the "decay and consequential reconstruction" of the fortress and surrounding settlement. The commitment by the three legions (Second Augustan, Sixth and Twentieth) to the building work throughout the province as well as between the fire in the early 2nd century and wider scale projects of reconstruction and laying out of the parade ground around A.D.140, is a "strong indication" that the base was "lightly garrisoned" during this period (Boon, 1972, 45-6). As such, the reconstruction of the settlement was necessary not only due to the fire itself causing widespread destruction, but also a lack of maintenance throughout the fortress and extramural settlement due to the prioritisation of forces elsewhere in the province. Boon has further proposed that the distribution of forces through the "profitless" zone beyond Hadrian's wall would have meant that resources were significantly limited (Boon, 1972, 35-6). This again could have contributed to the lack of rapid rebuilding or maintenance at Caerleon. Not only does it appear that the resources and manpower power were not available for the amphitheatres' repair and reconstruction, but it may not have even been viewed as necessary due to decrease in military personnel stationed there over this period between A.D.122 – 140. This is also demonstrated through the lack of building during this time frame. As noted by (Evans, 2010), there were a series of alterations and construction projects conducted in the first quarter of the 2nd century. Then it was not until around A.D.140 that construction resumed as exemplified by the alterations made to the officer's house (Evans, 2010), seemingly lining up with the second phase of the amphitheatre.

The sudden focus back on the repair and reconstruction at Caerleon may further indicate the lesser commitment of the legion to the Antonine wall and other construction projects further north during the second half of the 2nd century (Boon, 1972); allowing them to redirect attention and resources back to the legionary fortress and extramural settlement. This is also indicative of the importance of the settlement and fortress at Caerleon over this period. It seems that after a significant almost two-decade interval, the legionaries returned to Caerleon

and begun a large-scale project of reconstruction and repair. The legionary fortress, as mentioned earlier was maintained through the second and most of the 3rd century and as such must have played an important role within Wales. Investment into the reconstruction, repair and even addition to the architecture of the settlement certainly embodies this, especially due to the majority of this construction work through the mid-2nd century having been done in masonry, adding a notable level of intended permanence to the monuments and administrative structures.

When considering which groups or individuals were responsible for the funding and reconstruction of the amphitheatre one may assume that just as with the original construction of the monument discussed in the previous chapter, the legionaries stationed at Caerleon seem responsible. Due to the apparent return of the legions to Wales seemingly lining up chronologically with the repair of the amphitheatre and other major administrative structures within the settlement in the mid-late 2nd century, this seems the most appropriate answer. However, unlike at the time of the amphitheatre's original construction, urban amphitheatres constructed during this period in the 2nd century such as those at Cirencester and the second phase of London Amphitheatre, were also being constructed out of masonry and were somewhat comparable in form the example at Caerleon. Nevertheless, the context of the amphitheatre, the wider restoration of the settlement and the timing of the modifications in conjunction with the return of the legionaries to the fortress suggest to me that they were responsible for this.

This is almost certainly the case when considering the groups or individuals behind the modifications made in the 3rd century between A.D.213 – 222 (Wilmott, 2008). These dates were obtained through tiles stamped LEG II AVG ANTO, the latter representing the title "*Antoniniana*" awarded by Carcalla (A.D.211 – 217) to a lot of units (Wilmott, 2008, 150. This stamp according to Wilmott then stopped being used following the "*damnatio memoriae*" of Elagabalus in A.D.222, providing the proposed dates (Wilmott, 2008, 150). The stamping on these tiles, as discussed in the previous chapter, can be viewed as a confirmation that this building work was carried out by the legionaries. It is possible that the modifications made in the early-mid-2nd century (Evans, 2010) were made by auxiliaries or groups from outside the settlement, due to a lack of direct evidence such as this. However, the construction originally and these modifications made in the 3rd century are the only examples of this type of direct evidence for amphitheatre construction in Britain and the lack of this cannot be viewed as unusual. Direct inscriptions or stamps not being attributed to the early-mid-2nd century second phase of the amphitheatre may be unusual specifically at Caerleon, however for the reasons

expressed earlier I would still propose both the second and third phases of modifications were funded in the same manner as the original construction of the monument discussed in the previous chapter (3.5).

The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Caerleon: 4.5.2

The second phase of Caerleon Amphitheatre cannot be considered a complete rebuild. Although it is significantly different from the original construction, most of the modifications were made to the entrances and barrel-vaulted passages, while the general form of the amphitheatre seems to have remained consistent through phase 2 of the monument. Wilmott has noted the addition of buttresses 1.2m x 1.8m in size, which were constructed on the north-west quadrant to replace the original pilasters (Wilmott, 2008, 149). It has further been suggested that these modifications may have been put in place to counter strains upon the timber framed seating where it was keyed into the wall "augmented by vibrations caused by an excited crowd" (Boon, 1987, 64). This is certainly possible and perhaps indicates a significant amount of use of the amphitheatre itself over its first phase of construction. This is certainly more of a practical modification, rather than an expression of changes in tastes or aesthetics. Regardless of the specific circumstances that necessitated these modifications, it is evident that those behind them intended for the amphitheatre to be used once again, with detail paid to the reinforcement of the seating bank structure.

Levels in the entrances were also raised, which resulted in the "re-flooring" and replacement of the steps. Wilmott has commented that it is odd that in each of the short axis entrances the northern stairs were filled in and walled up, this suggesting that the boxes were no longer in use (Wilmott, 2008, 150). The demolition of the barrel vaults within the chambers beneath the boxes and their subsequent replacement with flat wooden ceilings may further confirm this with the walls also being heightened with reused brick voussoirs (Wilmott, 2008, 150). Caerleon appears to be the only example within Britain with evidence of 'boxes' such as these for audience members. The reason for the modifications to the boxes are unknown, though it may be due to a lack of use of the boxes due to interest from audience members or perhaps even a lack of higher status individuals willing to use them. If we are to consider later amphitheatres to have been influenced by Caerleon, the disuse of these boxes may also explain why this feature is also not replicated at these later Romano-British amphitheatres. Additionally, this modification could have been for structural reasons; even so, the removal of the boxes would indicate that the potential structural change was deemed more important than their use. Wheeler has provided an unusual interpretation of a large stone reused

voussoir placed by the angle of the southern stair in the western entrance (Wilmott, 2008). The final change during this period was the blocking of the main ramp to the arena through the eastern entrance due to the insertion of a cupboard into the doorway of the chamber (Wilmott, 2008, 150).

I would agree with Wilmott that these modifications were certainly significant; they appear to have been for the most part practical in nature. This signifies in my view interest towards the structure and intention to make considerable use of the amphitheatre now that attention could be paid to the architectural revitalisation of the settlement as a whole and the return of its inhabitants. The primarily functional nature of these modifications may be somewhat representative of the settlement and the context in which the amphitheatre was constructed. If the theory of military construction is to be believed, perhaps motivations such as personal status and political gains may be to some extent discounted in relation to the alterations to the amphitheatre. However, the collective status or prestige associated with the Roman military would have been advanced by these modifications; perhaps for the legion who made it evident that they were responsible for the later alterations in the 3rd century, assuming the same legion was also responsible for the earlier period changes.

This was not the final phase of the amphitheatre at Caerleon with further considerable modifications made in the early 3rd century dated between A.D.213 – 222 (Wilmott, 2008, 150). Entrances A, D, E, G and H (Fig. 4.17) were all filled to the level of the exterior ground surface, allowing a "horizontal approach for spectators". A new stone staircase was also constructed into the northern half of entrance C and a block of seats was added to the east of entrance B (Wilmott, 2008, 150). At this point it appears that the majority of these additions revolved around the access to the amphitheatre for spectators. These modifications are still of a practical nature, however by increasing the flow of spectators into the amphitheatre, the monument's overall significance and impact within the settlement was enhanced perhaps allowing more people to view events giving it a wider reach within Caerleon and the surrounding region. The buttresses were replaced yet again, though these new additions were highlighted with the "lavish use" of hard white mortar (Wilmott, 2008, 150). Although this is a relatively minor detail, it may demonstrate a level of attention paid beyond pure function. Even from the original construction of Caerleon Amphitheatre, it was evident that the form and aesthetics of the monument were deeply important, primarily due to its context and the capability of those behind the project. The evident focus on function and practicality when investigated in both later phases of the amphitheatre do not detract from this. The form of the amphitheatre in terms of decoration or grandeur is not compromised by these later

modifications and given the addition of these new buttresses it appears evident that this was still somewhat important to those behind the later refurbishment projects.

A major modification during this 3rd century period was the construction of a small oblong room on the east side outside entrance F. This may have been a *nemeseum* (Wilmott, 2008, 150), bringing the monument perhaps more in line with the example far earlier at Chester when considering the physical manifestation of the religious importance of these monuments. The example at Caerleon had a stone bench on the west side and a square platform in the corner. The room was built in an "analogous position" to the example at Carnuntum in Austria which is confirmed to have been a *nemeseum* (Wilmott, 2008, 150). As such, is certainly possible that the room functioned as one at Caerleon. The probable existence of a *nemeseum* at Chester constructed over a century prior (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 156-7) could add to the probability that the room at Caerleon served a similar function. The far later addition of this possible *nemeseum* exhibits the amount of choice that was present when constructing even legionary examples of amphitheatres. The reason for this late addition is not known specifically, yet this early 3rd century period of renovation does indicate that the Caerleon Amphitheatre was still a monument of significance at this time.
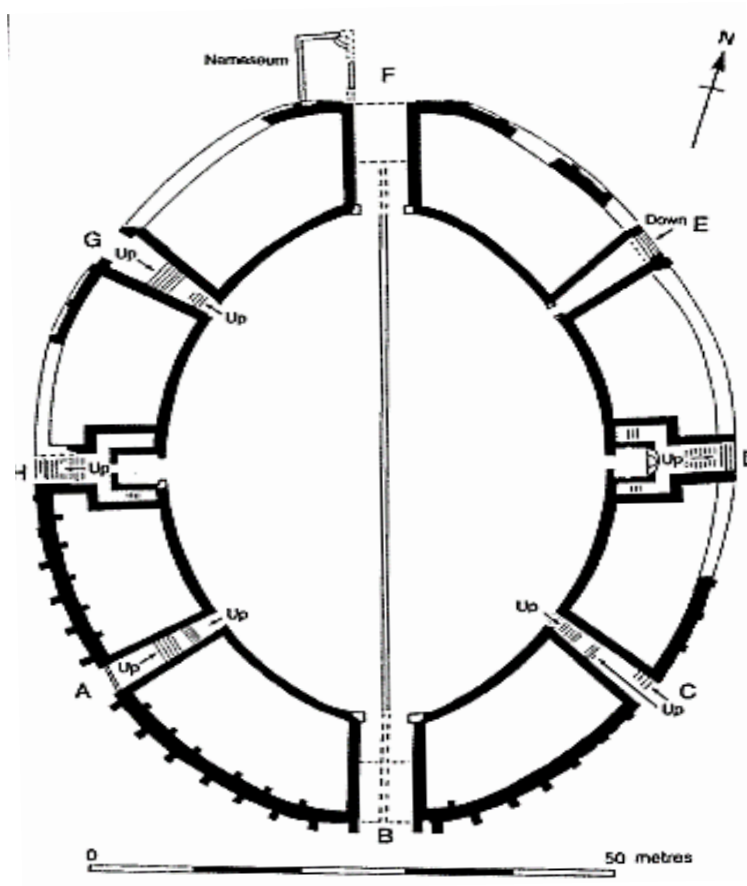
Figure 4. 17, plan of Caerleon Amphitheatre, final phase, Wilmott, 2008, 145

Conclusions: 4.5.3

Rather than total rebuilds, the second and third phases of the Caerleon Amphitheatre were modifications to the surviving monument. As I have highlighted, the majority of the works carried out over these two later periods of modification appear to have been for the most part functional and practical. The first, around A.D.140 seemingly coincides with the return of the legion to the fortress and extramural complex. The amphitheatre and many other monuments within the settlement at this point seem to have needed significant repair due to both the fire (Evans, 2010) and in my view a period of neglect. The modifications made to the amphitheatre during this period resulting in the second structural phase of Caerleon Amphitheatre are certainly significant and the alterations made that differ from the original structure would suggest that the changes were necessary in the mind of those behind the project. These repairs and modifications represent in my view a revamping of the monument; both being repaired as well as improved structurally for intended use by those returning to the fort complex.

This was a similar case when investigating the later series of modifications of the third phase of the amphitheatre. Many of the alterations that took place between A.D.213 – 222 (Wilmott, 2008, 150) in my view centre around making the access to the amphitheatre and the *cavea* easier for spectators. However, the addition of what is possibly a *nemeseum* (Wilmott, 2008, 150) is certainly interesting, especially considering another example at the other legionary amphitheatre in Britain at Chester. This further highlights the religious component to spectacle culture and amphitheatres specifically. Furthermore, the notably late addition of this further demonstrates the freedom of those behind the construction of even legionary monuments to construct them in the form's representative of their own cultural values and tastes. When considering the inspiration for these changes, in many cases it appears very unlikely that outside influence in a cultural sense was necessary, due to the functional nature of the changes. However, it is certainly possible that the addition of the *nemeseum* was an idea sparked by outside influences, perhaps from the example at Chester.

4.6: Chester Amphitheatre

4.6.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

The later phases of the amphitheatre at Chester were also subject to the 2004-6 excavations funded by English Heritage and Chester City Council. As noted in section 3.7, Wilmott and Garner's report (2017) on Chester Amphitheatre in my view provides one of the most detailed accounts of any Romano-British amphitheatre in relation to the immediate context and

architecture of the monument. Especially of note is the attempted reconstruction of the Chester Amphitheatre that has been implemented throughout this section, perhaps providing a unique visual insight into the potential scale and features of the monument.

Despite the multiple phases of construction considered in the previous chapter at Chester (3.7) the work on this amphitheatre appears to have continued during the mid-late 2nd century (Wilmott, 2008, 137-40). There seems to be a lot of emphasis placed on the architectural magnificence of this amphitheatre. This second phase is considered by Wilmott and Garner to be "the largest and most elaborate example of this type of building in Roman Britain"; further suggesting the amphitheatre was in an "architectural class" beyond that of others throughout Britain, though it does still share features with many urban and military examples (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 162). Considering the extent of the modifications made through the second 2nd I would agree with this sentiment. Even when compared to the most suitable contextual and architectural comparison in Britain at Caerleon, Chester is notably more extravagant in an architectural sense.

In a very similar manner to Caerleon, Chester also remained seemingly an important legionary settlement throughout the 2nd century. This is despite of the apparent recession of Roman forces in Wales noted by Phipps (2016, 19) which appears more applicable to auxiliary forts. Neither Chester nor Caerleon were dismantled physically or permanently abandoned. This could have been for a multitude of reasons, despite the larger reconciliation of Wales, these legionary fortresses more than any auxiliary settlements would still be viewed and act as physical manifestations of Roman and military power throughout the 2nd century, though this could to some extent fade through generations. Even considering the removal of many auxiliary forts through Wales as the frontier was pushed up further north, it is understandable that the region was not entirely ungarrisoned. Despite this, as discussed in the case of Caerleon in the previous chapter the settlement and fortress seemingly did suffer a period of neglect as the legions were moved north to assist with various construction projects (Boon, 1972, 45-6). The bulk of dating evidence for the modifications made to the amphitheatre of Chester from artefacts indicates that the building is "at least post-Hadrianic" (2017, 208). Additionally, they appear to agree with Boon's proposal in relation to the majority of the legionary garrison being absent for the middle two quarters of the 2nd century while undertaking building projects to the north; further stating that it was only after the campaigns of Severus that the fortress was recommissioned fully (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 208-9). In this instance, the situation at Chester contextually may have been similar to that at Caerleon. To

what extent this was related to the reconstruction of the amphitheatre is an issue that I shall consider throughout this section.

Mason (2012, 175) has further suggested that over this period in the 2nd century the fortress as a whole was equipped with a wide range of buildings one might expect in a settlement. At this stage the amphitheatre's second phase is "tentatively" included within the Severan works (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 208-9). This would place the date of this second phase of the amphitheatre to the same period as the general refurbishment of the legionary fortress itself (Wheeler, Wheeler, 1928, 151-4). The working life of the amphitheatre suggested to be around 80 years. This is primarily due to the dark soil and patch stone flooring laid over the top identified by Thompson (1976) which would indicate the abandonment and change of use. If this was the case, the second phase of the amphitheatre may have been a part of an overall revamp of the fortress as a whole, similar to the example at Caerleon and many other urban settlements over this period.

There is a suitable amount of archaeological evidence to confirm this theory in relation to other building projects around the fortress and settlement at Chester during this period. Mason (1987, 166-8) does make it clear that there was a significant improvement in the "quality of life" within the *canabae* specifically over the early to mid-2nd century. This is represented architecturally by the emergence of stone or partially stone houses specifically, rather than public monuments during this early 2nd century period. There does appear from the record to be a lapse in construction at Chester between around A.D.130 – 150. One that is especially noteworthy in relation to the possible period in which the fortress was lightly garrisoned was the *Mansio.* A stone phase of this monument was begun around A.D.120 though work did not progress past the laying of the foundations with the site being seemingly used as a rubbish dump between A.D.130 – 180. The monument was finally completed around A.D.180 and remained in use until the late 3rd century (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 149-150). The refurbishment and modifications made to the amphitheatre and other public buildings such as the *Mansio* appear to have been more in line chronologically with the works later in the 2nd century as outlined earlier.

It is worth considering if this was the case, why the modifications made to the amphitheatre at Chester seemingly occurred perhaps half a century later than those at Caerleon if the reasons behind this process were the same at each settlement, being the return of the legionaries after a period of absence. These two fortresses, despite being legionary in nature, were not intrinsically linked as to some extent demonstrated by the differing architecture present within

each settlement. There is no reason to assume both those stationed at Caerleon and Chester would have been assigned to the exact same projects and would have been able to return to their respective stations at the same time. As I discussed in the previous section, one of the main works that the legion stationed at Caerleon were assigned too was Hadrian's Wall (Boon, 1972), the construction of which begun around A.D.122 (Breeze, Dobson, 2000). While the legionaries appear to have returned to Caerleon around A.D.140. However, this may have not been the case with the legionaries from Chester. Boon (1972) noted that the seeming return of the legion to Caerleon indicated a lesser commitment of the legions to the Antonine wall which was under construction by A.D.142 (Robertson, 1960). However, this is only really indicative of a lesser commitment by that group specifically, those stationed at Chester could have been called to continue this other project later into the 2nd century or others, explaining the later period of absences at the legionary fortress there. Specifically, the Twentieth Legion, also noted by Boon to have been committed to the building work throughout the province during this period (Boon, 1972, 45-6), may have been present at Chester as well and later working on the Antonine Wall. Swan (2000) notes studies of utilitarian pottery from the Antonine Wall found a small quantity of "locally made" vessels with North African affinities similar to those found at Chester at the Holt work-depot made by the Twentieth Legion (Swan, 2000, 399).

When considering the motivations for the second phase of Chester Amphitheatre, one could somewhat safely assume that due to a supposed period of neglect or lack of use through the mid-2nd century, the monument would be in need of a certain level or repair or maintenance. This as I argued was very much the case with the amphitheatre in a similar situation at Caerleon, perhaps the main difference contextually at Chester being the lack of evident fire damage to the amphitheatre. The modifications made to the amphitheatre at Chester are certainly more significant in my view. The monument was extended and enlarged considerably, a new outer wall was added measuring almost 2m thick and constructed 1.8m outside the first structures outer wall (Wilmott, 2008, 141). The 4 entrances were retained, while the upper part of the auditorium could be accessed by the addition of *vomitoria* and vaulted stairways within the structure led spectators to the face of the *cavea* (Wilmott, 2008, 141-2). The second phase of the Chester Amphitheatre was constructed "symmetrically around its predecessor" and appears to have been planned to use the same centre lines as the first monument (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 195-8). Additionally, various features were incorporated into the second phase, similar to Caerleon Amphitheatre, rather than being a total rebuild such as London Amphitheatre. The arena and arena wall were partially "renewed" with the

nemeseum incorporated into the second phase at Chester. The main new elements according to Wilmott and Garner are the outer wall and the 12 entrances created by the addition of the *vomitoria* (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 162).

This is certainly comparable to the example at Caerleon, the modifications made seemingly to increase capacity, the ability of spectators to access the *cavea* and the overall functionality of the monument. It appears that this was to a more significant extent than at Caerleon, especially when considering the overall enlargement of Chester Amphitheatre during this phase. If the amphitheatre was remodelled during the wider Severan construction works at the fortress and chronologically lined up with the return of the legionaries to the settlement it may be viewed as an attempt to repair and further renovate the amphitheatre for a new period of use over the late 2nd and 3rd centuries. The elevation architecturally of Chester Amphitheatre even more so than the example at Caerleon is more revealing of the freedom of those behind the remodelling of these monuments. There is a myriad of possibilities when considering why Chester Amphitheatre was transformed to such a significant extent, in excess of what could be seen as just necessary repairs and remodelling; this again shall be analysed in specific detail in section 4.5.2. The motivations for these changes may indicate the importance of the amphitheatre specifically to those behind the reconstruction. This is demonstrated though the sheer amount of resources these individuals or groups willingly allocated to these modifications of the amphitheatre.

The issue of which groups were behind the funding, planning and construction of the second phase of the Chester Amphitheatre is perhaps not as clear cut as at Caerleon due to a lack of specific inscriptions at Chester. One could suggest that the nature of the modifications, as well as the overall form of the amphitheatre, would be heavily suggestive of military, more specifically legionary construction. Considering my earlier conclusions in relation to the first phase of the amphitheatre (1A and 1B) as discussed in the previous chapter (3.7), the second phase using the same centres and initial layout as the first may suggest a similar source of construction by legionaries and members of the military. Wilmott and Garner have furthered this proposal, suggesting that the surveyors could have worked back from the form of the first phase of the amphitheatre to work out the original survey method (Wilmott, Garner, 2017). Furthermore, Mason has proposed that the calculations may have been originally recorded as an archive (2000a, 123). Perhaps more convincing is the chronology of the second phase of the amphitheatre, seemingly lining up with the apparent return of the legionaries and the wider Severan construction works at the fortress. Again, these two factors are not necessarily separate. The timing of the modifications, context of the amphitheatre, the architecture itself

and with significantly convincing evidence of legionary construction at the most comparable example at Caerleon Amphitheatre would all lead me to suggest that the second phase of Chester Amphitheatre was also constructed by members of the military.

When considering the funding for the second phase of the Chester Amphitheatre, following from the probability of legionary or at least military construction, logically it could be assumed that the same was the case for the funding, similar to Caerleon Amphitheatre. The only other realistic possibility is that the modifications could have been funded by individual high-ranking members of the military stationed at Chester out of their own pockets, rather than through a general military budget or by the state. The magnitude of the work that took place at Chester would have cost a significantly larger amount than at Caerleon. This again may have simply come down to choice and how much individuals were willing to allocate to the amphitheatre specifically or even how much was available overall at the time of the projects. However, due to the context of the monument I would still propose funding was sourced through the military; the allocation of these funds and the architecture of the amphitheatre display the freedom involved with the construction of public buildings even within primarily military settlements.

4.6.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Chester:

The complexity and grandeur of the architecture of Chester Amphitheatre has been emphasized thus far thoughout this section as well as by Wilmott and Garner (2017). The transformation architecturally of Chester Amphitheatre during this late 2nd century period was dramatic, in my view more so than Caerleon. I think Chester Amphitheatre over this period can be considered the most elaborate and impressive in Roman Britain. One of the major modifications that I have mentioned is the overall enlargement of the amphitheatre, both physically outwards with the new outer wall and seemingly in terms of the audience capacity (Wilmott, Garner, 2017). The enlargement of the Chester Amphitheatre as well as the transformation of the entrances with the addition of *vomitoria* were the most significant alterations when considering the motivations behind this project. These modifications appear primarily designed to enhance the experience of the audience, both allowing more people to view the events and spectacles on display and easing the methods of access to the *cavea* for people. However, the enlargement and enhanced capacity of the monument should not be misconstrued as purely functional or practical alterations. The physical enlargement of the monument alongside further aesthetic architectural modifications would have still represented status and prowess of the military to those in the surrounding region or passing through the

settlement. This is perhaps even more significant due to the exceptional nature of Chester Amphitheatre architecturally. Even through this later period the monument, due to its context, may still have been viewed by those in the surrounding region and communities as a representation of the Roman military administration. Though it is worth noting even though the amphitheatre was arguably the most complex architecturally in Britain, the transformation into the second phase is not as dramatic as total masonry rebuilds elsewhere, such as the second phase of the London Amphitheatre.

A great deal of the modifications as mentioned revolved around the experience of the spectators, including the manner in which they entered into the monument. It has often been assumed that there was a major entrance on the western side of the building to match the one located on the east. However, it has been pointed out that the "proximity of the west side to Souters Lane ravine" makes this impossible architecturally. Thus, a standard *vomitorum* was substituted for the gate in this position (2017, 195-8). It should be noted that this is not seemingly that unusual, with multiple amphitheatres throughout the empire having a similar plan. A prominent example is Pompeii amphitheatre, also having multiple entrances to the *cavea* on one side of the long axis without one mirroring it to the other side due to the monument being constructed into the cliffside (Fig. 4. 18) (Bomgardner, 2013). In relation to the capacity of the amphitheatre, as well as the access of the spectators, changes were made directly to the *cavea* and the addition of the *vomitoria.* There were 8 seating *gradus* each 410mm high and 790mm deep, the angle of the seats from the *podium* being 26.43 degrees. It has been further identified that the angle of the seating rake is "projected to the *praecintio*" and that the cross section of the *cavea* contained a "near perfect isosceles triangle" (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 200-4). I would agree with Wilmott and Garner who have further proposed that it is "highly unlikely" that this was coincidental, this section arguably was part of the calculations of the original architect (2017, 200).
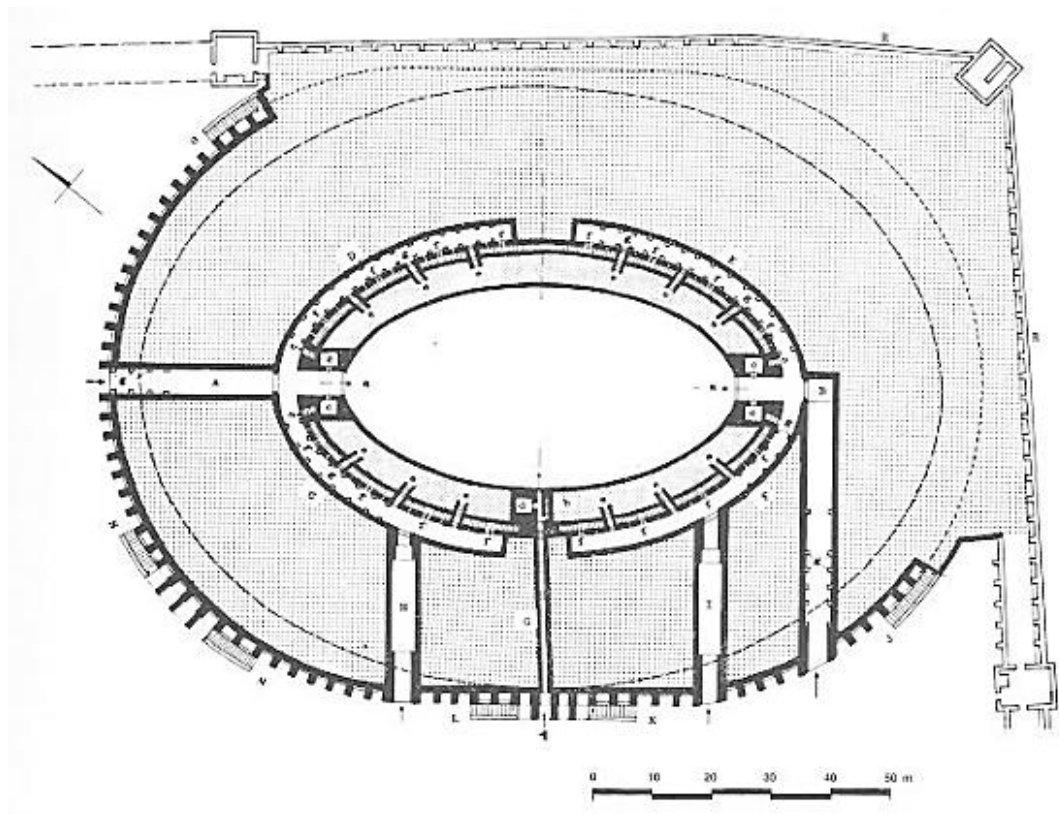
Figure 4. 18, plan of the Pompeii amphitheatre features below the *cavea*, Bomgardner, 2018, 45

A good deal of investigation has been dedicated to the seating and audience experience at Chester Amphitheatre. The amphitheatre has both a *summa cavea* and *ima cavea* separated by the *praecintio.* The *summa cavea* was on the same angle as the *ima cavea* considering the height of the outer wall provides enough space for 9 *gradus* and a narrow ambulatory at the top of the *cavea* (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 200). Bomgardner (2000) has however suggested the possibility of a steeper seating rake, therefore going higher than the outer wall. His suggestion is that this may have been provided to improve the view of those seated there. Wilmott and Garner rather have suggested the presence of a parapet around the ambulatory that was 1.2m high. This would supposedly be high enough for any safety required while simultaneously allowing a vantage point to view the "river and surrounding countryside" (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 200). One especially useful aspect that comes from this detailed investigation of the *cavea* of Chester Amphitheatre is the possible capacity of the monument. The reconstruction of this second phase at Chester gives a seating space of 3166.87m. Wilmott and Garner (2017, 200) use an approximate average shoulder width for males in modern statistics of 450mm. According to these authors, this would give a potential capacity for 7037 spectators.

Bomgardner (2000) meanwhile used a proposed measurement of 400mm giving an even larger possible capacity of 7917. A further allowance due to the arguable function of the rear parapet ambulatory allowing individuals to stand and watch, again using the 450mm unit results in a further possible 620 people. (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 206-7). I would agree with Wilmott and Garner (2017) that an appropriate range for its capacity of between 7500 – 8000 seems probable.
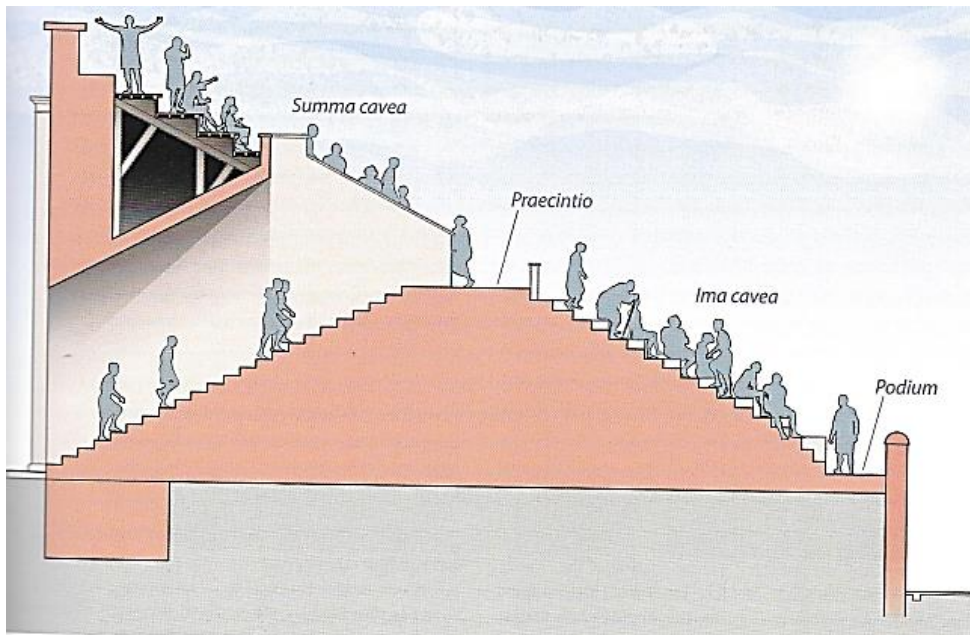
Figure 4. 19, representation of the seating back on the second phase of Chester Amphitheatre, identifiying the *Summa Cavea, Praecintio, Ima Cavea* and *Podium*, Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 199.
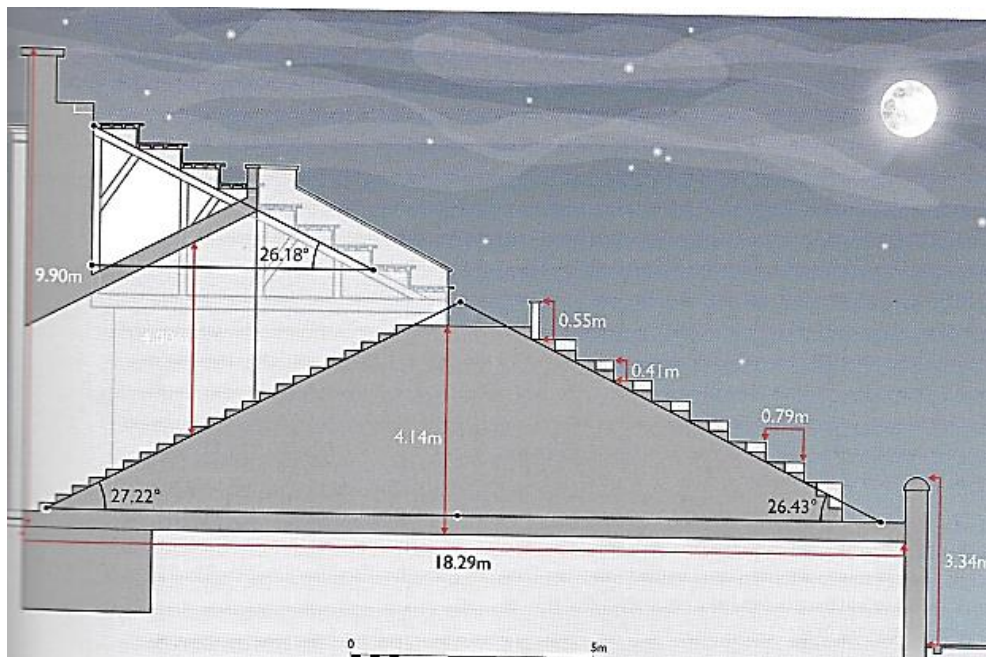
Figure 4. 20, reconstruction of a section through the *cavea* and a *vomitorium*, identifying the measurements including the basal isosceles triangle, Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 199.

The main northern entrance (entrance 12) (Fig.4. 21) was a broad funnel shaped passage leading directly into the arena at a downwards gradient of 1.8m. This passage ran beneath the *summa cavea* and would have probably had a barrel vault perhaps ending on the line of the low balustrade defining the *praecintio* (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 200). Considering the experience of the audience a feature identified by Wilmott and Garner (2017) in line with the arena end of this entrance passage was a sill for a "two-leaf timber gate" (2017, 201-2). The measurement of this gate means that when it was open each leaf was the right size to block the *podium* stairs. This would provide a barrier for the audience while animals were brought into the arena (Wilmott, Garner, 2017). At this stage it is certainly interesting and somewhat impressive, demonstrating the complex nature of the architecture and engineering that went into the construction of the second phase of Chester Amphitheatre.

Entrance 3, the main eastern entrance of the amphitheatre was vastly different; it comprised of three passages; the middle was similar to entrance 12 leading into the arena. However, the outer edge was "flanked by two doors" opening into individual side passages (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 202-3). These side passages did not seem to open into the arena but allowed people to access the *podium* without having to climb (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 202-4). These have been identified as additional *vomitoria* access to just the *podium,* and as such considered to be "privileged" seating providing the best views possible for specifically those of high social status. This may even provide a contrast to the example of Caerleon where the boxes (used by the highest-status spectators) seem to have been decommissioned. Entrance 3 is considered to be the main entrance point for higher ranking spectators who could be viewed from all parts of the building (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 202-4). Similar style entrances have also been noted at the Amphitheater-Sichelengraben, Augst (Hufschmid, 2009, 114), the military amphitheatre at *Carnuntum* (Marr, Roring, 2016) and at Avenches (Bridel, 2004, 213).
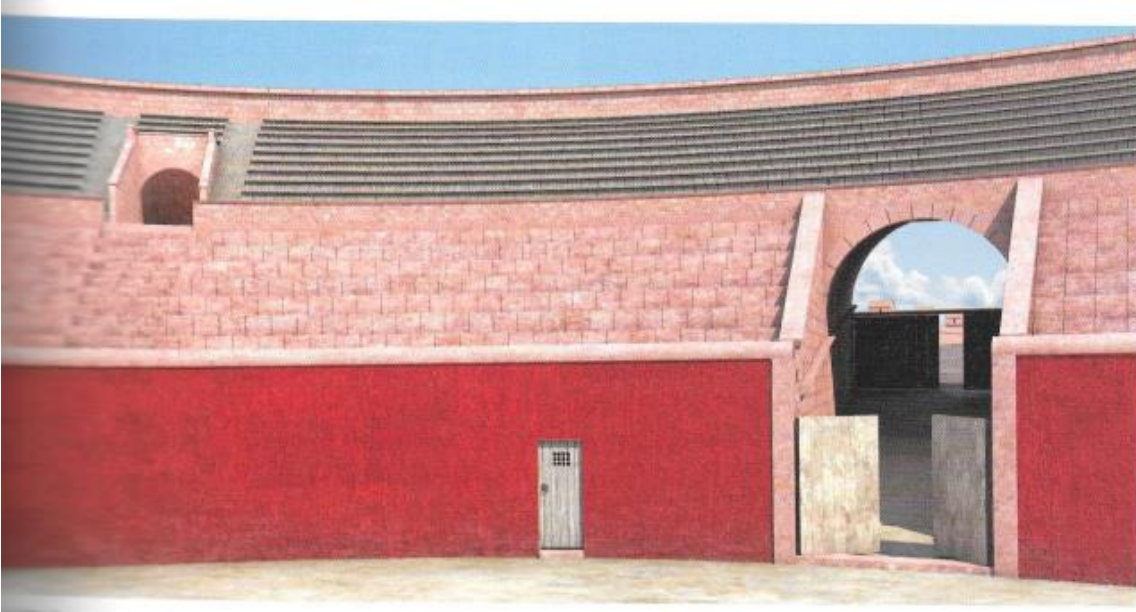
Figure 4. 21, reconstructed view of the main north entrance (Entrance 12) by Wilmott and Garner, view from the arena. *Nemeseum* door noted to the right of the main entrance, Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 201.
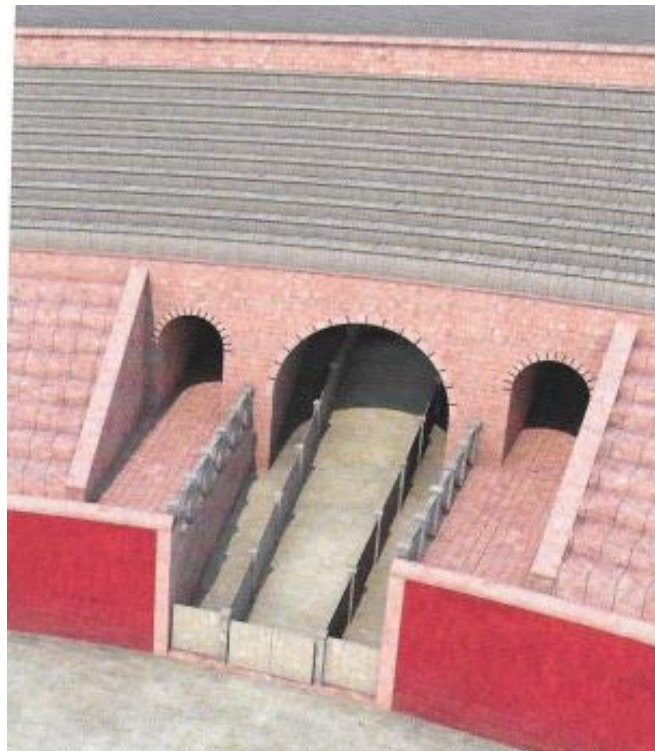
Figure 4. 22, reconstructed view of main eastern entrance (Entrance 3) by Wilmott and Garner. This shows the side passages leading to the *podium*, Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 203.

Figure 4. 23, reconstructed view of the exterior of Entrance 3 showing the side doors connecting the main and side passages, Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 203.

The modifications made to the entrances do not appear to be just functional. The pilasters at the entrances have especially deep foundations and as such have been proposed to also function as buttresses. Three pilasters between each pair of entrances do not appear deeply founded and have been suggested to have more staged as decoration (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 204). The specifics of the decorations appear based primarily on the most recent reconstruction of the amphitheatre by Wilmott and Garner, suggesting overall rather simplistic decorations to the monument. Proposing that the ornamentation was "very plain" and not especially elaborate such as half-round pilasters and Corinthian capitals (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 204). While not strictly considered decoration, two coping stone inscriptions have been identified very close to the arena wall which they presumably fell from close to the east entrance. The more complete example reading *SERANO LOVCS* (RIB III, 3157) (Fig. 4.24). Wright (1976, 186) has proposed that this can be read as "Seranus' place" in that identifying a specific seat. However, the fact that this is inscribed on a coping stone rather than a bench has led it to be recently questioned (Tomlin *et al.*, 2009, 159). Nevertheless, coping stones inscribed with names often combined with the word *locus* have been identified throughout the empire at Arles, Trier, Nimes, Sicily and Syracuse (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 207-8). This may suggest that this inscription was in fact commemorating notable individuals, perhaps benefactors and their 'place' in the *cavea*. The second inscription found (RIB III, 3154) may even give some weight to this proposition as it reads *ET FEC* translating too "and built it"

(Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 207). This has also been called into question by the editors of the RIB, proposing that this was a quarry inscription with the rest being lost when it was formed into a coping stone. However, Wilmott and Garner have also provided an interesting parallel at the Pompeii Amphitheatre, coping stones bearing the inscriptions commemorating benefactors who paid for the construction of parts of the seating (2017, 207).

It is difficult to know for certain which of these cases is true, especially due to the partial nature of the inscriptions. The parallels across the empire are somewhat convincing, though the individual nature of these amphitheatres must be considered. In my view, the first inscription is more convincing in relation to its purpose, marking out and commemorating an individual. This is mainly due to the surviving wording being more suggestive of the intention of the inscription than the second example of *ET FEC* (RIB III, 3154). Additionally, the lack of convincing alternatives in relation to the first inscription (RIB III, 3157) only makes its intentions as proposed by Wilmott and Garner (2017) more convincing. The second could still be referring to Seranus, another individual or even a legion as was the case at Caerleon, though due to the incomplete inscription the possibility of it being a quarry inscription remains very possible in my view. Wilmott and Garner have rightly added that the location of these coping stones close to the east entrance only reinforces their earlier interpretation of the entrance providing important spectators access to the *podium* (2017, 208); perhaps making a favourable interpretation of both inscriptions more attractive.

Figure 4. 24, coping stone inscribed *SERANO LOCUS*, Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 190.

4.6.3 Conclusions:

While the amphitheatre at Chester is comparable to the legionary example at Caerleon, the architectural complexity and individuality of the amphitheatre, especially in Britain makes it stand out as one of the most magnificent examples of the province. I firmly believe that this second phase at Chester was the result of legionary construction and military funding due to the context and complexity of the monument, but also due to the incorporation of many of the same features of the original military constructed amphitheatre into this redesign. While I accept that due to the standardisation of masonry construction in relation to Romano-British amphitheatres in the 2nd century one could suggest that individuals outside of the military or without legionary engineering knowledge could have been responsible for this later phase at Chester, I would propose that the architecture of the monument makes this unlikely.

The remodelling of the monument in the late 2nd century seems to have been a part of a wider project during the reign of Severus. Though this dating is uncertain as pointed out by Wilmott and Garner (2017, 208-9) it lines up well seemingly with other projects within the settlement and fortress itself and explains the apparent period of absence of the legion from Chester. This was in a similar vein to the example at Caerleon, though this was later in the 2nd century. The legionaries from Chester perhaps worked on later projects throughout the province, specifically the Antonine Wall. Especially after the suggestion that the legions from Caerleon worked on Hadrian's wall and then less so on the Antonine example (Boon, 1972). The motivations behind the remodelling of both legionary amphitheatres I would suggest are very similar, with many of the alterations based on the capacity of the amphitheatre and then the experience of the audience, both when seated and assisting individuals in entering into the monument. The nature of the modifications would further indicate an intention of use, while the overall physical enlargement of the monument would also be indicative of the status and engineering prowess of the military to those visiting or inhabiting the surrounding area of the legionary fortress. The improvements in the entrances and seating would have surely not gone unnoticed by those who experienced events and displays at the amphitheatre whether visiting the settlement or from the surrounding area. In this instance, contrasted to the most comparable amphitheatre at Caerleon, the modifications focused on the higher seating banks at Chester appear to focus upon enhancing the experience of spectators of higher status.

4.7: Silchester Amphitheatre

4.7.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

Original excavations by Fulford (1989) still seem to be the primary source of knowledge in relation to the later phases of the Silchester Amphitheatre. As noted in section 3.3, more recent attention paid to the town as a whole has provided fruitful research and analysis of the development of the settlement during the Roman occupation. Fulford's recent publication in 2021 (*Silchester Revealed*) has provided an in depth and comprehensive view of the evolution of the town culturally, politically, and economically over this later period after A.D.100. The settlement as a whole and the amphitheatre specifically have been subject to significant academic interest especially by Fulford since the late 20th century, with a solid amount of available information and publication. However, it must be noted that much of this is still theoretical and must be extrapolated from the excavated areas of the town.

The amphitheatre at Silchester was subject to multiple phases of modifications and rebuilding during the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Unlike other amphitheatres both originally constructed and subject to rebuilding over this period, the second phase of Silchester Amphitheatre continued to be primarily of timber construction (Wilmott, 2008. 100). In terms of scale, the modifications made during the second phase of Silchester Amphitheatre are comparable with those of the military amphitheatres at Chester and Caerleon. The amphitheatre was later rebuilt entirely in masonry for a third phase (Wilmott, 2008, 101-3). Some of the primary issues to consider throughout this section are the reasons behind what I would consider as a choice to continue the use of timber despite the wider spread of masonry work for the construction of amphitheatres during this period, and the further reasons behind the eventual 'upgrade' to masonry construction for the monuments' third phase. As discussed in the previous chapter (3.2), it seems apparent that those behind the original construction of the amphitheatre were not afraid to deviate from what was considered a more traditional Roman type of monument.

The proposed date seemingly accepted for the second phase of Silchester Amphitheatre is the mid-2nd century (Fulford, 1989, 167). The town appears to have been undergoing a period of urbanisation and perhaps architectural transformation during this period. After the death of Cogidubnus and the construction of the first forum basilica and the implementation of the street grid (Fulford, 2021), changes were still being made well into the 2nd century. This included the metalling of peripheral lines under Hadrian around A.D.130 (Boon, 1974, 54-7) and the mammoth task of constructing the inner defences, consisting of a bank and ditch that

seems to have been undertaken about A.D.160-170 (Boon, 1974, 65-70). Even later at the end of the 2nd century a new defensive circuit was constructed (Fulford, 2021, 130). The scale of the defences is impressive, it has been calculated that the volume of material needed was around 40,000m^3 and building the wall alone would have taken perhaps 5-10 years (Fulford, 2021, 134). One explanation for this is that these defences were a response to what Fulford describes as the greatest war in the reign of Commodus (A.D.176-193) (Fulford, 2021, 130). Another may have been the assassination of Commodus in A.D.193, creating a struggle for control of the empire. The exact dating of the defences is not known, but the nature of them is consistent with "a rapid response to an emergency" (Fulford, 2021, 130). Whilst this is not directly related to the remodelling of the amphitheatre it does demonstrate the capabilities of those within Silchester in terms of construction. Furthermore, there is no sign of assistance from the provincial government according to Boon (1974) confirming the capability of those within Silchester.

Economically the importance of Silchester in relation to trade, as noted in Section 3.3, does not seem to have diminished over the 1st century. The wealth of the town and its people seem to have been mainly derived from country estates, rather than occupations developed within the town itself (Fulford, 2021, 120). Silchester during the 2nd century was a great consumer of pottery, most of the towns drinking vessels and tableware were imported, chiefly from the workshops at Lezoux in the centre of France. Alongside this, beakers decorated with hunting scenes were imported from the Argonne region of northern France and from Cologne on the Rhine. There was also a vast amount of local pottery from Alice Holt Forest 15 miles to the south-east of the town (Fulford, 2021, 121). This industry developed around or just before the conquest of A.D.43, becoming Silchesters main domestic supplier by the end of the 1st century (Fulford, 2021, 121). This mix of domestic and imported goods is thought to have also been the case with other forms of material culture such as glassware. With its wide-reaching communications, the town was also a place where estate owners would come to sell their harvest (Fulford, 2021, 121-2).

The 2nd century seems to have allowed Silchester to flourish within the Romano-British administration. The apparently consistent period of construction over the 2nd century at Silchester may have been a result of the change in administration after the death of Cogidubnus and the town reaching its "peak" (Fulford, 2021). Those now in control of the town having their own preferences and ideas of how the settlement should be urbanised and maintained. The remodelling of the amphitheatre may have been a part of this process and Fulford (1989) suggests the first timber phase would have "no doubt" needed repairs by this

period. He bases this proposal on the species of timber used, concluding that even if a more durable species was used such as oak, by the time of the modifications, repairs would still be needed (Fulford, 1989, 167). Work was carried out by the Princes Risborough Laboratory considering the decay rate of various wood species (Farmer, 1972, 8). If we extrapolate the findings from these works Fulford has proposed that oak posts of 20cm^2 could last between 60 and 100 years before failing. As such the arena posts being 24-26m^2 could have lasted around 120 years at most (Fulford, 1989, 167-9). As such it is "not unreasonable" to consider the monument in need of repair by the mid-2nd century (Fulford, 1989, 167-8). I would agree with this proposal, especially considering the nature of the other construction projects around Silchester during this period. Compared to other Romano-British towns during this period in the early 2nd century prior to the construction of the defences, little is known about Silchester (Clarke, Fulford, 2011, 3-5). However, it does seem evident that construction continued through this period, perhaps furthering the process of urbanisation after the death of Cogidubnus.

The proposal of the modifications and remodelling of the amphitheatre being the result of necessary repairs is convincing. Even if this was the case, as for the amphitheatres at Chester and Caerleon the alterations made were still a significant choice and act as an expression of the desires and needs of those behind the project. The monument being in need of repairs provided a perfect opportunity for these modifications to be made. The alterations required in order to create the second phase of the amphitheatre primarily centred around the arena of the amphitheatre (Fulford, 1989, 29). The circular plan of the arena was modified into a more common place oval shape measuring 37.5m x 44.4m (Fulford, 1989, 29-30). The oval or elliptical shape of the arena during this period provides the monument with many structural parallels throughout Britain and the empire as a whole. One must question the reasons behind this modification specifically and the choice of using timber again despite the wider spready of masonry construction during this period. It should further be noted that due to this transformation of the arena multiple other aspects of the monument needed to be altered to accommodate it. This involved a new retaining wall outside the line of the original version from the first phase, significant modifications made to the arena wall and the remodelling of both the north and south entrances (Wilmott, 2008, 100-1). It is evident that this period of modification was by no means a small-scale project and I would maintain that the main objective of this project was the reshaping of the arena, the other modifications made appear to have occurred as a result of this. The choice to transform the shape of the arena in this way and the evident work put into the project reflect a change in both aesthetic preferences and

the intended uses of the monument. I discussed previously how Silchester Amphitheatre stood out due to its unique almost circular arena and whilst an oval is a more traditional and widespread choice when it comes to the form of amphitheatres, it is further worth considering to what extent this would still have been the case by this period in the mid-2nd century. One must consider to what extent by this period this shape would be considered 'Roman' by those behind the second phase of Silchester Amphitheatre.
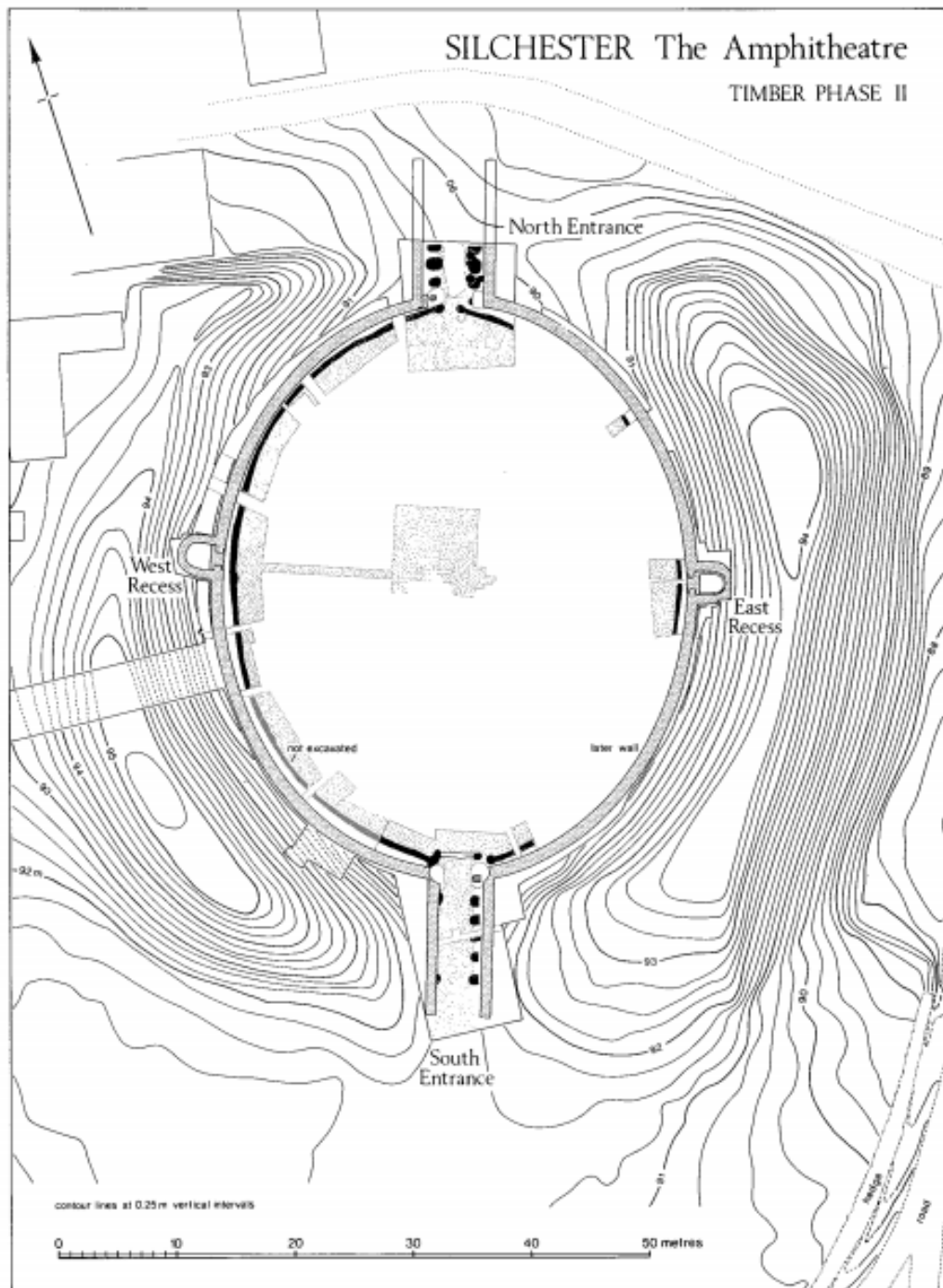
Figure 4. 25, plan of the timber phase 2 of the Silchester Amphitheatre, Fulford, 1989, 28.

If we accept that the central goal of this series of modifications was, aside from the seemingly necessary repairs, to transform the shape of the arena, the question of motivations is very important. The method used over the course of both the second and third phases of Silchester Amphitheatre was the 'four circle method', as mentioned in the previous chapter (Fig. 4.26) (Wilmott, 2008). The other two main examples in Britain that we can be somewhat sure made us of this technique even in their early phases were the military examples at Chester and Caerleon. If these indeed acted as direct influence for the transformation of the arena at Silchester, it may give further credence to this idea that this was carried out because it was considered more traditionally 'Roman'. This may also be representative of the town becoming recognised as a legitimate local government after the death of Cogidubnus with this specific project providing such a wide range of structural parallels with other amphitheatres throughout Roman Britain and the empire. Of course, this hinges entirely on the probability of the second phase at Silchester being influenced by these military amphitheatres which cannot be proven. The main other possibility in relation to the use of the 'four circle method' is that individuals from outside Britain or perhaps other settlements within the province were responsible for the transfer of knowledge making the transformation of the arena at Silchester possible. The idea of the amphitheatre now being more traditionally 'Roman' in form is still relevant here, regardless of where the knowledge originated from when considering the nature of cultural change and the provincial preferences towards amphitheatres. Due to the probable normalisation of this arena shape throughout Britain during this later period, this could simply be viewed still as Romano-British and no longer reflect traditionally Roman architecture in the minds of those behind the project.

The wider context within Silchester during this period provides a useful insight into the funding of this amphitheatre. The lack of governmental assistance is highlighted by Boon (1974) in relation to the defences as mentioned earlier. One would assume that if a project such as those, arguably more 'necessary' in certain terms than the modification of the amphitheatre did not obtain provincial government assistance, neither would public projects. Furthermore, the urban context and motivation discussed throughout this section would lead me to suggest the modifications were funded and carried out by individuals or groups living within Silchester at the time. The necessity of repairs as discussed earlier as well as the evidence of other large scale construction projects within the context of Silchester after the death of Cogidubnus provides a perhaps ideal situation for those willing to invest into the architecture of the town, especially in terms of gaining political status now that the town as fully absorbed into the Roman administration.
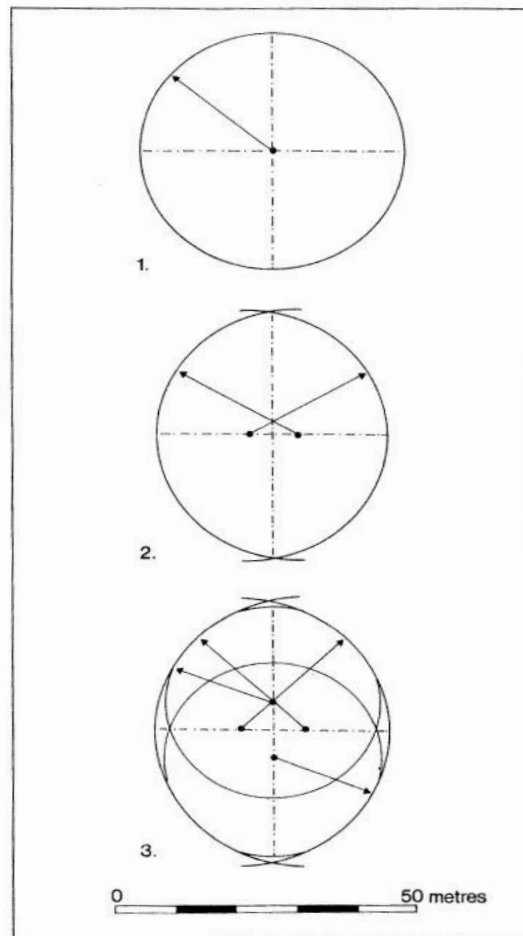
Figure 4. 26, Three phases of the arena at Silchester from circular to oval, Wilmott, 2008, 64.

The scale of some of these projects over the 2nd century, especially the defences as described earlier, would suggest that those within responsible were perfectly capable of funding smaller projects such as the modifications to the amphitheatre if they wished. Additionally, the prominence of Silchester over the 1st century as highlighted by Cunliffe (2012, 18-19) primary based on its location, perhaps continued into the 2nd century, meaning that the funding for widespread building projects throughout this period may have been readily available to those within the town. Furthermore, the choice to use timber again as the primary building material could have been more cost-effective depending on the supply of wood or alternatively masonry. The example at Cirencester Amphitheatre having been constructed into a quarry (Holbrook, 1998, 147) demonstrates this to a more extreme extent than most in Britain. Fulford (1989) has proposed that the second timber phase at Silchester would have used "only marginally" less timber than the first phase (1989, 169-170). Additionally, Fulford suggests that that it is likely second-hand timbers were also used (1989), most probably those still salvageable from the first phase. It seems that it would be far more cost effective and

convenient to maintain the timber construction of the monument, rather than a total masonry rebuild such as at London. It is also worth examining the notion that masonry construction was 'to be expected' or in some way required even during this later period. While it is the case that the majority of amphitheatres by this stage were either constructed originally in masonry or rebuilt as such, the continued use of timber for the Silchester Amphitheatre appears to have been primarily down to a choice. Just as with the original phase of the monument and its unusual near circular arena, the use of timber does not necessarily represent a lack of skill or capability, but rather a deliberate choice by those behind the project.

The masonry phase of the monument was not constructed until around A.D.250 according to Wilmott (2008, 100). Again, this may have been due to the decay of the timbers from the second timber phase, especially if some of the original timbers were reused. The masonry reconstruction even under the guise of 'repairs' is certainly significant. The use of masonry during this stage may very much represent, as I have suggested with other examples, an implied permanence to the monument, especially if the required repairs were due to a similar reason as the last phase of the amphitheatre. This is especially significant at Silchester due to the much later date of use than previous examples. Dating evidence indicates "use at least intermittently" up to the mid-4th century (Wilmott, 2008, 103). The choice of masonry may also be due to a further normalisation of stone construction throughout Silchester during this even later period. Work by Fulford and Clarke (2011) relating to *Insula IX* in a central position close to the forum-basilica between the 2nd and 3rd centuries (2011, 326) has provided much needed insight into the construction projects of later Silchester. However, to what extent the construction and cultural items located here are representative of the town as a whole is still in question. They do seem to place significant focus on the "increase of built environment" within this insula over the later periods between A.D.150 – 250 (Clarke, Fulford, 2011). This estimated increase is around 70%, including both masonry and timber structures (Clarke, Fulford, 2011, 349). If this was extrapolated throughout the town, it would represent a massive increase in building work and general urbanisation. Furthermore, it has been suggested that over this period in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the period of stability at Silchester seem to be represented with this increase in building within the *insula* and as such may be more applicable to other areas within the town.

If this period of construction and urbanisation had continued through the 3rd century the remodelling of the amphitheatre may have been very similar contextually to the second timber phase with individuals or groups taking advantage of the works going on throughout the settlement as an opportunity to also repair and remodel the amphitheatre. Furthermore,

somewhat like the second phase of refurbishment there does not seem to be much notable evidence of other modifications being made to other public buildings such as the forum and basilica at this time. Again, even if this phase of the amphitheatre was undertaken due to the need for repairs, the modifications made go far beyond just that. Especially interesting is the fact that the shape of the arena was further modified, becoming more oval in shape and measuring 45.5 x 39.2m (Wilmott, 2008, 100-3) (Fig. 4.26). It is notable that the *cavea* was heightened during this phase as shown in the recreation of this phase by Nigel Sunter (Wilmott, 2008, 102-3). This may represent the intent to increase the potential capacity of the amphitheatre somewhat similar to the modifications at the amphitheatres of Chester and Caerleon. It appears that this third phase is a more complete rebuild than the previous timber phase, though again this may also be due to opportunity. The entire monument being reconstructed in stone would provide further opportunities for modifications. The possible heightening of the *cavea* exemplifies this well. Wilmott has proposed that this was probably partly due to the excavation of the foundation trenches for the stone walls. This would have provided the materials dumped onto the *cavea* in order to heighten it (Wilmott, 2008, 102-3). This perhaps further highlights the opportunistic nature of the modifications to the amphitheatre in relation to this later stone phase.

There are multiple probable contributing factors to the choice of rebuilding Silchester Amphitheatre in masonry. As I discussed in relation to the timber phase, there would likely have been the matter of funding and convenience. Wilmott mentions that the arena wall appears to have been constructed from naturally available local stone, including flint, green sand and brown ironstone which created a distinctive string course (Wilmott, 2009, 100-3). This further would have acted as internal decoration for the monument to be seen by those attending events from the arena and seating. In relation to available stone, the earlier construction of the defensive stone wall around the town (Boon, 1974, 65-74) demonstrates a very substantial supply of stone as well as experience in masonry construction to some extent. Due to the modifications to the arena's shape as well as the use of masonry for the whole monument, those behind this phase at Silchester could have been inspired and influenced by the military examples at Caerleon and Chester. However, masonry construction throughout Britain during this later period would have been well established. The main connection to the military examples is the use of the 'four circle method' similar to the second timber phase.

The use of stone for this project I would propose was motivated by intended permanence of the monument, learning from the past two phases and their eventual need for repairs and the evident availability of stone. Considering the transfer of knowledge in relation to the capability

of those behind this project is not as clear at such a late date in the mid-3rd century due to the spread of this knowledge through Britain concerning the construction of specifically masonry amphitheatres. It is also worth considering the matter of the amphitheatre as a reflection of the settlement itself architecturally. If the focus on masonry and timber building identified at *insula IX* can be extrapolated to the town in general as mentioned by Fulford and Clarke (2011), the choice of masonry for the amphitheatre project could further represent this focus on urbanisation and building up the town physically. Given the lack of government assistance noted at Silchester in relation to construction, I would propose the amphitheatre was probably funded by local people.

4.7.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Silchester:

The first phase of modifications to the amphitheatre in the 2nd century centred primarily around the arena. The further alterations to the entrance passages, recess and "probably" the seating bank, were consequences of this (Fulford, 1989, 29). The modified arena wall consisted of smaller timbers measuring 200mm square and set into a continuous trench around the arena. Unfortunately, due to the dismantling of this wall and the space being cut away by the insertion of the later stone arena wall, the relationship between the timber second phase arena wall and the *cavea* is unknown (Wilmott, 2008, 100-2). While the timber uprights of the arena wall during this phase are noticeably smaller there were considerably more of them making up the wall. Fulford (1989, 35-6) has proposed that due to this and how "firmly set into the ground" they were, there is "no reason" why the wall could not have supported either a circulation passage (podium) above or another structural arrangement linking it to the *cavea.* However, at the level of the arena, there would have not been enough space inside the new arena wall for a continuous passage (Fulford, 1989, 35-6). This would perhaps be comparable to the example at Dorchester Amphitheatre noted by Bradley (1976).

Additionally, both of the entrances to the north and south were modified. There is evidence for the removal and replacement of the posts flanking the passageway in the southern entrance though the overall structure and proportions of this entrance seem unchanged over this phase (Fulford, 1989, 29). The replacement of these timber posts I would propose was due to the need for repairs, perhaps for the reasons I have highlighted in the previous section in relation to the decay of the first phase timbers. The alterations made to the northern entrance is more noticeable, the passage was "drastically narrowed" from around 3.6m to 700mm according to Wilmott (2008, 100). However, Fulford (1989, 36) claims that the reduction was down to a width of 1.2m. This could be explained through the precise places in which this was

measured. Figure 4.27 shows the excavated Northern entrance. Perhaps Wilmott's smaller measurement was taken from the posts F673 and F699 at the arena side of the passage, whereas the noticeably wider passage may have been the measurement taken by Fulford. I find it hard to believe such a noticeable disparity between the measurements proposed by Wilmott (2008) and Fulford (1989) was just due to an error. Unfortunately, Wilmott does not provide a reference for the figures he gives. It appears that other features of the monument such as the western recess were maintained throughout this second timber phase. There seems to have been a gap in the new arena "screen" opposite the phase 1 entrance to the western recess (Fulford, 1989, 31). As noted, many of these additional modifications to the amphitheatre appear to have been either a consequence of the alteration to the shape of the arena, or perhaps in the case of the southern entrance specifically the need for repairs. It seems that those behind the modifications to the shape of the arena took advantage of the monument's state of apparent decay to carry out this project.

The modifications creating the second timber phase of the amphitheatre may appear somewhat minor in scale and also due to the continued use of timber in an era where masonry construction was already well established throughout the province, especially when compared to the later masonry rebuild of the Silchester Amphitheatre. I would maintain that the transformation of the shape of the arena was the primary goal of this project outside of necessary repair. Even so, this does not only represent the preferences of those behind the project in terms of architecture, perhaps leaning towards a more traditionally 'Roman' form of the monument, but it further demonstrates the lengths they were willing to go to in order to carry out this project. It is vital that we separate modifications from necessary repairs when considering the second timber phase of the amphitheatre. However, even the repairs represent the importance of the monument as a whole. The fact that it was repaired, even in timber, indicates the amphitheatre held its role within the town and continued to be recognised as an important monument. This suggests to me that the monument was not repaired and maintained simply due to its symbolic and architectural significance within the town. Rather, the actual use of the monument in hosting events was still at the forefront of the minds of those responsible.

NORTH ENTRANCE · Timber Phase II
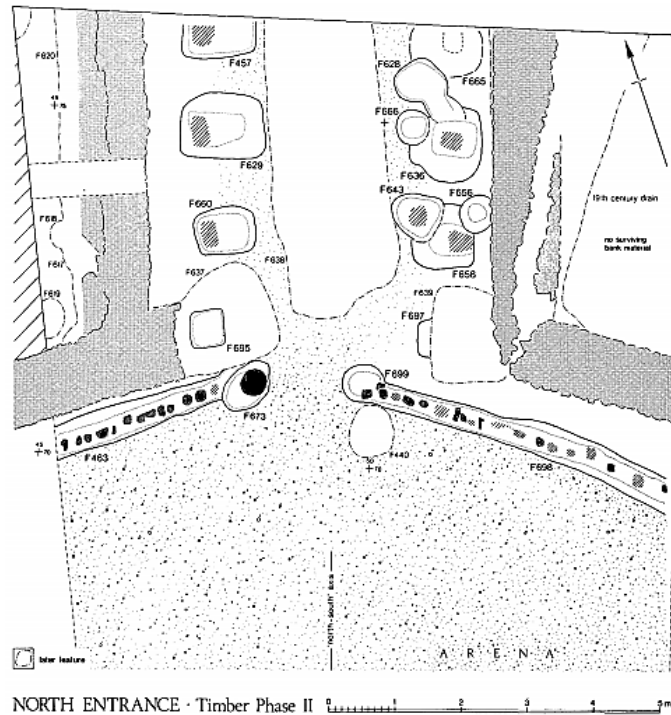
Figure 4. 27, the northern entrance of the second phase of Silchester Amphitheatre, scale 1:60, Fulford, 1989, 34.

The full masonry rebuild of the amphitheatre undertaken around a century later (Wilmott, 2008, 100-3) was a far larger project than the modifications undertaken for the second timber phase. As discussed previously the arena was yet again transformed, not only through the construction of a stone wall, but the shape itself was modified now measuring 45.5 x 39.2m (Fulford, 1989, 37). Fulford (1989, 170-1) details the specific nature and measurements of this new arena shape; the long (east-west) radii were centred on the short axis at b and b_1 as depicted in figure 4.28. The short radii were centred on the long axis at a and a_1. The centre of the amphitheatre is represented by x and It is noted that the distances $a - x$ and $b - x$ are very similar, all ranging between 5.1m – 5.8m (Fulford, 1989, 170). Fulford further notes that this may be due to the proportions of the second timber phase, and these had been chosen in order to follow the form of the previous phase of the monument. Furthermore, he draws comparisons to the military amphitheatres at Chester and Caerleon (Fulford, 1989, 170). While they are set out in a similar manner, as demonstrated in figure 4.29, it is highlighted that the lengths of the radii at the amphitheatres of Chester and Caerleon differ more noticeably on the short and long axes. Fulford specifically notes that Caerleon is "longer but with a more sharply-curved short radii" whilst Chester is "slightly shorter on the long axis and wider on the short axis" (Fulford, 1989, 170).

Comparing figures 4.28 and 4.29, there are notable differences and similarities between the three examples, so I agree with Fulford that the differences are understandable. As I have emphasized throughout this project there was not a mandated or 'cookie cutter' method of construction or laying out of these amphitheatres. It is worth considering to what extent the similarities in planning the shape of the arena may strengthen the argument of inspiration from the legionary amphitheatres. In my view however, the almost two century gap between the planning out and construction of the arenas at the legionary amphitheatres and the masonry rebuild at Silchester is the main issue with this interpretation. It is certainly questionable to what extent by this period these two amphitheatres could have served as the source of knowledge for the transformation of the arena at Silchester. As with the second timber phase, the techniques could have been sourced from various examples throughout the empire by this later period.

As with the previous timber phase, the further transformation of this arena into what can be considered a more traditionally 'Roman' shape alongside the use of masonry is notable. Again though, by this later period it could be argued that both masonry construction and the oval shape of the arena were normalised or even to some extent to be expected for amphitheatres. To what extent this may be applied to Silchester is very much based on to what extent we can suggest it was directly inspired by the military amphitheatres with their Roman roots in mind. Unfortunately, at this stage it is not possible to confirm or deny this. Furthermore, as I have stressed, I do not believe that the modification to the shape of the arena for the stone phase of Silchester Amphitheatre was as much of a significant or definitive part of the project as the alterations to the arena of the second timber phase. This is highlighted by the plethora of other alterations and revisions made to the monument not associated with the arena itself.
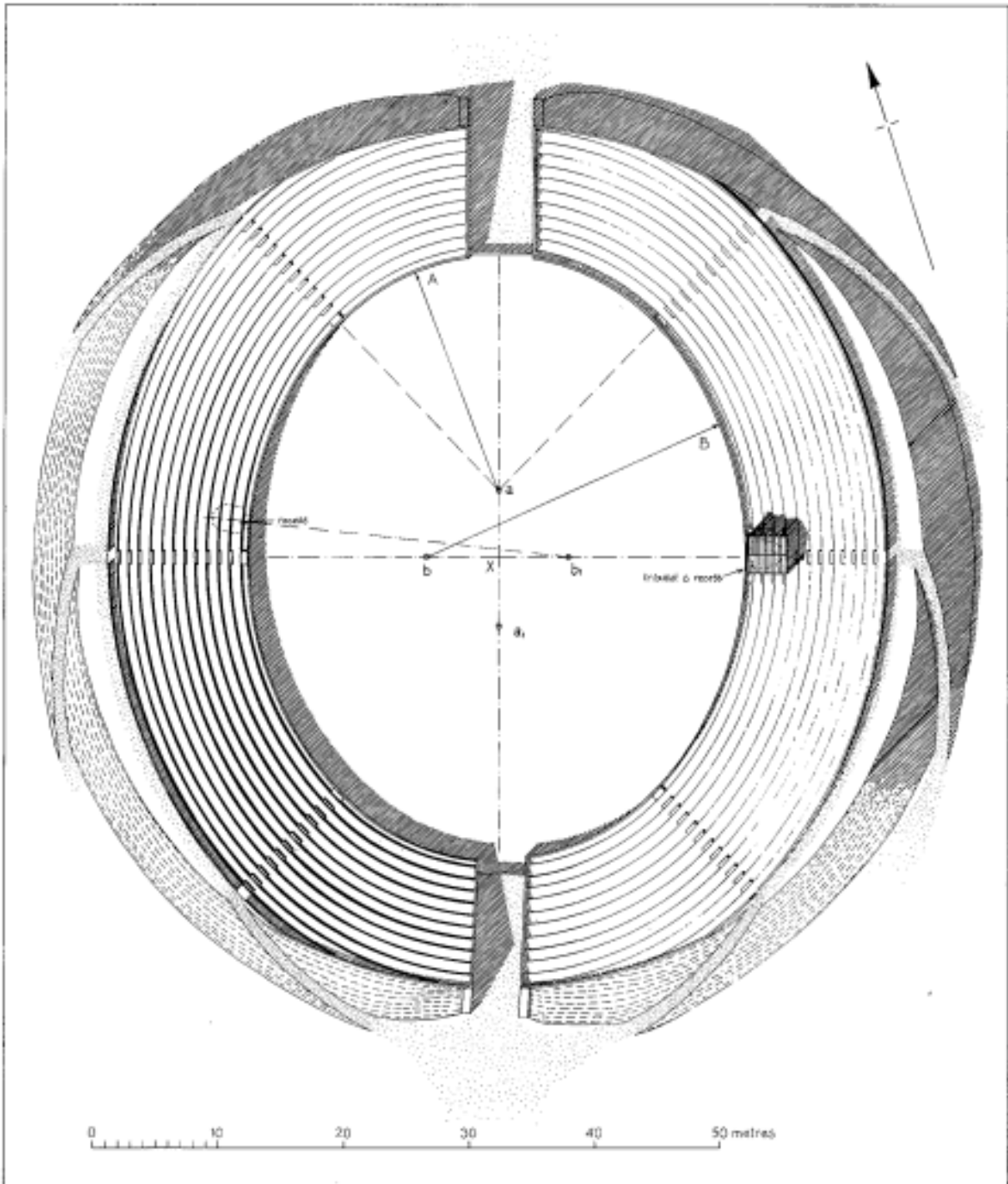
Figure 4. 28, reconstruction of the final stone phase of Silchester Amphitheatre, Fulford, 1989, 34.
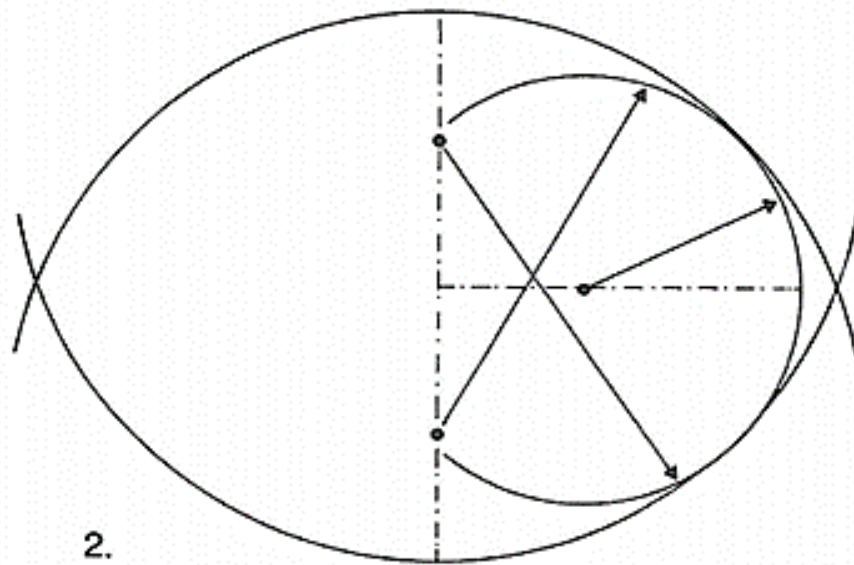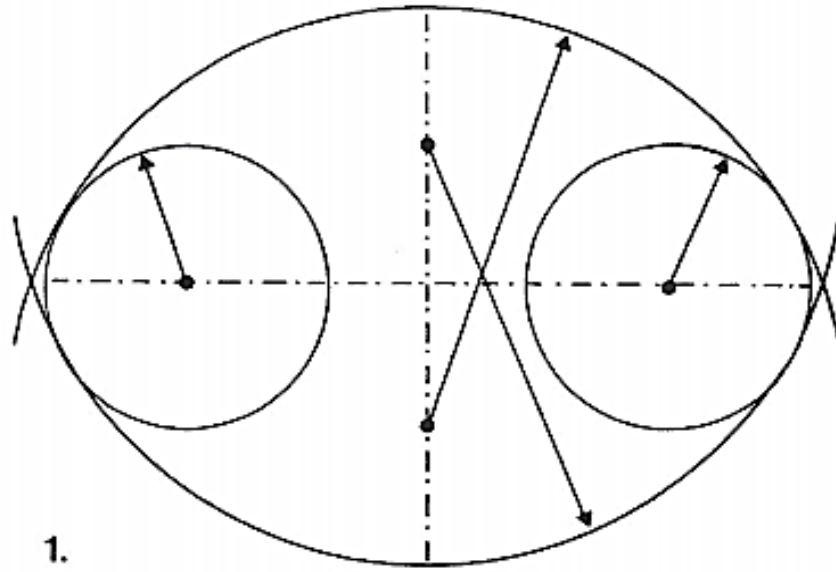
Figure 4. 29, the planning schemes using the 'four circle method' at both Caerleon 1. and Chester 2., Wilmott, 2008, 83

The new masonry arena wall was around 2.75m high, Wilmott (2009) comments that this is consistent with the 2.63m average proposed by Golvin of arena wall heights taken from 45 monuments through the empire (1988, 316-7). The wall itself was constructed with a variety of "naturally available local stone" including flint, brown ironstone and greensand; these formed a "distinctive string coarse" (Wilmott, 2008, 101-2). This was most probably intended to be decorative, though it was not present in the entrances or on the recesses on either side of the arena (Wilmott, 2008, 101). The forming of this decorative string course is the first-time significant thought and work was put into a decorative feature of the Silchester Amphitheatre. This is beyond what could be considered as necessary repairs to the monument as well as the functionality of the amphitheatre; rather it displays attention to the aesthetic aspect of the architecture. This is certainly a far cry from the original phase of the amphitheatre around two centuries earlier and even the second timber phase a century earlier in which this aspect did not appear to have been important to those behind those projects. This could have been for multiple reasons, perhaps it was not economically or technologically viable in those previous phases. In this later instance, the range of locally available stones may have provided the opportunity for this type of string course.

Additionally, another meter may have been added to the arena wall with a parapet or railing as indicated by a coping stone located nearby. Parapets and railings with coping stones mounted to arena walls have been identified in many masonry Romano-British amphitheatres that I have discussed in both urban and military contexts such as at London, Cirencester, Chester and Caerleon. This is certainly an important feature when considering what events may have taken place within the amphitheatre at Silchester, as this would have provided further protection for the audience. Also relevant to the use of the amphitheatre was the transformation of both entrances. The southern entrance measured 3.8m wide while the northern entrance was expanded greatly to 5.2m in width. Fulford has further mentioned that it is possible the seating carried across the top of these passages, due to the larger timbers within them, though there would have been "little advantage" to this; it is more probable that they were left open as in previous phases (Fulford, 1989, 174). There is a notable discrepancy in the sizes of the north and south entrances. One suggestion for this is the presence of these supporting facilities outside of the arena such as changing rooms or stables (Fulford, 1989, 174), although there is no clear evidence for this structurally. An alternative explanation for the wider northern entrance is the presence of drainage. Fulford proposes that in at least "at one stage of its life" a drainage channel ran adjacent to the west passage wall (1989, 174). This appears to be a more satisfactory justification due to the lack of evidence for other facilities.

Both entrances seem to have had gateposts. Those for the north entrance were positioned close to the front of the passage and according to Fulford they may have opened away from the arena. Meanwhile, the gateposts of the south entrance were positioned about 1m back from the front of the passage and "must have" opened into the arena due to the slope of roadway (Fulford, 1989, 174).

The recesses were also reconstructed during the masonry phase; the stone walls of the recesses were somewhat narrow at 80cm thick with the strength of the structure coming from their apsidal shape (Fulford, 1989, 175). Wilmott has noted a worn greensand plinth was found in the eastern recess, which has been interpreted as possibly the base of an altar (Wilmott, 2008, 102), suggesting that the room may have acted as a shrine or *carcer*. To what extent this is also applicable to the western recess is questionable. The reconstruction of the amphitheatre during this phase also suggests the *cavea* was heightened as mentioned previously. Furthermore, Wilmott notes evidence of timber seating replacing the terraces of the previous timber phase (2008, 102-3). If this was the case it is estimated that there would have been room for between 10 – 12 rows, giving the amphitheatre a capacity of around 3000 people. This is still quite small when compared to other amphitheatres that I have discussed within this chapter. Larger urban examples such as Cirencester were capable of holding up to 11,500 people (Holbrook, 1998, 172-3) and even with all the comparisons to the legionary examples at Caerleon and Chester, Chester still had over double the possible capacity at of Silchester 7000 people (Thompson, 1976, 194). However, it is again worth considering the context of the Silchester Amphitheatre. Fulford and Clarke (2011) have enquired into the possible population levels of the town. They commented that attempting to reconstruct the number of inhabitants within the excavated insular was "fraught with difficulty" (Clarke, Fulford, 2011, 332). The figures that were suggested were based on the extrapolation of the excavated timber and masonry buildings within the insula out to the whole walled area. This increases the estimate given by Boon significantly. If a "consistently greater density" of timber building was allowed for, the population potential rose to 7,600. Additionally, if we consider the possibility of two storey buildings within the later town the total rises, according to Fulford and Clarke, to 15,200 (2011, 333). It seems evident that the suggested capacity of Silchester Amphitheatre does not appear sufficient for the population. However, to what extent this extrapolation by Clarke and Fulford is accurate is questionable, reflecting more the top end of the potential population of the town, rather than the actual suggested number. Fulford has more recently suggested a population of 7000 in 2nd century Silchester (Fulford, 2021, 129).

Again, the size and capacity of the amphitheatre during the later masonry stage may have been due to a multitude of reasons. If the *cavea* was heightened, it does indicate a conscious effort to increase the monument's capacity. The end size and capacity may have been deemed sufficient for the population or intended viewership by those funding and building the monument, or perhaps there were issues with space, funding and capability. Regardless of this, the amphitheatre at Silchester is still noticeably smaller in size and capacity than many other examples throughout Britain even considering those constructed during this 1st century. This was also the case with the first phase of the monument and perhaps is due to the original size and placement of the monument. One very notable feature that did not seem to change was the method of access to the *cavea*. Wilmott notes that access seems to have been through a track over the earthwork bank even during this later stone phase (2008, 103). There were some later refurbishments made to the monument as well though these were quite minor. The arena was raised with dumps of sand, clay and gravel with a ring drain cut through this material (Wilmott, 2008, 103). These changes can be noted in figure 4.30, which Fulford (1989) considers a second stone phase of the monument.
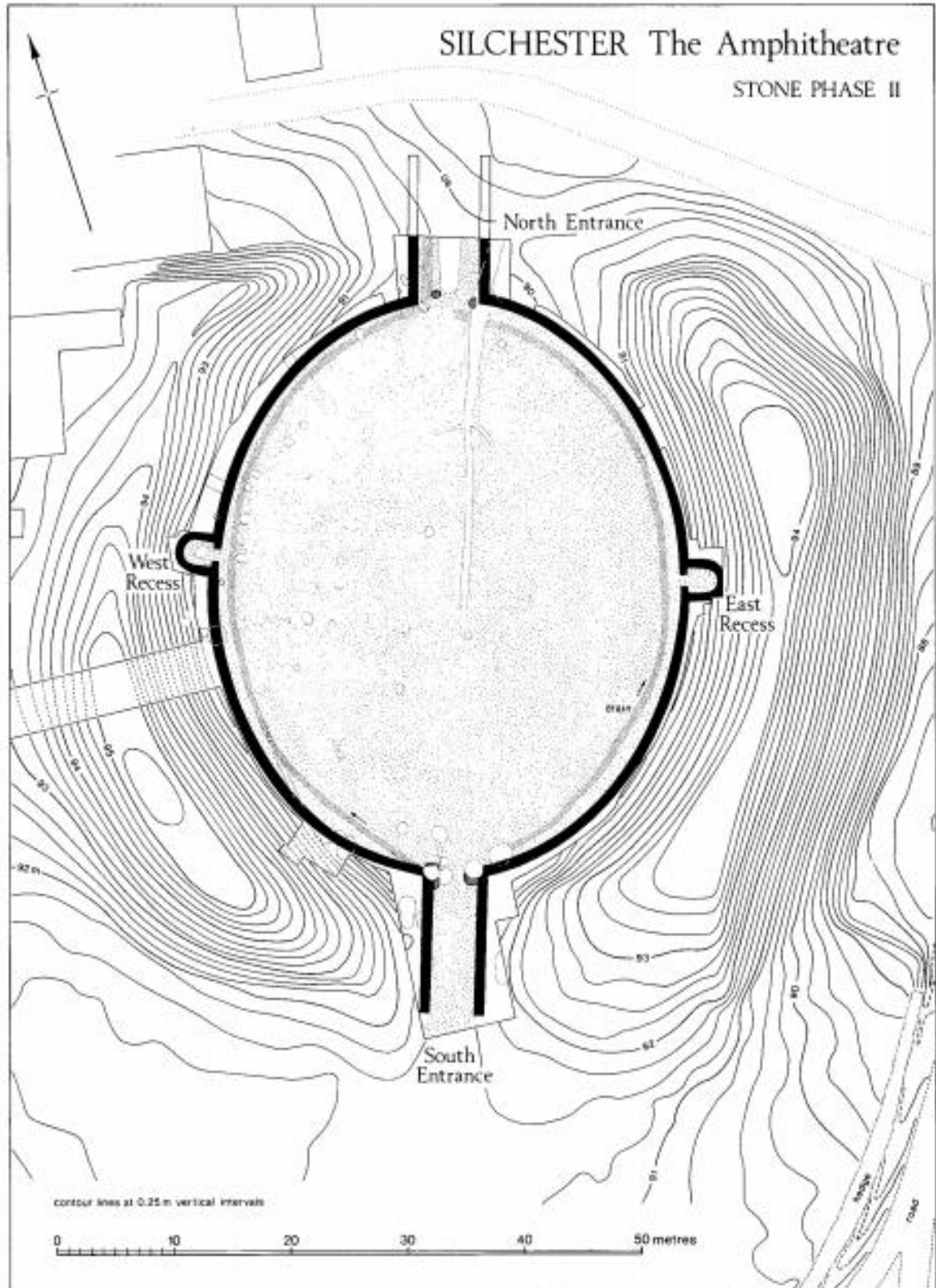
Figure 4. 30, plan of the timber phase 3 of the Silchester Amphitheatre, Fulford, 1989.

4.7.3 Conclusions:

The second timber phase and masonry rebuilding of Silchester Amphitheatre demonstrate the long-term maintenance of the amphitheatre in a surprisingly consistent example of repairs being made after around a century each time. This not only reveals the importance of the amphitheatre to those within the town architecturally over such a long period, but also suggests a significant period of use at Silchester. Other projects at the time may be viewed as 'necessary' such as the construction and maintenance of the defensive ditch and wall or the laying out of the street grid. The repairs and maintenance of the amphitheatre demonstrate the cultural and perhaps status related importance of the monument throughout this period of over two centuries. In addition, the second area of significance are the modifications and past repairs that would have been necessary to simply preserve the monument as it was originally constructed in the 1st century. For the second timber phase the focus on the arena (Fulford, 1989, 29-30) shows clear intent in excess of just maintenance or rebuilding, rather representing the tastes and preferences of the those behind the project. The specific reason for this is unknown, though due to the focus on the arena shape I believe it is related to the uses of the amphitheatre rather than just aesthetics. The use of timber for this second phase is also interesting. Again, the main argument to consider here is to what extent this was a choice by those behind the project or due to limitations of some kind, most probably a lack of funding, resources or capability.

The eventual masonry rebuild of Silchester Amphitheatre in the mid-3rd century elevated the monument to a comparable level architecturally with others within Roman Britain, though around a century later. Again, this does appear to be related to the need for repairs to some extent. However, the use of stone and further modifications to the amphitheatre are still significant regardless of when the project was carried out. While it is important to consider the amphitheatre in the provincial context as a whole, the monument is still primarily representative of the culture within Silchester itself to some extent in an insular fashion. This links back to the lack of provincial or imperial government influence upon the construction of amphitheatres. The use of timber in the previous phase and the use of stone in the third phase was I would suggest to some extent a choice by those behind the project. This is especially the case with the further modifications to the arena, entrances and the *cavea.* The second timber phase especially I would suggest, just as with the original monument at Silchester, represented the individuality of Romano-British amphitheatres. The timber construction and architecture were notably unique when compared to any other British amphitheatre, as was the near circular arena of the first phase. It was not until the 3rd century when Silchester Amphitheatre

became somewhat architecturally comparable to other examples throughout Britain with the third phase totally reconstructed in masonry. The size of the monument was notably small compared to many others. Silchester Amphitheatre remained representative of the town and the preferences the people that funded and built it throughout its around three century period of use.

4.8: Carmarthen Amphitheatre

4.8.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

The first published mention of Carmarthen Amphitheatre was in 1951 by G. L. Ovens, evidence of its existence having been discovered in 1947 (Wilmott, 2008, 115). Preliminary excavation took place in 1968, confirming that the monument was an amphitheatre, then larger scale excavations were undertaken in 1970 (Little, 1971). Since this, excavations have been undertaken throughout the town with a published report by H. James (2003) considering the long period of excavations between 1978-1993. These did not seem to focus on the amphitheatre and the report also appears to rely on the findings of Little (1971). The amount of material located throughout Carmarthen and the related theories of the origin, development, and evolution of the town over the Roman occupation are certainly significant and well researched. The 2003 report by James systematically analyses the multiple excavations and provides a useful proposal of the timeline of Carmarthen throughout this period. However, it must be noted that there is a significant lack of findings relating to confirmed public buildings other than the amphitheatre. In my view the reconstruction of the amphitheatre by Ludlow (Fig.4.33) is also somewhat problematic in how it presents the monument architecturally as shall be discussed throughout section 4.7.2.

While Carmarthen amphitheatre has been excavated, excavations within the settlement itself are lacking, as due to the modern-day layout the town cannot be excavated further. For this reason, investigations into the proposed location of the forum and basilica cannot be carried out. Furthermore, precisely dating many of the features and buildings that have been identified including the amphitheatre itself is problematic and primarily based upon the context and comparison to similar settlements rather than archaeological evidence. Even the initial foundation and emergence of the *civitas* is questionable and very much open to interpretation. The range of buildings that have been identified according to James (2003) conform to a "typical pattern" of shops and workshops within provincial towns. He further suggests that there is "little doubt" that Carmarthen was a self-governing *civitas* due to the identifiable model of urban development (James, 2003, xx-xxii). Whilst I agree with James that

Carmarthen was a *civitas* capital, his phrasing here seems to suggest that there was an almost systematic way in which they were constructed. This is especially interesting at Carmarthen due to a lack of excavated and specifically identified public buildings that one may expect at a provincial *civitas.* The only surviving and confirmed monument at Carmarthen is the amphitheatre located 250m north-east of the eastern boundary of the town defences (James, 2003, 18). The forum and basilica have not been located, though they are believed to be beneath modern-day Priory Street. As such, much of the guidance as James points out (2003, 16-17) is based on the street grid in terms of considering the status and seemingly the dating of the town. One could suggest that the presence of the amphitheatre may be a compelling argument for the status and system of government of Carmarthen as a *civitas.* Especially since all of the amphitheatres identified in Britain not related to the military were constructed in relation to *civitas* capitals. This does not however signify a direct connection between *civitas* capitals and amphitheatres, but rather than it was in these towns that individuals and groups were motivated and had the funds to invest in such monuments. The presence of an amphitheatre in my view is not indicative of a towns formal or governmental status.

Carmarthen is the most westerly town in Britain, its closest neighbour Caerwent that is still a notable distance away (James, 2003, 21). The area is believed to have been the tribal capital of the *Demetae* who occupied Pembrokeshire and most of Carmarthenshire (Wacher, 1995, 391-2). Prior to the town being established, there was a fort constructed in the area possibly as early the Neronian period, though evidence in relation to this date is insufficient. James has proposed that there is "no reason" to doubt that the establishment of the fort took place during the conquest of Julius Frontinus who was the governor between A.D.74-77 (2003, 13). The fort itself lies to the west of the later town on modern day King Steet and Spilman Steet to take advantage of the estuary of the River Tywi and it was occupied no later than A.D.120 (Wacher, 1995). This introduces the issue of the fort's association with the town of Carmarthen in relation the possibility of a *vicus* prior to the *civitas* as has been the case at examples throughout Roman Britain such as at Cirencester. The lack of significant Roman finds would indicate that it is unlikely that there was a *vicus* located on the western side of the fort prior to the town. Meanwhile, significant concentrations of Flavian / Trajanic samian wares have been found to the east of the fort within the area of the later town (James, 2003, 15). The features located to the east at Church Street do not appear to have been part of a *vicus* but rather a smaller fort annexe installation according to James (2003, 16) during the late-1st and early 2nd centuries. Occupation during that period alongside the early 'military road' may also provide context for these findings (James, 2003, 16). While these finds may suggest the

presence of a settlement in this area the lack of "close-packed development" alongside the early road over this period would suggest that it cannot be interpreted as a *vicus* (James, 2003, 16). This proposal by James appears also based on Webster's (1966) studies into the origins of *civitas* capitals and the *vici* that developed from forts in Britain. Work on those in Wales specifically reinforces the "symbiotic" relationship between the *vicus* and the fort (James, 2003, 15). As such, when the garrison is withdrawn from the fort, the *vicus* also disappears (Davies, 1991). In this case, one would perhaps expect more substantial structural evidence or even a trace of this from the *vicus* had it existed prior to the town.

Wacher has also noted the apparent "peacefulness" of the *Demetae* as the justification for the joint withdrawal of the military from their territory and from more hostile tribes such as the *Silures* (Wacher, 1995, 391-3). This is further evidenced by the general recession of military forces as well as forts throughout Wales through the mid-late 2nd century (Phipps, 2016, 19). This may also have an impact on the question of when the town was founded in comparison to the fort. I do not believe that there was a *vicus* established prior to the town due to the lack of compelling evidence and as such the *civitas* does not appear to have evolved from a *vicus* like many examples in Britain such as at Cirencester. The fort itself was no longer occupied after A.D.120 and only minor traces such as post-holes, pits and gullies remain (Wacher, 1995, 391-2). In comparison, the datable features in the *civitas* excavations of the street grid, specifically streets 1 and 2 on modern day Priory Street, suggest construction around A.D.130. Additionally, these excavations would suggest that these streets are contemporary and laid out at the same time in the early-mid 2nd century (James, 2003, 16-7). James rightly highlights that this provides an interesting argument against the proposal that street one was a 'military road' down the Tywi valley towards the 1st century fort (James, 2003, 17). If the proposed dates are accurate this cannot be the case due to the abandonment of the fort by A.D.120 at the latest. It should be noted however that both dates are estimates and it is possible that there was crossover. Even if this was the case or the dates were very close, the main point to take away here is the division of the fort and emerging *civitas* in a physical sense as two separate entities. The close dates of the abandonment of the fort and construction of the identified streets at Carmarthen leave the possibility of an overlap in population, but the fort and surrounding structures were in my view not a pre-emptive settlement to the town itself such as a *vicus.*

The specific circumstances for the foundation of the *civitas* appear somewhat unknown. I agree with Wilmott (2008, 116-7) that the *civitas* was not founded until the total desertion of the fort. It seems probable that individuals or groups from the fort may have assisted in the

foundation of the town though there is a notable lack of evidence in relation to the military located within the town itself. This again could be due the very limited excavation of the settlement. The only structures identified and dated from the early 2nd century are a temple located east of the fort on the north side of the 'military road' and a large unidentified stone building to the south of it; James (2003, 20) has suggested that this may have been a *mansio* or a bath house. Unfortunately, there is "insufficient evidence" to date the amphitheatre precisely (James, 2003, 20-1). The construction of the streets 1 and 2 on the modern-day Priory Street site and the development of the shops and workshops in this area appear closer to A.D.150 than to A.D.130 and the amphitheatre may have been constructed within this period as well (James, 2003, 20-1). Considering figure 4.31, it is possible that street 1 may have actually led to the amphitheatre as suggested by James (2003) prior to the construction of the defences. The lack of other datable significant public buildings such as the forum and basilica at Carmarthen makes dating the amphitheatre contextually difficult. In my own view, there is little reason to suggest that the amphitheatre itself was constructed alongside the early streets or the identifiable "artisan area" on the Priory Street site (James, 2003, 20-1).
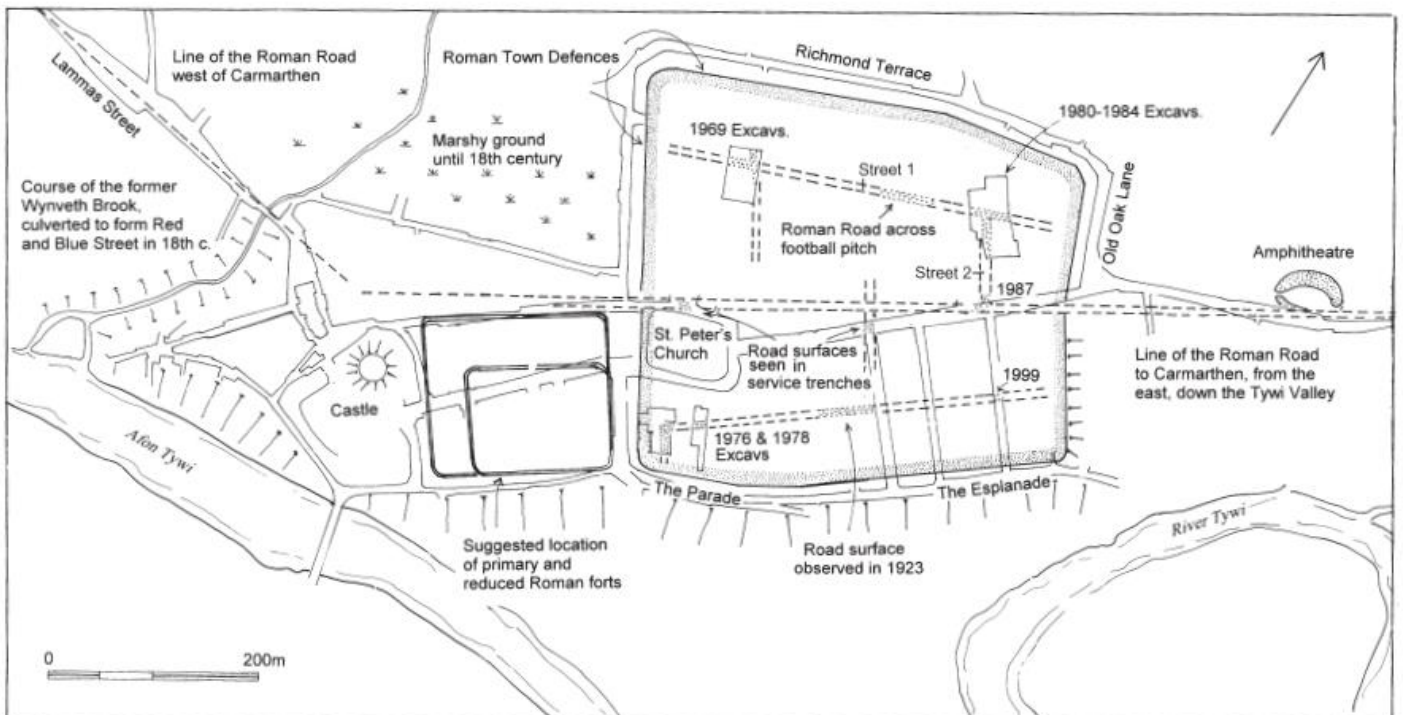
Figure 4. 31, Street lines of Carmarthen with the proposed fort locations and known Roman defence lines, James, 2003, 17.

If street 1 intentionally led to the amphitheatre prior to the construction of the defences this may provide a possible period of construction for the monument. The earliest fortifications

consisted of turf and clay banks, and the Antonine samian ware found in the rampart provides a probable mid-late 2nd century date for construction (Wacher, 1995, 391-4). Furthermore, James has suggested that the first phase of the defences can be seen as the final component of a stereotypical "ordered layout" providing structure and shape to the settlement (James, 2003, 18). It is worth considering however that the amphitheatre was constructed outside of the town and the defences, and as such one must question to what extent this idea proposed by James (2003) is fully applicable to this monument. In this instance, I do not think that the dating of the defences is enough to accurately provide a date for the construction of the amphitheatre. I agree with Wacher that the available evidence would suggest that the amphitheatre was constructed in the second quarter of the 2nd century (1995, 393) presumably during the same possible period of the laying out of streets 1 and 2.

The context and motivations behind the construction of Carmarthen Amphitheatre are also difficult to pin down due to the lack of overall excavation of the settlement. It appears at this stage that the amphitheatre was constructed over the emergence of the *civitas* during a period of urbanisation. This could perhaps be viewed as 'standard' when considering the construction of amphitheatres in Romano-British towns. As I have stressed throughout this project, the status associated with the monument as well as its practical and religious uses are the main motivations behind their construction. Specific motivations for the construction of an amphitheatre over other public buildings at Carmarthen are difficult to suggest due to the lack of excavation. As I have noted in previous examples, the construction of amphitheatres in Britain tend to line up with both the initial development or revitalization of settlements such as early London and Silchester as well as later notable periods of construction such as at Cirencester. I have yet to identify an amphitheatre in Britain being constructed sporadically in comparison to the settlement. This in my view is certainly applicable to Carmarthen amphitheatre. This may be the best explanation of the context and motivations behind the construction of the amphitheatre due a lack of wider excavation.

The location of Carmarthen as the most westerly *civitas* in Wales may have been a significant factor in this decision. The position of the settlement within Roman-Wales as demonstrated by figure 2.32 shows the relative isolation from other *civitas* capitals and auxiliary forts. However, there are still a notable number of "Romanised farmsteads" in the surrounding region (Guest, 2008, 7). As such, it is possible that the *civitas* at Carmarthen served as a sort of centre for this region and community. The settlement's development after the abandonment of the fort around A.D.120 may have provided a good opportunity for the construction of the amphitheatre within the region. However, this does to some extent indicate or make the

presumption that those behind the construction of the amphitheatre, and perhaps the development of Carmarthen, were aware of or motivated by the role that the town would later take on as a centre in the region. This is more convincing for the construction of the amphitheatre, specifically if it was constructed even a little bit later than the initial development of the town itself once it was somewhat established in this role.
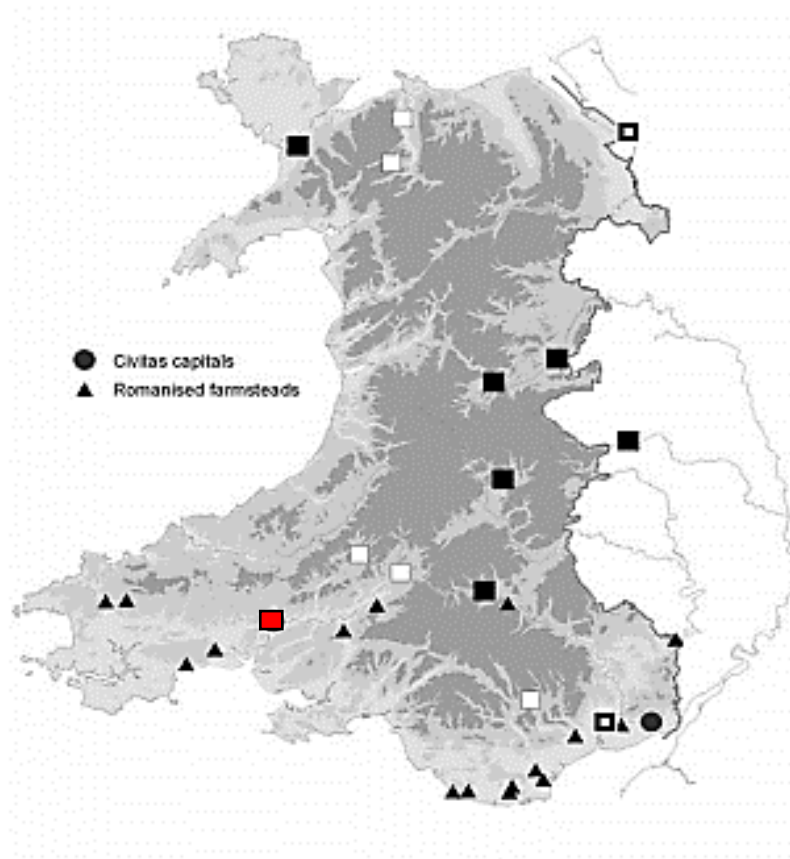
Figure 4. 32, Roman military installations and 'Romanized' settlements in Wales A.D. 125 – 165, black squares representing Auxiliary forts, white squares representing auxiliary forts with unknown occupation. Carmarthen marked by the red square. Guest, 2008, 7

Considerations for funding the amphitheatre are based upon the context of the monument and the town itself within the region during the early-mid 2nd century. Essentially how was it even possible for those within Carmarthen to fund such a large-scale project? Two considerations specifically that must be addressed here are the possible role of the *civitas* as a centre, but also how this can be represented architecturally due to the lack of public buildings comparable to the amphitheatre. Usually, these structures often funded by local groups or individuals, serve as a useful and interesting demonstration of the available funding and capabilities of those behind these projects. While the "probable" location of the forum and

basilica has been identified (James, 2003, 16) and it would be highly unusual for a *civitas* to not have at least a forum; there can be no real further assumptions made about it other than it probably existed and its probable location. In this instance, it is worth considering the source of funding for the defences and the street grid at Carmarthen. As mentioned in relation to the defences at Silchester, Boon (1974) suggested that there was no sign of assistance from the provincial government. It has been proposed that town defences could be motivated by civic pride and competition (Millett, 1990) rather than necessity or purely function, akin to public monuments like the amphitheatre. James (2003, 18) has further suggested the construction of the defences at Carmarthen may have been a "congenial aspiration" for the local elites governing the settlement. If this was the case and with the notable lack of evidence pointing towards government intervention into the limited construction projects noted at Carmarthen and the defences at Silchester, one would assume that the funding for the amphitheatre was also not through imperial or government channels. The street grid and defences also demonstrate the willingness and capability of individuals or groups to invest architecturally into the town.

In relation to the local economy, there is evidence for the production of basic goods and ironwork though it seems that there is a fairly restricted range of these goods, and they are not of especially high quality (James, 2003, 22). There have been numerous shops and workshops identified in the northern part of the town. They may have covered a substantial area if there was the same density as noted at Priory Street from the excavations in 1969 by Professor Jones (James, 2003, 22-3), perhaps making up the bulk of the economy at Carmarthen itself. The closest source of iron ore was around 20km south-east of the town though there is little to indicate iron smelting took place within the town itself. As such, this process must have taken place elsewhere with local smiths in Carmarthen either transporting or purchasing iron in "blooms or billets" (James, 2003, 22). The Priory Street excavations indicate that smithing took place throughout the lifespan of the town though the range of artefacts are "unexceptional" with a large quantity of iron nails and building fastenings. James mentions that this demonstrates or argues for fairly heavy local town use of iron in buildings and everyday tools (James, 2003, 22-3). I agree with this based on the evidence from excavation, while the transportation of these goods especially in terms of the economy of the town is significant. Again, the role of Carmarthen may have been as a market centre for the surrounding area of around 15-20 miles (James, 2003, 22-3) iron being just a single example. James comments that the course and fine ware from Carmarthen is not great in quantity or variety, but rather describes them as "at the end of the line" in marketing terms (2003, 24). I

would take this to mean that Carmarthen was the final destination for much of these wares, with them perhaps having been passed through multiple other places previously through trading and resale.

Perhaps more importantly, there is evidence of coastal trading possibly with roots earlier in the Iron Age. This "undoubtably intensified" through the Roman period with Carmarthen becoming one of the largest destinations for coastal traders in the South-East of Wales (James, 2003, 24-7). James has further commented that the western sides of Carmarthen Bay and its hinterland produced the best evidence for "Romanisation of the coastal zone" (James, 2003, 26). This would suggest that Carmarthen Bay was used a great deal by the Romans for trade and may have been one of the primary contributors to the economy and wealth within the settlement. If this was the case, it may also explain the origins of the funding for the amphitheatre and other public buildings as the town developed in the mid-2nd century. The wealth indicated by artefacts and finds does not appear to have been centred on or only in the town itself. The small farmstead at Penycoed just south-west of the town is the only rural settlement within 20-30 miles where no Romano-British pottery has been found (James, 2003, 26-7) so it must have been very widespread. Additionally, a very high proportion of bronze jewellery and vessels have been found at Coygan Camp around 20km south-west of Carmarthen (James, 2003). The notable evidence of wealth and a somewhat thriving economy is certainly significant when considering how the amphitheatre was funded. The lack of association with a specific military settlement or a *vicus* with the town, no clear evidence of military intervention and the urban context of the monument would lead me to suggest that these individuals or groups within the town itself or the surrounding hinterland were responsible for funding the construction of the amphitheatre.

The 2nd century date of construction of the amphitheatre at Carmarthen may also explain why those behind the project chose to build an amphitheatre rather than other monuments. By this period amphitheatres appear somewhat established as a Romano-British monument, even in Wales with military examples at Caerleon and possibly Tomen-y-Mur. Additionally, it is entirely possible for the amphitheatre to have been influenced by other examples throughout the empire, perhaps even more so due to the role the settlement seems to have taken in coastal trade. When contemplating why individuals chose to construct an amphitheatre at Carmarthen the role the town may have taken as a centre for the region in my view could certainly have been a strong contributing factor to this decision. By this period, the transfer of knowledge in relation to the construction of amphitheatres may not be so much of an issue as with earlier examples.

In my view, when considering how those within Carmarthen were aware of the amphitheatre firstly even as an option to construct and secondly the knowledge in relation to the monument's construction, there are two probable explanations. With the close proximity and perhaps even overlapping time period from the abandonment of the fort and the development of the town of Carmarthen, it is possible that individuals or groups associated with or actively a part of the military later inhabited the town. These people may have had prior knowledge in relation to the construction of amphitheatre especially since the two other examples noted in Wales, at Caerleon, and Tomen-y-Mur, were both military amphitheatres to some extent. This explanation may be further evidenced in section 4.7.2 when considering the exact architecture of Carmarthen amphitheatre. It is worth noting that this could also explain how the knowledge was passed onto the elites of the *Demetae* if they were responsible for the amphitheatre, Alternatively, the monument may have been constructed, funded and built by individuals previously associated with the military. It may have also been a combination of both groups, as these are not mutually exclusive. This theory does place a lot of emphasis on the possibility of those previously residing with the fort moving to and inhabiting the town after its abandonment though this cannot be confirmed and there still seems to be a significant lack of finds associated with the military at Carmarthen. Outside of this, the other explanation may rely on the role of Carmarthen as a centre in Wales and the regions' importance for coastal trading. Individuals from surrounding Britain and the empire may have been drawn to Carmarthen due to these factors perhaps either passing on knowledge of amphitheatre construction or settling within the region and investing into the settlement architecturally.

4.8.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Carmarthen:

The Carmarthen Amphitheatre is located around 250m north-east of the eastern boundary of the town's defences (James, 2003, 18). As with other Romano-British examples such as London Amphitheatre, the monument took advantage of a steep hillside. The northern side was built into the hillside and seems to have been cut back to form a more "regular ellipse". The spoil from this area was then later used to construct the southern side of the *cavea* (James, 2003, 18-20). Despite this seemingly standard practice, it has been suggested by Boon (1990) that the southern side of the amphitheatre did not architecturally correspond to the northern side of the *cavea.* This is further demonstrated in Neil Ludlow's recreation and drawing of the amphitheatre (figure 4.33). The northern *cavea* is significantly larger, seemingly because it was built into the hillside which provided support for this part of the structure. It would have taken "extensive revetment" to reinforce and hold the southern side of the *cavea* in place had it matched the northern area in size since there was no evidence suggesting the lowering of the

interior ground level (James, 2003, 18). Due to this, the northern side of the *cavea* appears to be significantly larger, placing a lot of emphasis onto that side visually as the 'main' viewing area. James (2003, 18) has thus suggested that Carmarthen should be viewed as a theatre-amphitheatre, Boon further mentioning that this "was a feature of public architecture of the north-west" (1990, 398).

On the evidence alone presented by James and Boon, as well as having investigated the example of the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium, I would not agree that the Carmarthen Amphitheatre can be classified as such. There is no of evidence for the existence of arena furniture such as a stage at Carmarthen Amphitheatre. While this could be explained through possible robbing of such furniture or the erosion of timber over time, there is no mention of lasting signs such as post holes noted at the stage within the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre (Wilmott, 2008, 124-6). The only evidence suggested by James (2003) is the lack of architectural conformity of the southern and northern sides of the *cavea.* To me, this is not enough to classify Carmarthen Amphitheatre as a 'theatre-amphitheatre', considering that there are other, in my view, more plausible explanations for this. It may be down to choice or the topography of the landscape. The support provided by the hillside in which the northern *cavea* was constructed into allows it to be larger while the southern side does not have the support of a hillside. This may be due to a lack of materials, funding or perhaps just choice. The larger northern *cavea* could have also been related to creating the largest capacity amphitheatre possible with the funding and capabilities of those behind the construction of the monument. While it is unconventional there is no rule to say that the two sides of the *cavea* must be identical. The spoil taken from the northern *cavea* and used to construct the southern side may have not been enough to build it to the same size. While there are examples such as at Silchester of spoil being brought from elsewhere (Wilmott, 2008), those behind the project at Carmarthen may not have seen this as necessary. If anything, this further emphasizes the diversity and individuality of these monuments even within the 'urban' category.

The monument itself was large, measuring overall 91 x 67m with the arena measuring 50x30m (Wilmott, 2008, 115-6). Wacher notes that the size of the amphitheatre is especially impressive when considering the probable size of Carmarthen itself. As such it may be the case that those outside of the town may have been expected to make use of and travel to the amphitheatre for events. This is one of the main reasons why Wacher has proposed that the settlement may have acted as a centre for the *Demetae* (Wacher, 1995, 391-4). Along with the

evidence in relation to the economy of Carmarthen and its place within the region in terms of trade, I would agree that this seems probable. The size of the amphitheatre would certainly support this as well, considering the somewhat remote location of the settlement. The closest amphitheatre in Wales was seemingly located at the legionary fortress and settlement at Caerleon which is a significant distance away.
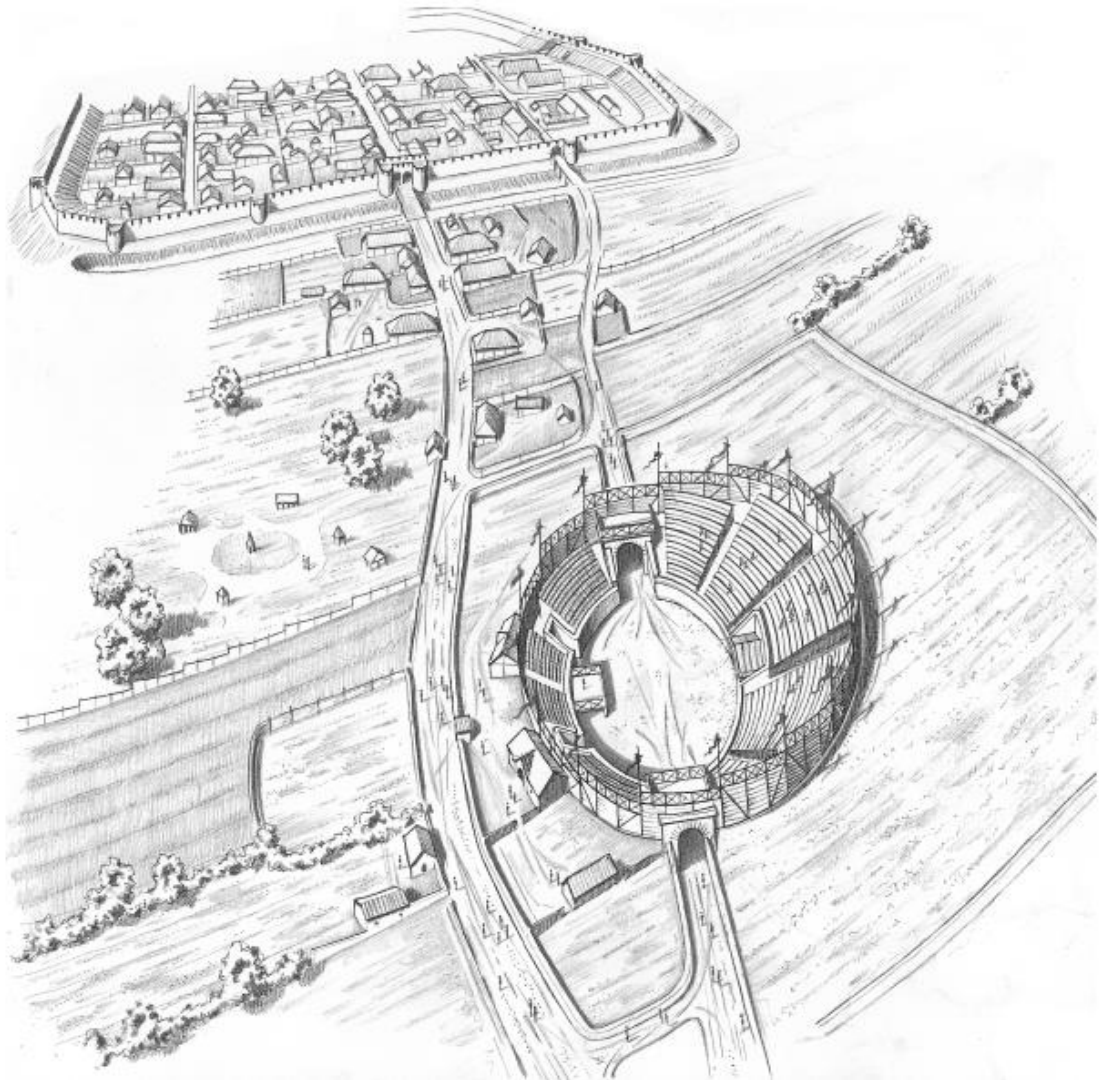
Figure 4. 33, Neil Ludlow's reconstruction of Carmarthen Amphitheatre from a bird's eye view taken from the site display panel, James, 2003, 19.

As well as its impressive size, the measurements of the arena as depicted in figure 4.33 demonstrate the arena shape is very different from those noted at the theatre-amphitheatre of Verulamium as well as further examples such as at Derventum (4.3.2). The architecture of the monument does have some complex features. The arena wall was fronted by a shallow

channel 350mm wide and 80mm deep which has been interpreted as a drain. Wilmott has noted that the topography surrounding the monument and the way in which it was set into the hillside would require "sophisticated" drainage systems (Wilmott, 2008, 115-7). Beneath the road levels of the eastern entrance there was a rubble soakaway drain 1.3m wide and 300mm deep, a small pack of boulders was also found beneath the northern *cavea* 1.5m deep which ran beneath the eastern end of the southern *cavea* (Wilmott, 2008, 115-7). It has been suggested that the rubble drain was also structural in order to reinforce the artificially steepened slope and divide the *cavea* into a *cunei* (wedge shaped segments) (Wilmott, 2009, 115-7). In this instance the topography surrounding the amphitheatre appears to have been one of the defining factors behind its architecture. This does raise the question of why this area was chosen for the amphitheatre. Figure 4.33 demonstrates I think the physical presence the amphitheatre may have had in relation to the town and landscape in this position on the hillside beside the main road into the settlement. This would have been viewed by those residing within the town or those just travelling through the settlement. This further demonstrates the engineering and architectural capabilities of those behind the construction of the amphitheatre and in this sense their dedication to its construction. The arena wall and two entrance passages of the amphitheatre were constructed in masonry while the revetments for the terraces in the seating banks were made of timber (Wacher, 1995). Wacher has also commented that the system used here is very similar to the dry-stone terrace at Cirencester Amphitheatre (1995, 392-4). The north-east entrance shows some evidence of use with three cobbles surfaces all containing Roman pottery within a stone passage 6.1m wide.

While the size of the amphitheatre is certainly impressive, there is little to suggest that it was directly inspired by the closest legionary example at Caerleon. Wacher (1995) does draw comparison to Cirencester for the seating, though this style of timber setting has also been noted at examples through Britain such as at London and Silchester during this 2nd century period. The main areas that have been highlighted by the available reports on Carmarthen Amphitheatre note the area chosen and the size of the monument rather than specific architectural features. While these are significant when considering the status and role of the settlement, they make considering potential architectural inspirations and comparison outside of these factors difficult. They do demonstrate to some extent in my view the status of Carmarthen as well as the potential and capability of those behind the construction of the amphitheatre. However, it seems that a lot of further presumptions have been made by those investigating the amphitheatre specifically that are not backed up by the available evidence. The proposal that the monument is a theatre-amphitheatre is a clear example of this.

Additionally, the depiction of Carmarthen Amphitheatre by N. Ludlow (Fig. 4.33) displays a stage to the southern side of the arena which there is no evidence for from excavation as I discussed earlier. While the architecture of Carmarthen Amphitheatre is impressive and unique with the differing heights of the southern and northern *cavea* much about the monument and settlement in general remains unknown.

4.8.3 Conclusions:

It is evident that there is still much we do not know about both Carmarthen and the amphitheatre constructed there. In my view, the town does appear to be a *civitas* and not based upon a previous military settlement like a *vicus.* While it is probable that there was an overlap between the abandonment of the fort and the foundation of the town, there is a lack of significant evidence of military association and activity within Carmarthen. The construction of the amphitheatre in my view is in line with the overall development and urbanisation of the town during the mid-late 2nd century after the abandonment of the fort nearby. Those behind the construction of Carmarthen Amphitheatre do not appear to have had any connection to the military directly or the imperial government. The monument was seemingly funded and constructed as an investment into the town itself. This is demonstrated most plainly by the position of the monument on the main road through Carmarthen (figures 4.31 and 4.33). In terms of the funding for the amphitheatre, the role taken by Carmarthen in coastal trade and as a market centre for the hinterland surrounding the town gives a solid explanation as to where the wealth was most likely generated. It is evident that those within the town had adequate resources and knowledge to put into this monument and this is also demonstrated by the amphitheatre's size and architecture.

The development of Carmarthen Amphitheatre during this later period could be considered to some extent in a 'standard' fashion when considering the context of the amphitheatre as the town itself grew and developed. The monument however is impressive in terms of both size and the architecture employed in relation to the surrounding topography and how it was constructed into the hillside. Furthermore, the notable difference in size of the southern and northern *cavea* is interesting. While it is possible, I would not propose that this was due to the intended purpose of the monument, but rather may have been down to simply choice given the surrounding topography or even limiting factors in the planning and building of the monument. Again, this further reinforces that there are no set rules or forms for the construction of these monuments. The uses of the amphitheatre at Carmarthen are difficult to pin down specifically due to limited excavation and finds specifically in relation to the

monument. However, the monument would clearly be capable of hosting very large-scale events, and the town's role as a centre for the region as well as it being somewhat isolated in the far west would suggest that amphitheatre could have acted as the principal location for events and religious festivals.

4.9: Richborough Amphitheatre

4.9.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

The Richborough Amphitheatre was first noticed by Stukeley (1776). Though the monument was originally excavated by Rolfe in 1848, the observations made were "inadequate" (Johnson, 1999). More recently, in 2001 a series of geophysical surveys were undertaken focused around the Richborough Amphitheatre which have brought about further insight into the form and architecture of the amphitheatre; however, much is still not known due to a lack of more recent physical excavation. There are at the time of writing ongoing excavations being carried out at Richborough as noted in The Guardian (Sherwood, 2021). The amphitheatre has been included in these current excavations as shall be demonstrated in section 4.8.2. I am hopeful that this current work will reveal more about the monument specifically. The settlement as a whole at Richborough has been subject to a significant amount of academic interest, resulting in the development of the settlement and even its potential role in the invasion of A.D.43 being widely investigated and published on. While information relating to the amphitheatre's architecture and a definitive date of construction are lacking, the context of the monument is still significant and debate surrounding the settlement is still ongoing.

Roman occupation of the settlement at Richborough seems to have been somewhat consistent throughout the period of Roman rule in Britain from the mid-1st century to the late-4th century (Cunliffe, 1968). Excavations show that there was little trace of pre-Roman occupation though there are finds that "bear witness to possible occupations by Neolithic and Bronze age peoples (Cunliffe, 1968, 231). During the Roman occupation of the site, the settlement at Richborough went through multiple phases both in a physical sense with large scale changes to the architecture and landscape of the area, but along with these there were also notable modifications in the intended use of the area and occupying groups within the site. Understandably, this makes the dating of the amphitheatre and deeper questions into its construction and funding difficult to discern. Exact dating evidence is nominal, and my own estimations of the amphitheatre's date shall rely mainly on the architecture and surrounding context of the monument. This may also call into question the category of the amphitheatre, primarily depending upon which groups it was funded and constructed by.

Richborough much like the example at Dorchester appears to have had its origins as a Claudian military camp and continued to be used primarily as a supply base until around A.D.85 (Fig. 4.34) (Cunliffe, 1968, 232-4). This early Claudian camp seems to have played an important role in the landings of the Roman forces related to the initial invasion of Britain in A.D.43. It is "unlikely" that Richborough was the sole landing place for the invading forces due to the notable locations that would also be advantageous in the surrounding area, including Dover, Reculver and Lympne (Todd, 2004, 46-7). However, Todd does mention that there is a notable lack of evidence of use by the Claudian army at these locations and suggests that the main landing at Richborough was probably supported by subsidiary landings at east-Kent (Todd, 2004, 46-7). Alternatively, the landings of the Claudian forces may have occurred in west Sussex though this is based upon "slender evidence" and again requires further investigation (Hind, 1989). Wacher (1995, 88) has noted that Richborough may have been the main supply depot due to its lasting use until A.D.85, especially when considering the short-lived depot at London perhaps having more strategic importance due to its location. There is no evidence to suggest that the amphitheatre was constructed during this 1st century period at Richborough prior to the foundation of the town. This may be further unlikely due to the role of the settlement primarily as a supply depot.

The urbanisation and formation of the town may have begun as early as the late 1st century. This is based on evidence of the roads being reconstructed and some metalled with a period of construction between A.D.85 – 90 (Cunliffe, 1968, 237-40). Additionally, the first masonry buildings appear to have been constructed during the late 1st century; an example studied by Cunliffe included a small, heated bath, a room with *opus signinum* floor and painted wall plaster (Cunliffe, 1968). This does seem surprisingly complex in form and architecture for this late 1st century date, a sentiment that Cunliffe also notes when considering the abnormal plan of the building compared to others of the same period (1968, 238-241). The growth of the settlement between A.D.50 and A.D.100 according to Cunliffe provides a picture of general commercial development with the construction of the "great monument" at the head of Watling Street perhaps considered the gateway to Britain (Cunliffe, 1968, 238-41). It is worth noting that what Cunliffe refers to throughout his investigation as the "great monument" in my view appears to be the triumphal arch marking Richborough's role in the landings and invasion of Britain. This may have also been constructed to mark the foundation of the town. During this period in the late 1st century there is also evidence for the destruction of the store buildings as shown in figure 4.35, marked as burnt timber buildings (Cunliffe, 1968). Additionally, Cunliffe suggests that there was an influx of industry to the settlement in the

form of "artisans and traders" attracted to the developing town due to its growth into a "thriving channel port" (Cunliffe, 1968, 240-1).
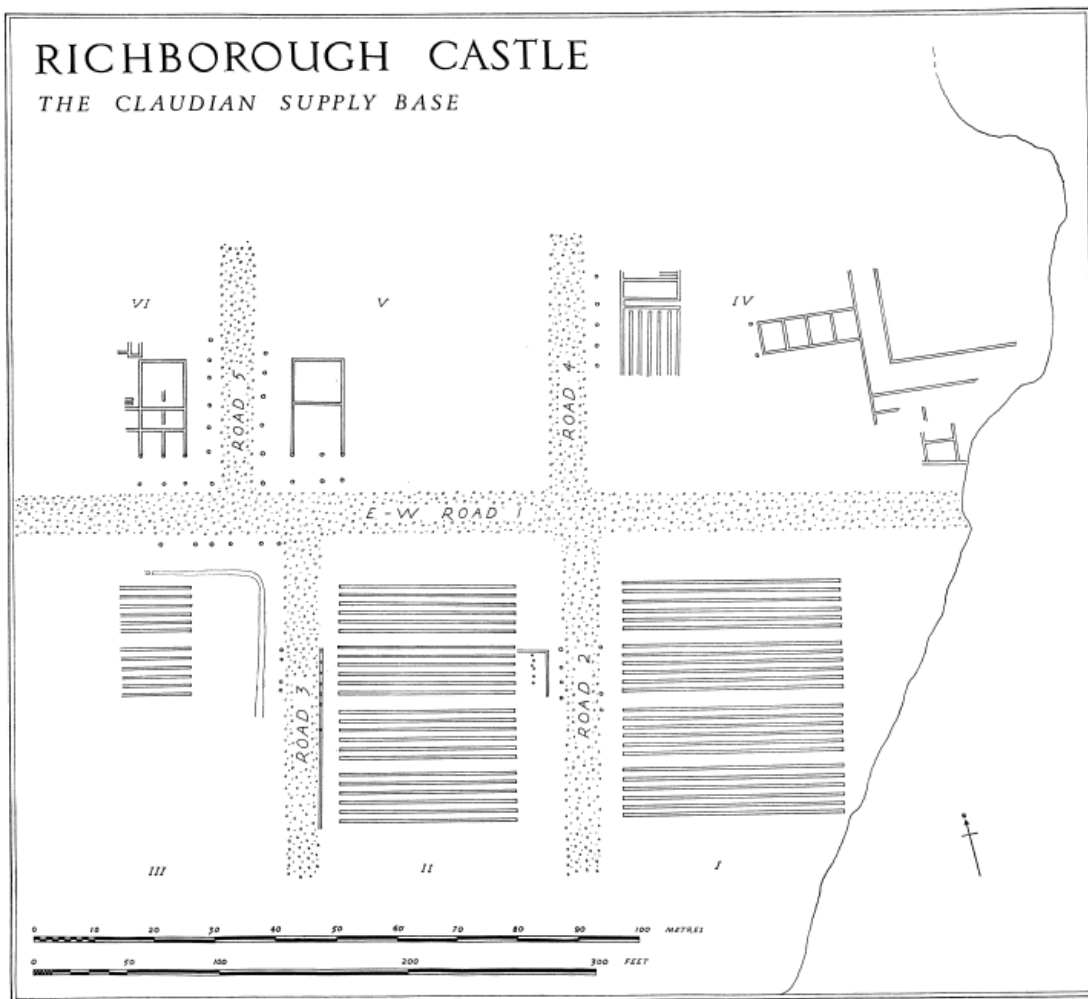
Figure 4. 34, plan of the early Claudian supply base at Richborough, Cunliffe, 1968, 239.

This urban period of the town appears to have continued through the 2nd century and into the mid-3rd century. Cunliffe has noted that this period shows the growth of the settlement and even shows it "flourishing" in the first half of the 2nd century (Cunliffe, 1968, 243). This is best demonstrated by the urbanisation and physical development of the town during this period. In *insula IV* at Site III the first masonry building was replaced by a larger example, while the disappearance of the floors would suggest they were made of timber. The building according to Cunliffe bears notable resemblance to its predecessor but also interestingly to the *mansio* excavated at Silchester (1968, 241-2). The date of construction is thought to have been during the thriving early mid-2nd century period. During this time the shops to the south-east corner of *insula V* were also entirely replaced in masonry (Cunliffe, 1968, 242-3). It seems apparent

that the period between the late 1st and mid-2nd century was one of large-scale urbanisation and overall development of the town of Richborough from its origins as a military base with clear evidence of masonry work.
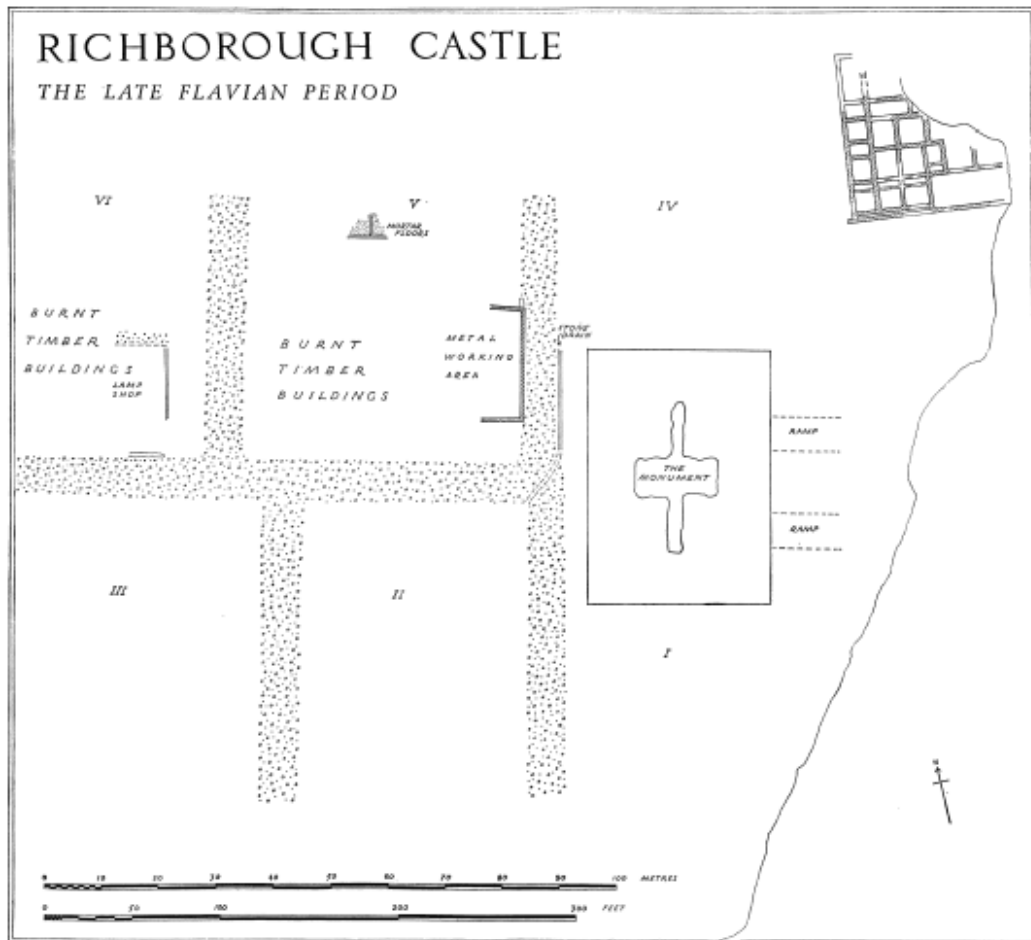
Figure 4. 35, Richborough in the late Flavian Period perhaps during the initial transformation of the settlement into a town, Cunliffe, 1968, 243

This introduces the possibility of the amphitheatre being constructed during this period also. Contextually one may presume the monument was constructed alongside the apparent expansion of the town itself. This would certainly make the amphitheatre in line with various other Romano-British examples I have investigated throughout this project. This possibility that the amphitheatre was built in either the late 1st or early mid-2nd centuries is entirely based upon assumption due to the urbanisation taking place within the town itself and not supported by any evidence from the amphitheatre specifically. When considering the monument itself, Cunliffe has proposed that the amphitheatre's masonry resembles other late 3rd century structures upon the hill where it was constructed (1968, 248). This may be highlighted further in section 4.8.2. though at this stage I agree with Cunliffe. Considering

material evidence, the finds include 19 late 3rd century and 13 4th century coins ranging up to Arcadius (Cunliffe, 1968, 248). While these finds may contribute to the proposed late 3rd century construction date, they only do so alongside Cunliffe's proposal in relation to the more convincing architectural evidence.

The archaeological and artefactual evidence would suggest a notable decline after the middle of the 2nd century at Richborough. This includes a lack of building evidence as well as the roads and structures falling into disuse, while there was a "sharp decrease" in finds of coins and pottery (Cunliffe, 1968, 242-3). The cause of this decline may have been the establishment of other towns and connections further inland causing a significant decrease in the importance of Richborough in the trade and economy of the continent. This is further marked by the town physically. By this period many other towns had been enclosed by banks and defences while at Richborough Cunliffe notes that the Antonine burial grounds was spreading almost up to the doors of the houses (1968, 243-4). In this instance, it appears that Richborough essentially overran its period of usefulness as a major trading settlement in Britain, especially with the growth of others such as London with direct access from the Thames inland. This is also marked through the lack of identified public buildings such as a forum at Richborough that has yet to be located. The evidence points to Richborough essentially being a smaller market town over this period with its growth and expansion halted by the mid-2nd century. As such I would propose that it is especially unlikely that the amphitheatre would have been constructed over this period.

Archaeological evidence suggests that during the 3rd century the site was reformed back into a prominent military settlement. An area of 1.1 acres around the "great monument" was enclosed by three ditches and a rampart essentially converting it into a defensive post (Cunliffe, 1968, 244). Wilmott confirms this also, noting that in the late 3rd century the triumphal arch was first fortified and then demolished later on during this period (2008, 119-120). Little evidence from this period survives from within the earth fort in terms of buildings and further construction work. Under Carausius (A.D.286-93) the earth fort was dismantled, and a larger stone fort was constructed, the area of enclosure now around 6 acres (Cunliffe, 1968, 245-6) (Fig. 4.36). This is the period Wilmott (2008) refers to in relation to the demolishing of the arch for the construction of this larger stone fort. The construction of this stone fort also demonstrates the capability and availability of resources in relation to masonry work at the settlement perhaps related to the construction of the amphitheatre. While Cunliffe notes that it is "difficult" to recognise the 3rd century structures within the fort, in the

north-east corner on site III the remains of a small bath block have been identified as depicted in figure 4.36 (Cunliffe, 1968, 247).
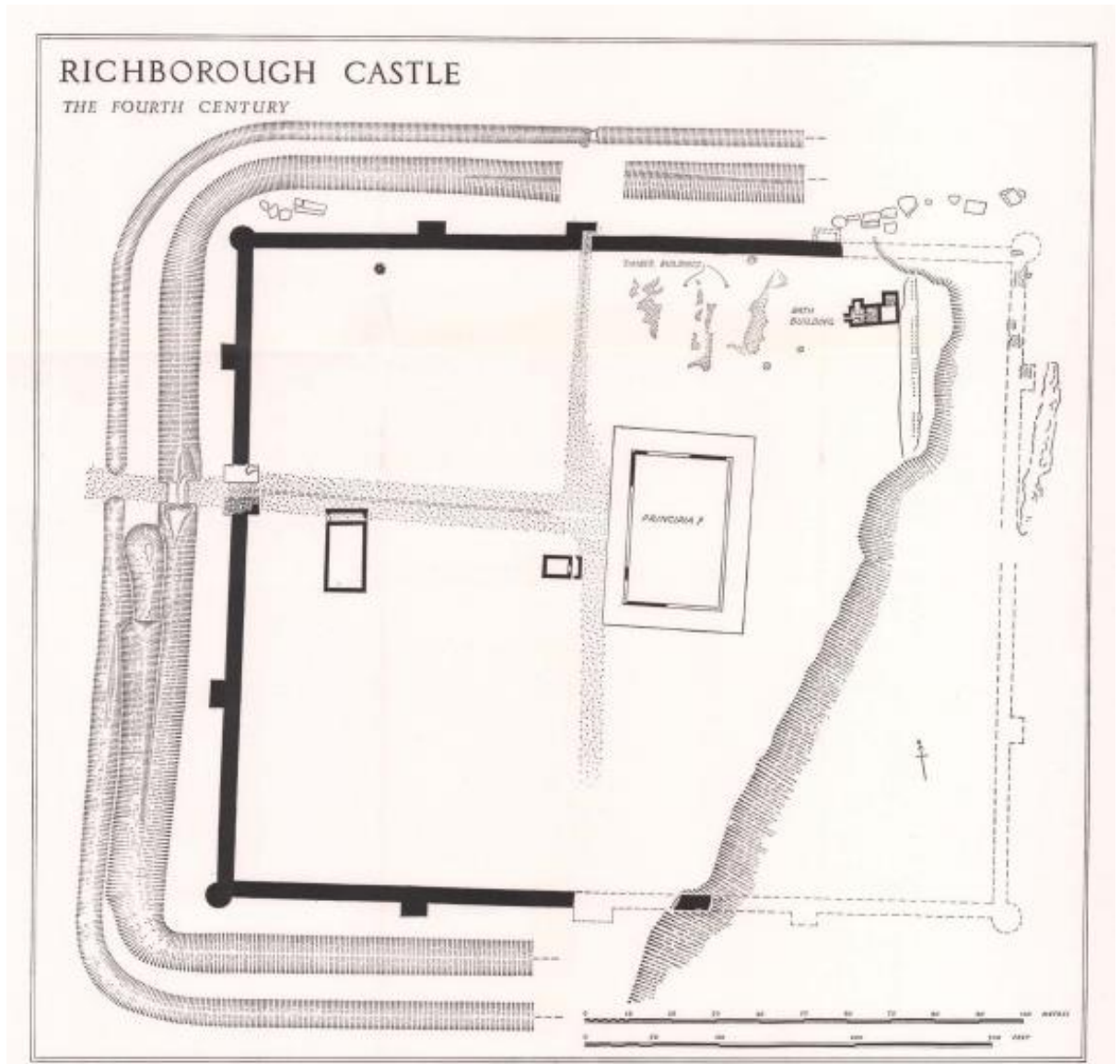
Figure 4. 36, Richborough 4th century fort complex after the late 3rd century reconstruction in masonry Cunliffe, 1968, 248.

If the amphitheatre was constructed during this late 3rd century period, either alongside the earlier earth fort or the later masonry fort this calls into question the classification of the monument. If the monument was constructed during this later period, which seems probable, it may very well be classified as a military amphitheatre, funded, planned and built by the legionaries who occupied the fort complex during the 3rd century. The 3rd century was a turbulent time in Britain as the Gallic empire split from the central government. Southern notes that a few years prior to A.D.260 during his reign Gallienus had withdrawn two legions in

Britain with Augusta II moving from Caerleon to Richborough around A.D.276 due to a lack of space at Caerleon (Southern, 2004, 394). This assists in explaining the transformation of the settlement at Richborough into at first an earthen fort, and then a masonry fortress. If these dates are correct, the earthen period of the fort complex only seems to have lasted around 10 – 17 years considering Cunliffe's proposed dates for the construction of the masonry fort. The lack of notable internal buildings and construction work during the period of the earthen fort would lead me to suggest that the amphitheatre was more likely to have been not constructed during this period. Additionally, the construction of the amphitheatre in masonry may demonstrate a connection to the slightly later masonry fort complex. It has been noted by the excavators that the masonry work of the amphitheatre is exactly like that of the walls of the Saxon masonry fort, suggesting the two may have been contemporary (Wilmott, 2008, 121). While it is possible that this amphitheatre at Richborough was constructed as an individual project, it is worth considering the wider context of the settlement and general large-scale projects of building and renovation. In this instance, the context and the architecture of the amphitheatre are more suggestive that the monument may have been constructed alongside the masonry Saxon fort in the later 3rd century. While the coins that were located and noted by Cunliffe (1968) on their own are not especially convincing, they do add to this theory providing possible proof of use or construction during this period.

If this was the case, the monument would certainly be considered a military amphitheatre. As such, when considering the groups or individuals one may suggest or assume that it was funded and planned in a similar way to other examples connected to legionary forts such as at Caerleon and Chester. It seems evident that the monument at Richborough despite being of masonry construction is not as architecturally complex as the examples at Caerleon and Chester. I have stressed throughout this project the individuality of these amphitheatres. As noted, Chester and Caerleon amphitheatres despite both being magnificent architecturally were not identical in planning or form. There is no reason to assume that Richborough should be of the same standard architecturally in this instance. Furthermore, as shall be discussed later, the lack of significant excavation of the Richborough Amphitheatre compared to other legionary examples in Britain has a significant impact on this issue. In my view, it is most probable that the amphitheatre was constructed during this late 3rd century period at Richborough, perhaps at the same time as the reconstruction of the fort itself in masonry and the destruction of the triumphal arch. In this case, despite not being in the same location, the amphitheatre may have been a replacement monument of sorts. Wilmott has proposed that the position of the amphitheatre due to it not taking advantage of the flank of the hill as one

might expect, must have been constructed to be purposefully visible from a significant distance (Wilmott, 2008, 121). He continues that if the monument was built at the same time as the Saxon Shore fort as I have suggested, it may have been intended to replace the monumental arch as a visible seamark to aid navigation (Wilmott, 2008, 121). This seems very much a possibility, though the precise position of the amphitheatre in relation to the shore during this period does not appear to have been noted.

In terms of motivations for constructing the amphitheatre, the role of the monument as a possible seamark and as a replacement for the previous triumphal arch is certainly significant. Additionally, one may suggest that the role of Richborough in the original invasion of Britain may have been a factor to some extent. It does seem evident that the existence of the triumphal arch up until this point remained an architectural reminder of this fact. With its destruction, the amphitheatre may have taken its place in this way also, as a physical reminder of the significance of Richborough during the 1st century invasion. Outside of this, the motivations for the construction may have been somewhat comparable to those at other legionary amphitheatres located in Britain. However, it is still worth considering the fact that the legionary amphitheatres at Caerleon and Chester were perhaps constructed two centuries prior to the example at Richborough. I would suggest that it is highly likely that the functional nature of the monument as an amphitheatre specifically must have been considered when considering why it was constructed. If it was simply a replacement for the triumphal arch in a symbolic sense and to be used as a seamark, there is no reason for an amphitheatre specifically to have been constructed, since those behind the project could have replicated or replaced the arch if needed. In this instance, the choice of constructing the amphitheatre rather than other monuments must have been deliberate and at least somewhat based upon the227 potential use of such a monument. This may be due to the link noted earlier in relation to Caerleon and Chester amphitheatres between these types of monuments and the military.

4.9.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Richborough:

The original excavation of the amphitheatre by Rolfe in 1848 appears to have misinterpreted the size of the monument massively. The excavation seems to have mistaken the limits of the arena wall for being the limits of the entire structure (Wilmott, 2008, 121). As such, the original plan published in 1849 shows stark differences from the more recent plan offered by the geophysical survey in 2001 (Fig. 4.37). However, observations made in the much earlier excavations do still have value as noted by Wilmott (2008) in relation to the specific features of the monument such as entrances, thickness of the walls and the types of materials used. One

thing that is especially notable in relation to the form and planning of the amphitheatre is the size that was correctly revaluated during the surveys in 2001. The resistivity survey shows that the arena measured 62 x 50m and was constructed as an oval (Wilmott, 2008, 120). This arena was one of the largest in Britain, even in comparison to the earlier legionary amphitheatres at Caerleon and Chester measuring 56.08 x 41.6m (Wilmott, 2008, 144) and 57.9 x 48.7m (Wilmott, 2008, 137). One of the reasons for this may have also been the role Richborough Amphitheatre could have taken as a navigation aid and seamark, since one would assume a larger structure would be easier to see and make out from a distance. Additionally, the size of Richborough may also have been a factor, especially when comparing the amphitheatre to that at Caerleon. As Southern noted one of the possible reasons for moving the legion to Richborough may have been due to a lack of space at Caerleon (Southern, 2004, 394). If this was the case, one could understand why a larger amphitheatre may have been constructed at Richborough to compensate for this issue. Furthermore, the status of the amphitheatre specifically may have been affected by its possible role as a replacement for the triumphal arch. Perhaps, if this was the case, one could expect complex architecture and decoration as noted at the amphitheatres of Caerleon and Chester.

Ongoing excavations at Richborough may provide further insight into the decoration of the monument specifically with very impressive and significant results. Senior properties historian at English Heritage Pattison has noted the discovery of the rendering of the inside wall that faced into the arena which as then plastered with traces of paint on the arena wall (Sherwood, 2021). The excavators have suggested there may have been series of painted rectangular panels with horizontal lines in red, yellow, black and blue. These may have contained "painted scenes" perhaps representing events within the amphitheatre (Sherwood, 2021). If this was the case, it would be especially significant with no other examples of this type of decoration having been identified at any other amphitheatres in Britain and only 19 – 20 examples found throughout the Roman empire (Sherwood, 2021). It would certainly elevate the status of the monument at Richborough and further indicate the individuality of the amphitheatre and the choices made during its construction. However, this is still very much theoretical; Pattison from English Heritage has stated "we don't have detail yet" having only excavated a "tiny fragment" of the wall (Sherwood, 2021) though they appear very hopeful in my own view.

The monument seems to have had two entrances, with one on each end of the long axis. Again, when compared to the other legionary amphitheatres in Britain, especially Caerleon Amphitheatre being constructed with a total of eight entrances (Wilmott, 2008), this seems like a far simpler design. However, Wilmott has further noted on each side of the short axes

there are large "almost circular anomalies" around 15m in diameter (2008, 120). There has been no convincing explanation posed for exactly what these are, though Wilmot that suggested that they be "extraordinarily well-preserved vaulted entrances" or the rubble from collapsed entrances, perhaps including the tribunals (Wilmott, 2008, 120). It does seem probable that these may have been entrances; the survey suggests that they were more deeply founded than the walls of the *cavea* and therefore it can be assumed that they represent significant structures (Wilmott, 2008, 120). If this was the case, then Richborough Amphitheatre would have had four entrances, bringing it more inline in this specific area of architecture with the legionary example at Chester. However, the precise nature of these entrances such as how the *cavea* was accessed is still to be unknown. It does appear that the two main broad entrances on the long axes would have led into the arena directly. This can be made out to some extent in figure 4.37 from the resistivity survey in 2001. There are features that one might expect at an amphitheatre by this period 'missing' or just not identified due to a lack of excavation such as arena recesses. Again, this may just be another sign of the individuality of the architecture of these amphitheatres, there are by no means any rules that would force those behind the construction and planning of the monument to add these features. Recent ongoing excavations have uncovered what has been identified as a *carcer* or "cell" with a doorway (Sherwood, 2021). However, the article does not identify where exactly this was located within the monument at this stage. Somewhat regardless, if correctly identified the *carcer* would have likely been used to hold animals or people before or for events.
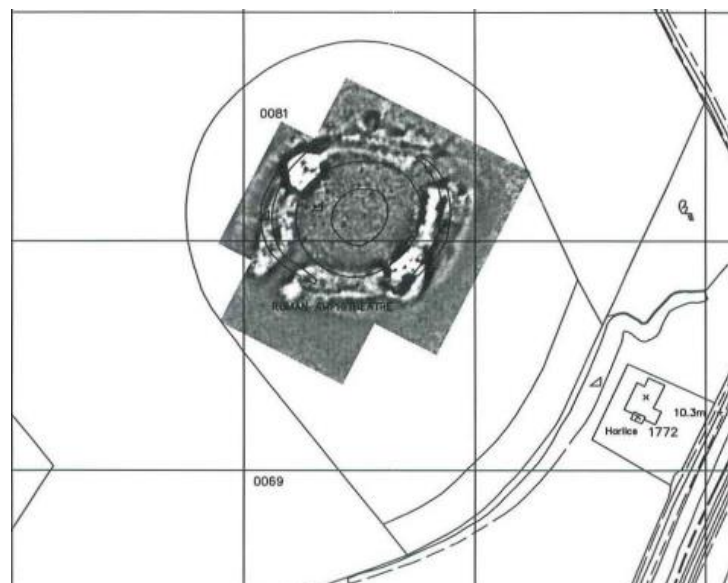
Figure 4. 37, image taken from the 2001 resistivity survey of Richborough Amphitheatre depicting the form of the monument and the entrances on the long axes, Martin, 2001.

The arena itself was hollowed out to a depth of 1 meter, and the spoil was then used to form the banks of the *cavea* (Wilmott, 2008, 121). Due to the common use of this technique throughout Britain, it is hardly suprising that it has been identified at Richborough Amphitheatre. It may be notable that this technique remained consistent from the first amphtiheatres constructed in Britain from the mid-1st century to the possibly latest example at Richborough in the late 3rd century. This shall be discussed further in the conclusion of this chapter. However Richborough does serve as the probable latest example of this technique used in Britain that has been identified. Overall the architecture of Richborough Amphitheatre from what can be identified appears suprisingly basic in construction. Again this is especially notable when considering the other legionary constructed examples at Caerleon and Chester. This highlights the individual nature of these monuments architecturally though one would expect by this later period, as well as the probable source of construction, the form of this amphitheatre if it was simplistic was primarily down to choice and or limiting factors such as budget and available resources. The similarities drawn between the amphitheatre walls and the walls of the Saxon shore fort noted by Wilmott (2008, 121) and Cunliffe (1968, 248) may explain this, as one may assume that the fort itself took priority in terms of allocation of resources due to its functional nature. However, if the amphitheatre itself was used as an important seamark this may have not been the case either. Cunliffe has proposed that the monument may have had only a short term of use. This is primarily based on the an inhumed body with a coin of Constans found over the western entrance suggesting that the building had gone out of use around this time, with the later coins found throughout the site were also perhaps the result of rubbish tipping (Cunliffe, 1968, 248). If this was the case, the monument may have even been constructed as to some extent a 'purposefully' temporary amphitheatre, as I suggested was the case at Dorchester. However, one would also think that if this was the case it is more probable that such a monument would have been constructed from a material easier to dismantle such as timber, as was the case at Dorchester Amphitheatre. Due to the current excavations being ongoing, there is probably still much to be discovered in relation to the architecture, decoration and use of the amphitheatre at Richborough. At this stage, the amphitheatre is still unique architecturally and displays the continuation of certain construction and architectural techniques from even the earliest Roman-British amphitheatres such as Dorchester and legionary examples at Caerleon and Chester.

4.9.3 Conclusions:

It appears most probable that the amphitheatre at Richborough was constructed during the late 3rd century perhaps in conjunction with the masonry rebuilding of the fort complex. The

physical evidence for this is lacking, only demonstrated by the coins identified (Cunliffe, 1968, 248) and the similarities in the masonry work of both the amphitheatre and the fort (Wilmott, 2008). The wider context within the settlement and surrounding area is also an important factor. The probable transfer of the legion to Richborough from Caerleon around A.D.276 (Southern, 2004, 394) would explain how those inhabiting the settlement at Richborough had the capability and funding to construct an amphitheatre. Additionally, the concept of the monument being a replacement for the triumphal arch that was deconstructed around this period both in a symbolic sense and a pragmatic one as a new seamark would go some way to explain their motivations behind the amphitheatre's construction. However, as I have discussed at length, these factors do not explain why the choice was made to construct an amphitheatre specifically over other potential monuments such as a replacement for the arch. In this instance, one must assume that the choice to construct the amphitheatre was at least in part due to the potential function and use of the monument, though without further excavation this is difficult to determine.

The amphitheatre itself I would categorise as a military amphitheatre due to the probable dating and legionary construction. Though another very significant aspect of Richborough Amphitheatre is the very late date of construction itself. In this sense, it is tempting to view the monument almost in an isolationary way, having been constructed around a century after the previous legionary and urban examples in Britain. However, it also to some extent serves to demonstrate some architectural continuity, with construction techniques noted at practically every Romano-British examples as far back as the very first amphitheatre at Dorchester. However, I do not believe it was directly influenced by any other examples in Britain as I have speculated with other Romano-British amphitheatres especially those constructed within the 1st century. One would expect by this later period amphitheatres were somewhat common knowledge and well established, especially when considering the legionary context at Richborough. The current excavations are very thought-provoking, especially with the prospect of detailed and unique decorations outlined by Pattison (Sherwood, 2021). However, the work is still ongoing and at this stage does not appear conclusive.

4.10: Late Romano-British Amphitheatres in use

Much of what was discussed in section 3.8 in relation to the uses of early Romano-British amphitheatres remains applicable to those I have categorised as "late" examined throughout this chapter. Despite reconstruction and mostly masonry constructions of these amphitheatres the direct evidence of events is still significantly lacking. Due to this, when considering structural or architectural evidence, in many cases it is more realistic to suggest events that

these monuments would or would not have been capable of hosting. This may be exemplified through architectural features such as the width of the entrance passages of an amphitheatre, making it either possible or impossible for certain animals or even people to access the arena through certain entrances. The use of masonry as well as the period of construction are the main areas in which these later amphitheatres differ from those considered in the previous chapter. However, in some cases the redesigning of these monuments and the apparent emphasis on certain architectural features may indicate that firstly the intent was there to make use of these monuments but also further intentions of modifying and building the amphitheatres with specific events in mind.

A primary further consideration here is the culture surrounding these amphitheatres during this later period within Roman Britain. It was noted in the previous chapter that some amphitheatres, especially those constructed by and in conjunction with the military settlements in Britain, may be considered a further representation of 'Romanitas' and as such the events within them may have been an extension of this. However, by this later period, this is certainly more debatable. I have argued throughout this chapter that amphitheatres and therefore their uses may have been established throughout Britain since the original introduction of the Roman administration. The freedom granted to those behind their construction and use especially over generations in my view would have most probably distorted the original 'Roman' association with both their forms and uses. It is perhaps even debatable, due to the individual context of these amphitheatres to what extent they would have been viewed by the those within Romano-British towns as 'Roman' at all. As such, I do not think it would be logical to suggest that the uses of these amphitheatres would have been strictly those that we often associate with traditionally Roman culture, since the monuments themselves, the settlements associated with them and possibly the population that both hosted and attended events within them during this period have evolved far beyond this concept. This further illustrates I think the theoretical progress made from the original concept of 'Romanisation'. While this may still be applicable to legionary amphitheatres such as at Caerleon and Chester, the Roman military cannot be considered a cultural monolith. They are also not immune to the cultural change and individuality noted at other Romano-British settlements. By this later date due to the now long-established Romano-British administration the requirement for amphitheatres to be used for military purposes including training may no longer be necessary.

4.10.1 Possible uses of the Cirencester Amphitheatre:

The consistent maintenance and attention paid to Cirencester Amphitheatre would suggest that it saw a notable amount of use. An issue somewhat specific to Cirencester, so far in Britain at least, is the presence of the theatre as well as the amphitheatre. As I discussed, we cannot tell if both monuments were in use during the same period, although the nature of the settlement and general evolution into a *civitas* would suggest that they were at some stage. One would assume that these were used to host different events and perhaps even increased the frequency of overall events and festivals due to more available space but also an increase in incentive and competition at Cirencester. Furthermore, the military presence at the settlement did not cease when it became a *civitas* either as I explained earlier in section 4.2. However, this evidence does not appear to be explicitly related to the amphitheatre, which makes considering specific events difficult.

Due to the lack of specific evidence, the main aspects I have considered which may relate to what events took place are architectural aspects of the amphitheatre itself. Many of these do not specify what events did take place, rather giving us an idea of what was possible or not possible due to the architectural limitations. For example, the height of the walls commented on by Wilmott as "worryingly low" (2008, 113). He further suggested that perhaps there were coping stones with arena wall top railings set into them as at London, Chester and Caerleon (Wilmott, 2008, 113). This would certainly increase the possibility of beast fighting or baiting events. Wilmott commented also when investigating the Tomen-y-Mur Amphitheatre that "one cannot imagine" that wild beasts could be presented safely (Wilmott, 2008, 115) due to the height of the walls and the size of the banks. Cirencester certainly was not limited by the size of the banks, though the height of the arena walls may have been an issue when hosting events involving more exotic beasts.

A feature that requires further specific attention is the addition of the two side chambers constructed either side of the entrance passages during the third phase of the monument. When these were constructed at Cirencester Amphitheatre the main comparison in Britain was the chamber accessed within the centre short axis entrance at the military amphitheatre of Caerleon (see section 4.2). However, this was noticeably more architecturally complex than those at Cirencester; the chamber at Caerleon was brick faced and barrel-vaulted. Further notable examples seem to have emerged later, notably at London after the masonry rebuild of the amphitheatre that shall be covered in the next section. The example at Caerleon has been theorised to have acted as a beast-pen (*carcer*) (Wilmott, 2008, 102) and this could certainly

also be the case at Cirencester. The size of the south-east chamber 2.4m long and 2.1m wide (Wilmott, 2008) would suggest that it could have held certain animals. Due to the earlier evidence that I have cited for the cavalry garrison in Cirencester during this period, one could suggest that these side chambers were used to store horses for events. The average height of a horse during this period is around 1.36m (Albarella, *et al.*, 2008, 1839). Although we do not have the height of the side chambers, the arena wall maximum height was believed to have around 1.8m (Wilmott, 2008, 112-3) meaning the entrance and height of the side chambers may have been able to accommodate these animals. However, the length of the chamber would certainly not sufficient to contain even one horse at least comfortably. The size of the chamber would also discount larger animals such as bears. Most probable, though lacking direct evidence, would be the housing smaller animals such as dogs used in baiting events as suggested at Tomen-y-Mur by Wilmott (Wilmott, 2008, 155). The fact that the chambers opened into the arena would suggest that they could have been involved in certain events despite their ostensibly smaller size. Furthermore, as suggested by Holbrook the north-west chamber may have had a timber door or drop gate (Holbrook, 1998, 163-4). They may have been used specifically to hold people for gladiatorial events or even executions.

4.10.2 Possible uses of the London Amphitheatre:

The more general proposals outlined in the previous chapter relating to the possible events which may have taken place within the first amphitheatre are still applicable to London during this period. Though the settlement has evidentially changed and thus the possible events which took place may have also evolved, one cannot suggest that this would also prevent events which possibly took place within the earlier timber phase from continuing. London's unique status and prominence may very well be represented within the events which took place at the amphitheatre as well as through the monument architecturally. Perhaps the settlement's new status and Hadrian's visit led to higher expectations when it came to events. Direct evidence in relation to the events within the amphitheatre depicted through material culture have also been discovered at London. A good example of this is the Samian pottery vessels located at the Romano-Celtic shrine to the south-east of the masonry amphitheatre at 54-66 Gresham Street as referenced in section 4.3. The wares depicted scenes of gladiatorial combat, Hingley proposing they may show the popularity of these events at London (Hingley, 2018, 127-8). If this was indeed a shrine, this also contributes heavily to the amphitheatre having a connection to religious and ritual practices. The introduction of these wares and artwork into material culture may impact the populations' tastes and demand for specific events and games. This is not enough to be seen as direct evidence of specific events taking

place within the arena, though one could suggest that the amphitheatre at London was used for religious festivals and events as I proposed during the amphitheatre's primary timber phase. Furthermore, due to the huge immigrant and merchant population material culture may simply be imported wares and not a direct reflection of the events in London.

While the construction of the Cripplegate Fort may be relevant to the uses of the amphitheatre, it is not possible to firmly suggest that the military stationed at the fort were involved in the events within the monument due to a lack of direct evidence. Perhaps more probable was the use of animals in events at the London Amphitheatre during this period. Architecturally, this phase of London's amphitheatre is certainly different from the earlier timber iteration. As mentioned in section 4.2 the side chambers (carceres) on either side of the entrance, specifically the southern chamber possibly equipped with a vertically sliding timber trapdoor (Bateman, 1997, 58). It could be suggested that this was used to safely hold animals before they were released into the arena for events. Additionally, the possibility of the coping stones located around the inner arena wall being used to support netting (Bateman, 1997, 56) would be indicative of the use of animals in events such as beast fighting or perhaps sacrifices. Further proof has been found in London's amphitheatre itself with the distal humerus of a brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) found in contemporary layers behind the arena wall (Bateman, 2011, 58). However, again this does not signify a specific event having taken place, rather opening up further possibilities relating to the use of animals within the arena. The primary features to take note of when considering the uses of the masonry rebuild of the London Amphitheatre are certainly the coping stones and the *carceres*. The inclusion of these gives the impression that the masonry reconstruction of the London Amphitheatre was done with certain events (probably involving animals) in mind throughout the planning and construction of the monument. In this case, the new amphitheatre at London is certainly a reflection of the culture and 'tastes' of those behind its construction. Given that the events within amphitheatres were also open to the wider population of London, to some extent this could be extrapolated to represent the general preferences of the people during this period. The best evidence we have relating to this phase of the London Amphitheatre points primarily towards the use of animals in events.

4.10.3 Possible uses of the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre:

The form and architecture of the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre, specifically the inclusion of the stage would provide a very wide variety of what the space could be used for. The focus seeming more on the arena than the stage itself in the first phase of the theatre-amphitheatre

meant that the arena could be used for more traditional events if needed such as *munera* or animal baiting. Despite the impeded view of the stage for those in the north-eastern side of the building (Wilmott, 2008, 125-6) during the monument's first phase of construction, the stage I would propose, would still have been the focus for some events and displays. The popularity of these events probably inspired the shift in focus towards the stage in the second phase of the amphitheatre's construction.

During the first phase of the amphitheatre there is also a notable piece of arena furniture, a cross shaped slot with arms 4.05m long and 457mm wide. In the centre there was a deeper section that seems to be provision for a "cruciform timber base plate" with an upright (Wilmott, 2008, 124-5). It has further been suggested that this baseplate was pegged down, indicating it may have been a maypole, gibbet or a post to which beasts could be chained (Kenyon, 1935, 218). There was a steady supply of animals at Verulamium with a substantial concentration of animal bones having been found. However, these are on the most part associated with the *macellum,* generally associated with a meat market (Niblett, 2001, 77). There are no significant findings within the amphitheatre complex itself that may suggest specific types of animals were used within the arena either for sacrifice or beast baiting events. Nonetheless, this interpretation of the base plate constructed into arena during the first phase of the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium does seem probable. Wilmott has further commented that the arena is somewhat small with a diameter of 24.34m (Wilmott, 2008); from my own calculations giving the arena an area of around 465.3m^2. Even the only other near circular arena at Silchester, constructed around a century prior, was significantly larger than this despite being on the smaller side when compared to the majority of Romano-British amphitheatres. This would have certainly influenced which events were possible at Verulamium. The limiting factors in relation to the extravagance and scale of events within the arena, may have been a contributing element towards the popularity of events and performances focused on the stage and 'theatre' aspect of the amphitheatre. As such this may have been one of the reasons for the architectural changes so soon after the proposed construction date of the original monument; those who used the amphitheatre may have realised that it served far better as a theatre due to its size.

Another issue to consider when contemplating the possible uses for the theatre-amphitheatre is its location. On the most part amphitheatres throughout Britain are placed outside the city defences, though this is not the case at Verulamium. Significantly, there is the large temple constructed very close to the amphitheatre in Insula XVI. This may suggest that the amphitheatre was also a place for religious gatherings, similar to the example at London and

the theatre at Gosbeck's Farm referenced earlier. The religious significance of the theatre is not specifically translated through the architecture of the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium or the finds at the site, though this was also an issue at London. Nevertheless, I would suggest the context of both monuments are highly suggestive of them having a role in religious gatherings and festivals. The Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre and temple were further connected to the complex on Folly Lane over the river by a road. This was seemingly another place of religious importance and the site of a mid-1st century royal burial. Niblett has proposed that at some point around the late 1st century a large Romano-Celtic temple had been constructed on the site of the funeral pyre (Niblett, 2001, 111). It has further been suggested that this road linking the complex at Folly Lane to the amphitheatre and temple on the other side of the river may have acted as a sort of processional way.

4.10.4 Possible uses of the Caerleon Amphitheatre:

The significant structural alterations over the almost two century period since the monument's initial construction are certainly useful when considering which events the Caerleon Amphitheatre was capable of and possibly built to host. I would propose that the effort put into and the nature of the remodelling of the amphitheatre in both A.D.140 and the 3rd century would suggest that it was certainly intended to be made use of. One issue to consider is the fact that the general form of the amphitheatre did remain consistent, perhaps suggesting that events which may have taken place prior in the period since its original construction continued to do so. The primarily military context of the amphitheatre at Caerleon when considering the tastes and preferences of individuals who hosted events there is significant. The modifications around A.D.140 seem to focus on revamping and to some extent optimising the amphitheatre for use again after a period of decay and damage, rather than preparing the monument for new specific events that can be identified.

The specific suggestion by Wheeler (1928) in relation to the reuse of the stone voussoir placed by the southern stair of the western entrance in my view is very unlikely as I discussed previously (section 4.4). Particularly significant during this period were the modifications which lead to the apparent destruction or walling off of the boxes. Wilmott has commented that it is "odd" that the northern stairs were filled in and walled up perhaps suggesting that the boxes were no longer in use (Wilmott, 2008, 150). This seems to have been due to the process of raising the levels of the entrances and reflooring the steps (Wilmott, 2008, 150). In this instance, the boxes appear to have been willingly 'sacrificed' to make way for these modifications. This is most probably in my view due to them not having been used to a great

extent throughout the original phase of the amphitheatre. However, their lack of use may indicate to some degree either the attitudes or nature of the spectators at Caerleon. One would assume these boxes were primarily used by higher ranking individuals either stationed at the fortress or visiting from elsewhere. It appears unlikely that there were none of these individuals stationed at Caerleon due to the settlement's importance. The lack of use and subsequent decommissioning of the boxes may be indicative of the attitudes within the amphitheatre in terms of the division of the spectators based on status, or perhaps architecturally placing more emphasis onto the convenience and access to the amphitheatre for people in general over elites or higher-ranking individuals.

Later modifications in the 3rd century focus on the access to the amphitheatre for spectators in general allowing a "horizontal approach for spectators" (Wilmott, 2005, 150). This again could be viewed as an optimisation of the experiences of spectators and those making use of the amphitheatre. These modifications do not point towards specific events within the arena, but rather the intention and motivation surrounding the general use of the monument over these periods. One could even suggest especially with the effort put into seemingly reinforcing the monument around A.D.140, it may have been a preparation for heavier use than originally anticipated with larger audiences. A further addition to the monument that is of paramount importance during the 3rd century period of alterations is the possible *nemeseum* (Wilmott, 2008, 150). This introduces a clear religious component to the amphitheatre at Caerleon, which I have discussed previously in relation to amphitheatres in general. To what extent this would have impacted events held at the amphitheatre is unknown, but it may have played an important role in ceremonies and religious festivals.

4.10.5 Possible uses of the Chester Amphitheatre:

Much like Caerleon Amphitheatre, if we are to consider the military context the primary feature in determining the use of the Chester Amphitheatre, one could propose that the use of the monument did not radically change from that of the earlier phase around A.D.96. This is due to many of the features remaining and being incorporated into the second phase as identified by Wilmott and Garner (2017, 162). Specifically, as discussed in the previous chapter the *nemeseum* seems to have remained during this second phase, perhaps hinting at the use of gladiators at Chester. Nemesis was widely believed to have been the goddess of gladiators and other slaves during this period (Hornum, 1934; Schweitzer, 1931). However, without direct evidence of gladiatorial games, this is a tentative suggestion. Moreover, the *nemeseum* could have also been used in ceremonies or religious festivals. Furthermore, the *nemeseum* at

Chester was not added to the exterior of the monument as was the case at Caerleon. It only had one entrance that led straight into the arena (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 156), perhaps suggesting that it played a more active role in events than the example at Caerleon.

Perhaps adding weight to the probability of gladiatorial games is an especially useful piece of arena furniture found within the amphitheatre, namely what is believed to be a "tethering block" (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 208) (Fig. 4.38). Furniture of this nature appears around the empire, and in Britain this could be compared to the example discussed at the theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium. Further examples of similar blocks have been located at the theatre at *Clunia* in Spain as well as the amphitheatre at *Viminiacum* (Wilmott, Garner, 2018, 208). An example has even been depicted in iconography within the province; the famous mosaic located in the villa of Bignor, West Sussex depicts two gladiators (a *retiarius* and a *secutor*) on either side of a stone block with an iron ring in the centre (Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 208-9). As can be seen in the image the fighters are not attached to the block, and as such it may have not been directly involved with gladiatorial games. If the comparison to Verulamium is considered, the block may have been more probably used in relation to animal baiting. In relation to Verulamium Kenyon (1935, 247) suggested this very use for the post onto which "baited beasts could be chained". In relation to the use of animals in the arena, the modifications made to the main northern entrance (Entrance 12) with the addition of the leaf gate as discussed may have been used to shield those seated close by in the *podium* from animals being led into the arena. It is hard to imagine that this feature of the gate was incidental and the idea of it providing a barrier for spectators is as such somewhat convincing. The different method of access to the *podium* at Entrance 3 through the additional *vomintoria* does explain why this feature was not necessary at that entrance even if it was also used to lead animals into the arena. Furthermore, the possibility of the main eastern entrance (Entrance 3) being more specifically for higher ranking and important spectators may mean that it was not used to lead animals into the arena.

The possible military role of the amphitheatre, primarily based upon its legionary context as discussed in relation to the first phases of the monument prior to A.D.100, may still be significant when considering its uses. However, one may expect the military importance of the monument and perhaps fortress as a whole to be somewhat diminished by this period due to the absorption of Wales into the Romano-British administration. Chester is closer to the frontier than the comparable example at Caerleon due to being further North, though by the second phase of the amphitheatre Hadrian's Wall would have been constructed and probably the Antonine Wall as well. However, with the recession of Roman military auxiliary settlements

and forts in Wales over this period (Guest, 2008, 7), perhaps the role of the two legionary settlements remained important in terms of security and keeping the province stable. The lack of amphitheatres constructed in the vicinity of legionary fortresses in Britain, Chester and Caerleon being the only examples, may suggest that the role of these monuments in the training of troops was not substantial. This is not to suggest they played no role in this process at all, though I do maintain that by the time of the second phase of Chester Amphitheatre, around a century after the pacification of Wales, its role in military training would have not been as significant.

Figure 4. 38, tethering stone from Chester arena, Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 209.

Figure 4. 39, gladiator mosaic from Bignor villa, Sussex, Wilmott, Garner, 2017, 209.

4.10.6 Possible uses of the Silchester Amphitheatre:

Despite the apparent focus on the use and functional nature of the arena, the second timber phase had some notable limiting factors when considering which events may have taken place within the monument. This particularly concerns the reduction in width of the northern entrance noted by Fulford (1989) and Wilmott (2008). Even if we take Fulford's suggestion of a width of 1.2m this would severely limit which animals could have been brought down the passage into the arena. However, the Southern entrance during this phase remained at a width of 3.3m (Wilmott, 2008, 100) so it would still be sufficient for bringing larger animals into the arena. This is even less of an issue when contemplating the third timber phase of the monument when the northern entrance was expanded greatly to 5.2m (Fulford, 1989, 174). Also, considering the height of the stone arena wall with the possible addition of a parapet or railing, there appears to have been few architectural limitations when considering what events may have taken place within the stone phase at Silchester.

Similar to the first phase at Silchester, horse remains appear to stand out during phase 2 and 3 of the monument. This was discussed in detail in the previous chapter, though a lot of emphasis was placed on the near circular shape of the arena in relation to displays involving horses. To what extent this is therefore applicable specifically to this second timber phase with the transformation of the arena is questionable. As noted in the previous chapter, it has been suggested that due to the shape of the first timber phase Silchester Amphitheatre also served as a circus (Fulford, 1989, 189-90). Despite this, Fulford notes that the "greatest incidence of horse" occurred in the third phase of the amphitheatre after the masonry rebuild (1989, 189). As such, this transformation of the arena shape may have been linked to the use of horses in events. The bones as with the evidence from the first phase of the amphitheatre may have ended up in the arena due to the introduction of spoil from outside the monument. This is further supported by the finds of pottery waste similar to those found in a pre-amphitheatre V-profiled ditch (F216) beneath the western seating bank (Fulford, 1989). The majority of animal bones found were from the silts and dumps involved in the raising of the arena during the stone phase (Grant, 1989, 137). Grant does note that many remains found may have been originally deposited close to the amphitheatre and as such, may reflect the "activities carried out within the structure" (1989, 137).

It is still very much possible that horses were used in the arena at Silchester, the bodies of those killed then dumped outside of the amphitheatre itself. Horses were used in displays in Rome for pulling light chariots, during gladiatorial displays and riding displays (Toynbee, 1973,

183-4). It is evident that the Britons even prior to the Roman invasion were familiar with fast two-horse chariots used for warfare (Bradley, 2009). As such, the size of the entrances and their later expansion may have allowed for the use of chariots in the arena, though there is no direct evidence for this. Furthermore, Fulford has commented it is unlikely that the side chambers were used to keep animals for events due to the recesses not connecting to the entrance or other passages, they would have to have been "negotiated into the chamber" before the start or during intervals (Fulford, 1989, 190). The use of the recesses themselves during both the second and third phases of Silchester Amphitheatre is not known. It seems most probable to me that they held some ritual importance in relation to events throughout both later phases due to the artefacts discovered within them. (Grant, 1989, 138). In the western recess five lower teeth of a horse were found. Deposits of horse skulls and teeth were not uncommon within pits and wells as a feature of Iron Age rituals in Britain (Grant, 1989, 138). Examples were also located at Newstead, (Ewart, 1911), Tripontium (Noddle 1973) and Northfleet (Ross 1968). If this was the case at Silchester the religious or ritual importance of the monument may be especially significant. These remains were not necessarily of animals killed within the arena or during performances. They may have also been natural mortalities later brought to the amphitheatre because of the monument's role in religious events and festivals (Grant, 1989, 138). It is evident that the amphitheatres of Britain did have a significant role within local rituals and religious events, the most notable example in my view being London. This ritual importance associated with the recesses of the later masonry phase of Silchester Amphitheatre has also been highlighted by Wilmott (2008, 102) in relation to the possible greensand altar base found in the eastern recess.

There is also the issue of how much or how often the amphitheatre was used, the monument does have an especially long period of use up to the mid-4th century (Wilmott, 2008, 103). Fulford places specific importance on the pollen data within the arena when attempting to determine this due to the accumulation of silts interrupted by gravel lenses representing arena surfaces (1989, 191). The greatest period of use based on this was the first timber phase, though Fulford rightfully also questions whether the arena would only be used or even useable with a gravelled surface (Fulford, 1989, 191). It is understandable that given the cost of hosting games as I have proposed at other amphitheatres in urban and military contexts throughout Britain, larger scale events may have been infrequent. Waste and rubbish from context group 3.4 at Silchester is telling, if it originated from the vicinity or within the amphitheatre it would imply a "fair degree of use" during this later 2nd and mid-3rd centuries (Fulford, 1989, 191). At

the same time, I would propose that the periods of rebuilding seemingly lining up to around a century apart would be indicative of use at those stages.

4.10.7 Possible uses of the Carmarthen Amphitheatre:

While Wilmott (2008) has noted evidence of long-term use at Carmarthen, due to the multiple layers of cobble in the north-east entrance, the specific uses of the amphitheatre are not well understood as with many other examples throughout Britain. The role of Carmarthen as a centre for the region, as well as the settlement's apparent importance in terms of coastal trade and the economy in Wales, may have both played a significant role in how the amphitheatre was used. Perhaps due to this, one might expect a wide variety of events to have taken place within the Carmarthen Amphitheatre due to it being the only suitable location within the region to host larger scale events and festivals. Additionally, if we consider the plausible overlap between the foundation of the town itself and the abandonment of the fort nearby there could have also been military influence in relation to how the amphitheatre was used. Especially by this later period, it stands to reason that members of the military as well as individuals involved in trade from elsewhere in the province or wider empire may have become accustomed to or at least had experience of events within amphitheatres. To some extent, this is evidenced by my proposed theory on how the amphitheatre was constructed in the first place at Carmarthen. It stands to reason that if individuals and groups were motivated to and capable of building the amphitheatre, they would also have some awareness of the uses of such a monument.

Despite the lack of confirmed other public buildings and monuments at Carmarthen, as expected, the amphitheatre was located outside of the town's defences. However, as mentioned earlier Street 1 may have led directly to the monument. Where this street joined with Street 2 a temple has been identified in the Priory Street excavations. This temple cannot be precisely dated due to a lack of evidence and later destruction by post-medieval pits and trenches (James, 2003, 50-3). However, if it existed during the same period of use as the amphitheatre the fact that Street 1 may have led right past the temple to the amphitheatre is notable. There is certainly a connection between the use of temples and amphitheatres for religious precessions and ceremonies (Wacher, 1978, 255-7). The connection between the two with the street may have created part of a processual way through Carmarthen, though there is no specific evidence to support this. Furthermore, it is somewhat dubious whether the road led to the amphitheatre specifically depending on the date of construction for the defences. Additionally, the position of the amphitheatre right beside the central road through

Carmarthen is significant. Even when not in use for events, the monument would have still served as a reminder of the status of Carmarthen and those behind its construction for anyone who passed through the town as noted in section 4.7.2

Unlike previous examples such as at Silchester and Tomen-y-Mur the size of the monument would not have been a limiting factor. The width of the north-east entrance noted by Wilmott (2008) of 6.1m would have easily allowed even larger animals to enter the arena. Unfortunately, the height of the arena wall does not appear to be known. If larger animals were used in events within the arena, though one would assume that the wall was high enough to keep the audience safe, or as with previous examples iron railings could have been mounted on top of the arena wall such as at London, Chester and Caerleon (2008, 112-4). Though there is no evidence confirming this, the architecture of the amphitheatre overall and the engineering that appears to have gone into the monument would suggest that this is not out of the capabilities of those behind the monument's construction.

105 - 110, Priory Street
Excavations 1980-1984

PHASE 1

quarry ditches

fence line

235

9592

Street 1

quarry ditch
3061

fence line 3099

layer 7306

Timber Building C1

Timber Building B1

fence lines

Street 2

drainage
gully
7372

Temple

pond
7312

fence line
7266

0   4   12   20 m.

26   46   66

A   D

B   C

Figure 4. 40, overall plan of phase 1 on Priory Street mid-late 2nd century, James, 2003, 50.
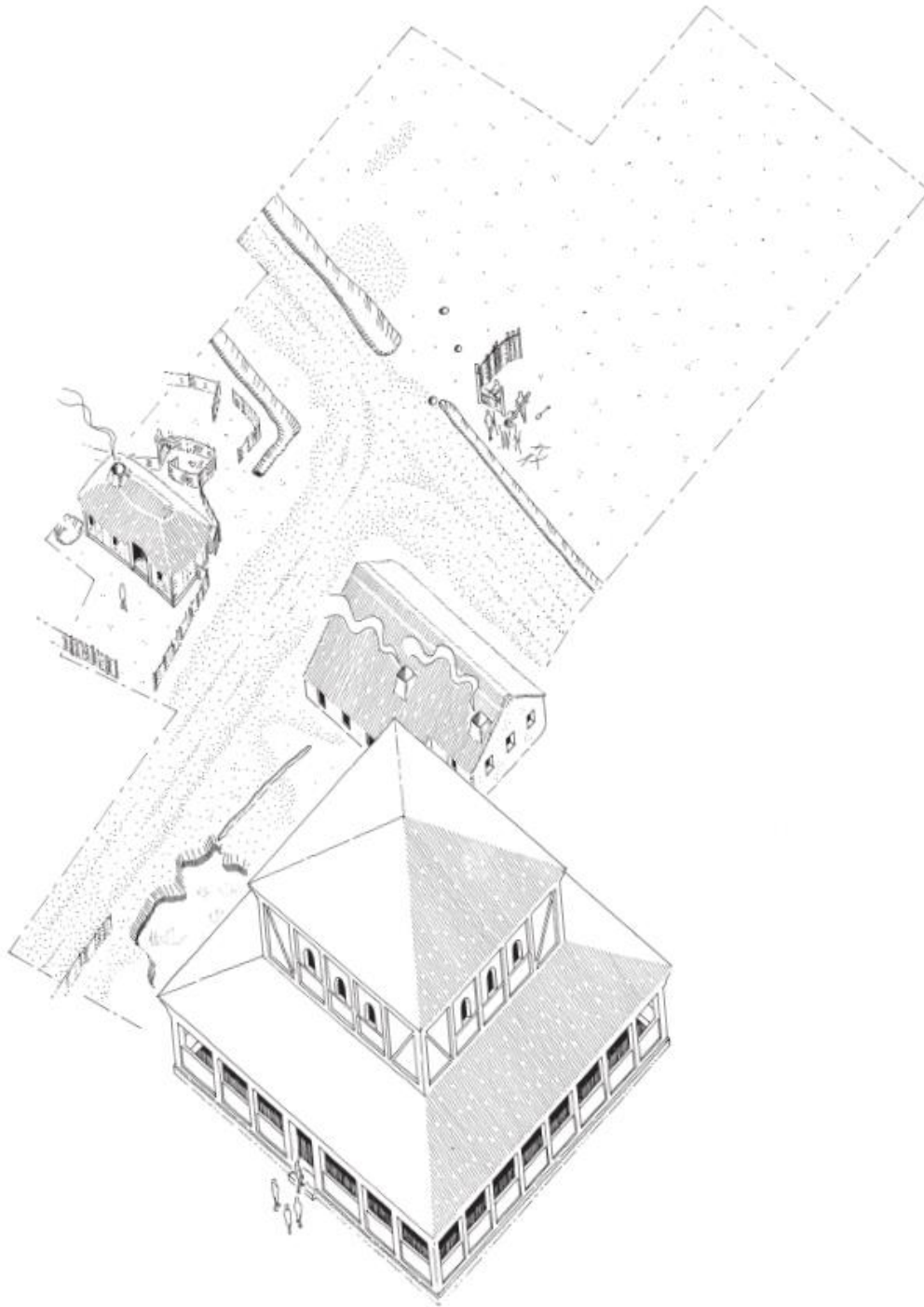
Figure 4. 41, reconstruction of phase 1 at Priory Street by Neil Ludlow, James, 2003, 51.

Unlike many other examples constructed through both the earlier 1st century period as well as this later period, Carmarthen Amphitheatre does not appear to have had recesses constructed on either axis of the arena. This could have impacted certain events as I have highlighted the potential roles of the *carceres* in events at amphitheatres such as at London as noted by Bateman (1997). Though to what extent they are necessary rather than convenient is debatable. Furthermore, by this later period in the mid-late 2nd century the awareness and uses of amphitheatres may have become more common place as the culture spreads alongside the wider emergence of the monuments themselves. However, it is always worth considering to what extent these monuments and their uses are representative of more local cultures and tastes.

4.10.8 Possible uses of the Richborough Amphitheatre:

The lack of complete excavations of Richborough Amphitheatre are a significant barrier when considering the specific uses of the monument. In this instance, context may be the best indicator of how the monument was used due to a current lack of notable artefacts and architectural examples. As I have discussed throughout this section, the choice to construct the amphitheatre specifically would suggest to some extent that there was also intention to use this monument. This is perhaps even more significant at Richborough due to the possible roles of the amphitheatre firstly in a symbolic sense as a replacement for the triumphal arch and secondly the physical role as a seamark noted by Wilmott (2008, 121). The fact that neither of these 'uses or roles probably taken by the amphitheatre are reliant upon the monument specifically being an amphitheatre would suggest to me that the decision to construct such a monument would be further based on what an amphitheatre can offer in terms of hosting events and larger scale gatherings. The military context and construction of the amphitheatre may have been significant in what the monument was used for with notable comparable amphitheatres at Caerleon and Chester. However, a further consideration is the probable very late date that I have suggested for Richborough Amphitheatre. One could understand the idea that in this sense Richborough Amphitheatre may even be viewed as a unique case being the only example constructed during the 3rd century in Britain and with such a notable period between the last examples constructed in the mid-late 2nd century. The changes of cultural tastes and preferences specifically in relation to the events hosted within Romano-British amphitheatres over this later period are not well documented or even researched. As such, comparison to earlier military examples at Caerleon and Chester, perhaps more significantly in the 2nd century provide the best contextual comparison. However, in my view, the probable

legionary construction and wider seemingly military context of Richborough Amphitheatre may even offset the notable time period in between these examples.

While I am not suggesting that there would have been no cultural changes in relation to the use of amphitheatres, the uses in relation to the military specifically in my view may be more consistent in relation to training purposes. The state of the empire in the 3rd century as it was "plagued" with issues and usurpation may have even fuelled this further (Southern, 2004, 394). While there is no specific evidence for this, it is notable that Gallienus had withdrawn two vexillations from two legions in Britain, one of them being II Augusta, the same legion that is believed to have moved to Richborough around A.D.276 (Southern, 2004, 394). As such, it should be noted that this was still a period of significant military unrest within the empire, including Britain. As suggested in relation to the original construction of Caerleon Amphitheatre, it is possible that *munera* played a significant role in the training of troops and instilling certain virtues into them (Bateman, 1997, 82). The identification in recent ongoing excavations of the possible *carcer* may be significant here as well. The small cell may have been used to hold wild animals and or people during events within the arena (Sherwood, 2021). Again, it should be stressed that these excavations are ongoing and not fully reported yet and the function and position of this feature does not seem to have been fully disclosed at this time. The article further suggests that the amphitheatre may have been used for gladiatorial contests, wild beast hunting and even executions (Sherwood, 2021). While these are all possible, and even probable due to the context of the monument, direct the evidence for any of these specific events is severely lacking. The excavations in the coming year will hopefully reveal more about the architecture and probable uses of Richborough Amphitheatre. Outside of the physical form of the monument, the location of the amphitheatre on the coast as well as the settlement's role in general, viewed as one of the gateways to Britain (Cunliffe, 1968, 238-41) may have been useful when considering the importation of animals and perhaps even people to include in displays. However, it does appear animal bone fragments located thus far are a result of butchery (Sherwood, 2021).

Chapter 5 – Amphitheatres of unknown dates:

5.1: Introduction

This chapter shall deal with the amphitheatres that are significant to my project but lack significant dating evidence. I will attempt to propose construction dates for these monuments and therefore where they may fit into this project chronologically, allowing me to continue making use of the same theoretical framework in relation to influence and cultural change as in earlier chapters. The three amphitheatres considered through this chapter are those at Newstead, Tomen-y-Mur, and Charterhouse on Mendip. In addition to the lack of suitable dating evidence, examples at Newstead and Tomen-y-Mur introduce another new 'category' of amphitheatres. These are labelled by Wilmott (2008) as 'auxiliary' amphitheatres due to them being connected to an auxiliary fort. It is vital that these are differentiated contextually from legionary examples such as those at Caerleon and Chester. Auxiliary forts make up the "vast majority" of military sites in Roman Britain; auxiliaries were non-citizens who acquired Roman citizenship upon retirement after 25 years of military service (Wilmott, 2008, 59). Despite the prevalence of these sites, the only two auxiliary amphitheatres identified in Roman Britain are at Newstead and Tomen-y-Mur; though the amphitheatre at Charterhouse on Mendip which I shall discuss may also fall into this category. With such a significant number and range of military installations in Britain (displayed later Fig. 5.10), it is certainly notable that as far as we know only 4 or 5 of these examples (depending on the status of the Charterhouse and Dorchester amphitheatres) had forts constructed within their vicinity. Amphitheatres and amphitheatre-like earthworks have been identified associated with similar auxiliary forts in Germany, specifically at the site of Dumbach on the Raetain *limes* and Zugmantel on the *limes* of Upper Germany. A more concrete example of an amphitheatre in this context was located in 2003 at Künzing in Bavaria (Wilmott, 2008, 59).

Limitations in relation to these amphitheatres are consistent with those in chapters 3 and 4, though perhaps to a further extent. While there is no significant dating evidence in relation to these amphitheatres, there have still been significant excavations and academic attention in relation to them. This further highlights limitations demonstrated by not only how much attention can be paid to historical monuments, but quite simply what is available regardless of the level of excavation and research these amphitheatres have been subject to. It is important not to consider these amphitheatres in isolation from those in previous chapters due to the lack of dating evidence. A key goal of this chapter is to attempt to place them chronologically and contextually within this project and the wider view of Romano-British amphitheatres in relation to cultural change and influence.

5.2: Newstead Amphitheatre

5.2.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

The monument at Newstead was originally proposed to be an amphitheatre in the 1990s by local archaeologist Dr W. Lonie, prompting Bradford University to undertake contour and geophysical surveys (Wilmott, 2008, 151). These confirmed the existence of the arena and encircling bank, with Bradford University carrying out limited excavations in order to identify the site, later interim reports published by Clarke *et al.* in 1996. The work was on a small scale, but the size and shape of the amphitheatre were identified (Wilmott, 2008). Excavations at the fort itself were carried out and reported on even earlier by Richmond (1948) providing a potential chronology of the settlement throughout its period of use. More recent publications focusing on Newstead on the Roman frontier have been significant such as by Sommer *et al.* (2012) and Hanson (2012) providing context to the amphitheatre and adding to the findings of Richmond's original report. Work relating to the amphitheatre specifically relies on the reports published by Clarke *et al.* and there does not seem to have been any significant excavation or focused published material since this period in the late 20th century.

The origins of this fort complex designated as 'auxiliary' may differentiate the architecture of the amphitheatre itself from legionary examples such as at Chester. However, it is worth considering that the auxiliaries residing at Newstead having been absorbed into the Roman military may already have been familiar with Roman values in relation to spectacle culture. This is something worth considering through my analysis, especially if those residing within the fort complex had already completed their required military service and had been rewarded with Roman citizenship. The fort complex at Newstead was of great importance to the Roman military. The site was placed on Dere street, the main Roman road through the south-east Scotland where the road meets the River Tweed. Jones has suggested that sites such as Newstead can be considered "gathering grounds" where troops regularly camped and probably acted as "springboards" for invasion into unconquered territory (Jones, 2012, 51). This could also be comparable to the earlier large-scale military camp at Chichester discussed in Chapter 3. The fort complex itself within this site is also considered a vital strategic position due to the reason mentioned above, it was constructed on a raised flat terrace above the River Tweed (Hanson, 2012, 63-4). The size of this fort complex is 6ha, around 14-15 acres in size, making it one of the largest in southern Scotland (Clarke, Wise, 1999, 373-4). Wilmott has even referred to the fort at Newstead as "unusually large" suggesting that the fort and camps were probably a base for up to 2000 auxiliary troops (Wilmott, 2008, 151-2).

This idea of the Newstead fort and surrounding camps acting as gathering grounds is certainly an issue worth considering relating to the amphitheatre. Newstead Amphitheatre was probably not constructed just to serve those garrisoned at the fort; rather it may have been used by countless auxiliaries, legionaries and those associated with the military passing through or gathering at Newstead. The fort here sits close to some 8 camps in the immediate area as well as some slightly further away such as at Millmount (Jones, 2012, 51). Curle (1911) was the first to investigate the 'annexes' surrounding the fort which were further surrounded by additional defences. Some of these annexes have official houses and bath houses which indicate extramural settlements. Further building work located within these areas suggest that these were defended military *vici* (Sommer, 2012, 77-80). These may have been to accommodate individuals who had completed their military service. In this instance, one could perhaps assume that the intended use or audience for the amphitheatre was like those at Caerleon or Chester as I have analysed in Chapters 3 and 4.

None of the camps themselves have specific dating evidence (Jones, 2012, 51), but the fort itself is believed to have been constructed during the Flavian period (Hanson, 2012, 63). Wilmott proposed that there were two periods of consistent occupation, the first for about 20 years after A.D.80 and the second 40 years after around A.D.140 (Wilmott, 2008, 151-2). The amphitheatre is lacking any specific dating evidence. The structure was discovered in 1992 in a hollow in front of the north-eastern corner of the fort (Sommer, 2012, 87). This can be observed through the features recorded by Curle in 1908 (Fig.5.1) as well as the wider contextual plan of the entire fort complex (Fig.5.2). Sommer has suggested that the amphitheatre along with the bath house represent two "special installations" of the 2nd century military *vicus* (Sommer, 2012, 86). This would place the construction of this amphitheatre in the Antonine phase of the fort. If this was the case, the construction of the amphitheatre may be seen as part of a building program to perhaps prepare the complex for the occupation during the Antonine period.
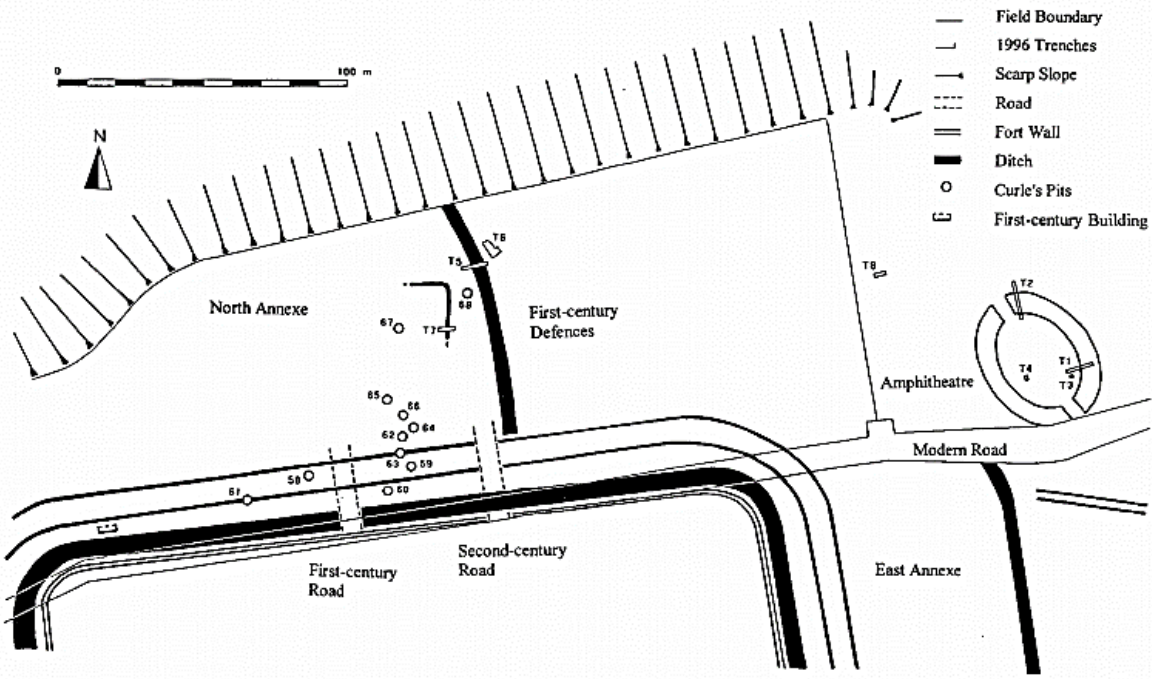
Figure 5. 1, features north of the Roman fort recorded by J, Curle in 1908, and a north/south ditch investigated by Trench in 1996 Clarke, Wise, 1999, 378.
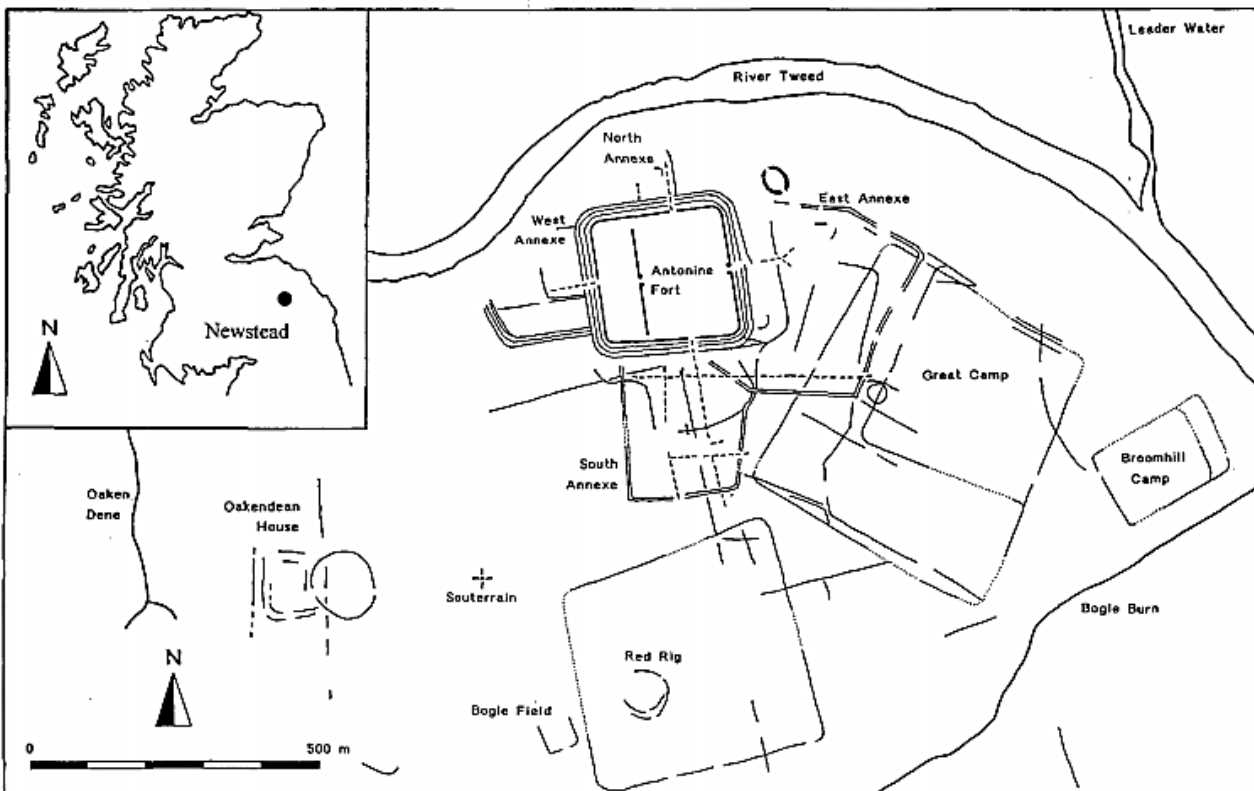

Figure 5. 2, plan of the Fort complex at Newstead and surrounding area, Clarke, Wise, 1999, 374

Sommer commented that during this 2nd century occupation of the settlement the layout and size of the buildings are "typical for buildings in many military *vici* in Britain" (Sommer, 2012, 84). Ditches to the east, south and probably north were "densely packed" with houses, the southern annex may have comprised of 80 – 100 buildings and the eastern annexe appears to have contained buildings lined on each side of the road over a length of 80m (Sommer, 2012, 84). A large majority if not all of these buildings seem to represent housing; specifically classed as "strip houses". These elongated buildings were constructed with a solid frame, the interior division of which was easily changeable without the need to alter the roof of the structure (Sommer, 2012, 84-5). These structures may have taken on a variety of uses such as to sell and store goods or offer services perhaps connected to the notable traces of industrial activities at Newstead over this period such as metal working (Sommer, 2012, 84-5). If these structures were used as domestic housing, specifically those lining the eastern annexe road, the population of Newstead during the Antonine period may have comprised of 500 – 1000. The bath house that has been located is surprisingly small and appears to have been constructed over the top of remains of the baths from the 1st century occupation in the western annexe. These cannot have served the fort as a whole, the baths measuring only 19 x 10m. Usually baths supporting fort complexes were two to three times this size; Sommer has suggested that these must have been for special clientele or visitors. Additionally, it is notable that they were surrounded by their own rampart on a cobbled base together with an elaborate latrine with an intricate system of pipes and drains (Sommer, 2012, 85-6). This further demonstrates that complex and ornate architecture was possible during this period at this fort complex.

Not only does this place the Newstead amphitheatre in an interesting position, acting as to some extent a communal centre for those residing within the fort and camps or those gathering there, but the dating of this amphitheatre also further suggests a very short period of usage, a maximum of around 40 years according to Wilmott (2008, 151-2) before the abandonment of the fort and settlement. This is provided we take the proposition that the amphitheatre was not constructed during this Flavian period, though evidence for this is still very much lacking. This short period of usage of the amphitheatre may be evident through the monument's architecture, perhaps comparing this amphitheatre to the evident temporary construction of the Dorchester Amphitheatre. However, this would further depend on if the fort complex was purposefully abandoned in the late 2nd century, or if it was through some catastrophe. The answer to this remains ambiguous, though no evidence of a catastrophe such as burnt remains have been recovered (Breeze, 2012, 119).

It appears somewhat unusual that this amphitheatre was constructed to accompany the fort complex at Newstead. As I mentioned previously this is rare in Britain. It is possible that the strategic importance and the role of Newstead as discussed thus far were significant factors in the decision to construct an amphitheatre here. This would be used to entertain those stationed at the fort as well as individuals gathering there or visiting from other camps, making Newstead more of a cultural centre. I do not believe the motivations behind this amphitheatre's construction to be based upon the need for military training or practice. Rather, due to the importance and size of the fort at Newstead and its probable role as a springboard, it may be a final time both auxiliary and legionary soldiers would be able to attend events for entertainment before setting out on campaign. The position of the amphitheatre outside of the fort complex and even outside of the defences (Fig.5.1) would suggest that it was not just to serve those who resided within the fort, even if temporarily. This is certainly something that may also be represented through the architecture of the amphitheatre and the events which took place within it. One might, expect for example, the seating capacity of the amphitheatre to be larger than just to accommodate the population residing within the fort itself, an issue that shall be discussed in section 5.2.1.

Considering the funding and source of construction, due to this amphitheatre at Newstead being linked to an auxiliary fort may suggest that the military were responsible. This may become clearer when investigating the specific architecture of the amphitheatre in section 5.2.1. Due to the unique context of this amphitheatre and the nature of the complex at Newstead, one may further suggest some top-down state encouragement relating to the construction of the amphitheatre. Given my previous points relating to the importance of this settlement for the gathering of troops, the addition of this amphitheatre may have been pushed in the interest of morale. It is worth mentioning at this point that the amphitheatre is certainly not as large or ornate as those constructed at the legionary sites of Caerleon and Chester, the arena measuring around 37 x 30m with an area of 870m^2 (Wilmott, 2008, 152). However, this is not as surprising when considering the temporary nature of the fort as highlighted earlier. Contextually, there seems to have been less motivation to construct an impressive large-scale monument to gain status or social standing. This amphitheatre at Newstead appears primarily for practical use and not built as an act of architectural munificence by the wealthy Romano-British elite. The role of Newstead as a springboard for further campaigns into Scotland may have caused the requirement for the amphitheatre to be built hurriedly, ready for this period of occupation. Furthermore, those behind its construction

may have expected the site to be somewhat temporary, either retreating from or pushing further into Scotland.

Additionally, it must be highlighted that this was an auxiliary amphitheatre, rather than accompanying a legionary fortress. However, due to the location and importance of Newstead it is further very probable that the audience frequently included legionaries. Hanson notes the presence of legionaries has been indicated even during the earlier Flavian-Trajanic occupation. This fragmentary evidence includes a set of *phalerae* (a type of military decoration normally preserved for legionaries) and two short swords identified as *gladii* from early pits (Hanson, 2012, 65-7). Furthermore, he suggested that the size of the barracks block is indicative of a legionary example, rather than auxiliary. However, again this may be also due to the sheer size and importance of this fort complex. Additionally, it is worth noting that this specific example is from the earlier occupation during the Flavian-Trajanic period. The presence of the *legio XX Valeria Victrix* is "strongly attested" over the Antonine period (Hanson, 2012, 69). A centurion from this legion Gaius Arrius Domitianus is recorded on a series of altars, one to Jupiter from the well in the *principia* and two from the ditch of the east annexe (Hanson, 2012, 68). There was also an altar dedicated to the *campestres* by a decurion named Aelius Marcus. This dedication is presumably from the 2nd century according to (Hanson, 2012, 69). He rightly mentions that this does not therefore mean that his unit was presided at the complex during this period. It can be concluded that to some extent both legionary and auxiliary troops were present at the site over the Antonine period.

The seemingly less complex and perhaps temporary construction of the amphitheatre may also be due to the lack of construction expertise brought by Roman legionary engineers. However, if this was the case, one might also expect it to be still superior or at least comparable to urban amphitheatres constructed by those outside the Roman military. Yet it appears to be notably smaller than all other examples I have investigated, even those far earlier such as Silchester Amphitheatre. Furthermore, from figure 5.1, there does not appear to be a specific impediment in relation to the possible size of the monument as can be seen in Fig.5.2. It is also perfectly possible that the form and size of the amphitheatre may have been deliberate, rather than due to a lack of ability, resources, or funding. This may be especially relevant if the Antonine date of the amphitheatre is to be believed due to the evident advances in building technology and architecture relating to amphitheatres through the 1st and early 2nd century.

As I prefaced earlier, I would suggest that the amphitheatre was funded and constructed through the military. This would make the funding similar to other examples associated with

forts such as Caerleon and Chester or associated with temporary important camps such as at Dorchester. The importance of the fort geographically and strategically as a gathering point probably contributed to construction of the amphitheatre here when compared to most forts throughout Britain during this period. Although the amphitheatre appears to have been constructed in the second phase of occupation, we can observe further building work during this period such as the small bath house, housing in the east and south annexes and the additional ditch systems surrounding the annexes (Sommer, 2012, 82-3). The amphitheatre may have been constructed alongside this evident building work as a part of a wider program taking place within the Newstead site. This could be viewed as an architectural revamp of the fort complex, preparing it for its intended purpose over this period of occupation as a springboard and gathering point for further invasions into Scotland. I shall continue to analyse the source of the amphitheatre's construction specifically throughout the next section dealing directly with the architecture of the monument. The military context and significance of this fort complex appears to be the direct reason behind the construction of the amphitheatre. This is an issue that may further be reflected through the architecture of the monument itself.

5.2.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Newstead:

The architecture of Newstead Amphitheatre appears unique, as is the monument's context. The monument measured 37 x 30m (Wilmott, 2008, 152) which is noticeably small compared to others constructed in the same period or even supposedly in the previous century. However, the size of the arena is certainly comparable to international examples of amphitheatres seemingly connected to auxiliary forts. The "bowl-shaped" auxiliary amphitheatre constructed at Dambach, Germany measured 35 x 28m, while a later 3rd century example located at Dura-Europos in modern Syria was 36 x 29m (Sommer, 2009, 48-9). Moving forward, I will continue this investigation under the premise that this amphitheatre was constructed under the Antonine occupation of the Newstead fort complex around A.D.140 (Wilmott, 2008, 151-2). Though I cannot be sure about this date, it appears to be the most plausible given Sommer's arguments discussed previously and shall allow me to consider the architecture and form of this amphitheatre in the wider context of this period. Taking this later date into account, a central issue I shall consider throughout this section is why this amphitheatre appears to be so distinct architecturally to those constructed prior to and during this same period, as I briefly discussed in section 5.1. One issue highlighted previously is the possible 'temporary' nature of the construction of Newstead Amphitheatre. I have also already discussed the possible reasons for this, though analysing the form of the amphitheatre may also provide much needed clarification in relation to the motivations and logistics behind the

monument's construction. Furthermore, based on my conclusion that the amphitheatre was constructed by the Roman military, introducing further comparisons to other examples at Caerleon and Chester may also prove useful, though these monuments are contextually vastly different from the example at Newstead.

Although there have been multiple notable periods of excavations at the Newstead fort complex, the remains of the amphitheatre are not as complete as other Romano-British examples. The topography of the site "strongly suggests" an entrance existed at the north-east end of the long axis. Additionally, an opposing entrance at the south-east could also be presumed, though any evidence has been destroyed by a modern road embankment (Clarke, Wise, 1999, 385) (Fig. 5.3). Excavations in 1993 allow the determination of an approximate outline with some confidence. The amphitheatre can be seen to have been elliptical rather than circular, with its long axis 40 degrees west of north. There has not been any notable analysis considering what technique may have been used to form the arena at Newstead. Due to the probability of the structure being constructed originally by the military as well as the elliptical shape of the arena, the 'four-circle' method could be suggested, though this is pure speculation at this stage.
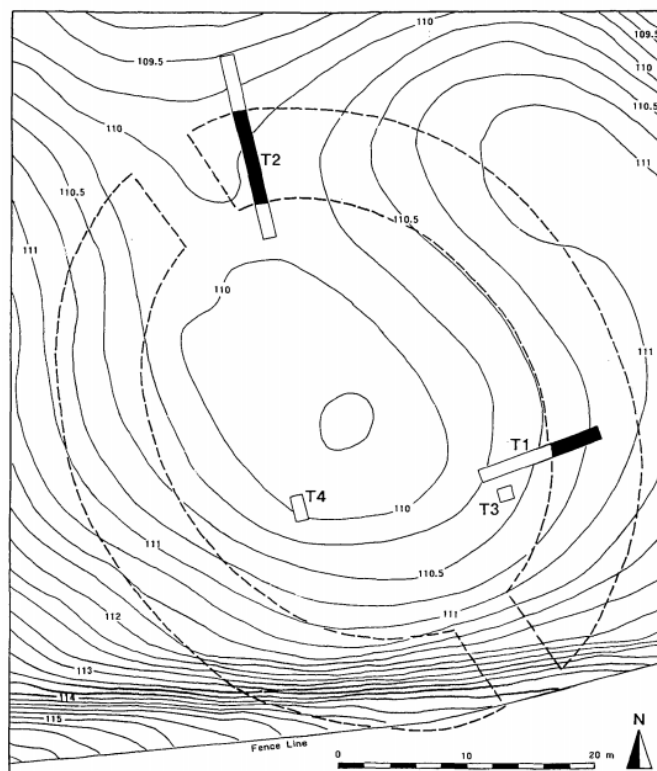

Figure 5. 3, plan of the amphitheatre based on 1993 contour survey, and locations of 1996 trial trenches, Clarke, Wise, 1999, 383

The measurements of the arena are noticeably small when compared to every other amphitheatre I have covered thus far. Furthermore, Newstead Amphitheatre was "nothing like" the Roman World's largest amphitheatres with complex provisions of access (Clarke, Wise, 1999, 397). We cannot be sure about the methods of access at Newstead Amphitheatre. This again highlights a primary issue in relation to the analysis of the architecture of Newstead's amphitheatre, is the lack of surviving features. At its highest point, the bank survives to around 0.5m above the natural ground surface, 2m above the buried surface of the central depression (Clarke, Wise, 1999, 382-3). In the usual fashion the banks appear to have been constructed using the material from the excavation of the arena (Sommer, 2012, 86). By this point during the 2nd century this technique has been very well established and appears to be visible at every other amphitheatre I have analysed and as such is to be expected. Sommer has put forward the possibility that these banks may have further acted as a foundation for timber seating; this is primarily due to the discovery relating to the amphitheatre at Künzing on the Danube in Germany with almost identical measurements (Sommer, 2012, 86). The arena of the amphitheatre at Künzing measured 36.5 x 30m (Wilmott, 2008, 152). This appears to me as a reasonable assumption, especially given the military origin of Newstead Amphitheatre. Timber framed seating, though more complex, has also been identified at both legionary amphitheatres at Chester and Caerleon as I discussed in the previous chapter.

The amphitheatre at Newstead took advantage of the local topography of the landscape; the monument was constructed to the northeast corner of the fort on the hillslope of Leaderfoot Brae (Wilmott, 2008, 151). The bank width has only been examined on the north side, reported by Wilmott, close to what was probably the northern entrance. The surviving width of the bank on the downhill side was 7m. This provided an estimated seating capacity of 1000 – 2000 (Wilmott, 2008, 152), based on estimates of the area required per person at other Romano-British arenas (Wacher 1995). As discussed in section 5.1, the Newstead Amphitheatre was constructed outside of an urban context and not as a monument to prove wealth or to gain status. This may explain the lack of decoration or what could be considered impressive architecture. Perhaps the amphitheatre was constructed with the possible audience size in mind, the estimations given by Wilmott of 1000 – 2000 (2008, 152) and Sommer's estimate of the population at Newstead being around 500 – 1000 (Sommer, 2012, 85-6). As I outlined previously in my view this amphitheatre is connected to a large extent to the fort complex acting as a widespread gathering ground and 'springboard' for the invasion into Scotland. With this in mind, the monument should have been able to support a larger audience than just the 500 – 1000 who populated the fort complex itself. This seems possible,

when taking the lower end of the suggested population figure and the higher end of the capacity range given by Wilmott (2008, 152). If this was the case, the size of this amphitheatre at Newstead, despite being noticeably small, even when compared to one of the most architecturally basic examples constructed in the 1st century at Silchester measuring 43 x 42.4m (Fulford, 1989, 13), could have been a purposeful choice by those behind its construction.

5.2.3 Conclusions:

It is very much apparent throughout my investigation of Newstead Amphitheatre that the examples in this new category of 'Auxiliary Amphitheatres', proposed by Wilmott (2008), are unique compared to the urban and legionary examples I have discussed thus far. This specific context also meant that the structure appears somewhat detached to some extent from the political sphere of Roman Britain. Unlike many other amphitheatres, as I have stressed throughout this investigation, Newstead was not constructed as a physical manifestation of political power, status or Roman force. Rather, the amphitheatre was constructed purposefully for those residing within the Newstead fort complex or gathering there before pushing further into Scotland. Due to the motivations behind the amphitheatre's construction and the monument's context, factors such as the notably smaller size and simplistic architecture of the structure make sense as pragmatic choices. Much like the amphitheatre at Silchester as discussed previously, we cannot put the choices in relation to the construction of Newstead Amphitheatre down to the "ignorance of the builder" (Fulford, 1989, 180-2) or a lack of capability. An important difference at Newstead is the high probability of military construction. This would further be suggestive that the choices in relation to the architecture of the amphitheatre were not down to a lack of capability or technological knowledge, especially when compared to other examples such as those at Caerleon or Chester constructed far earlier in the mid-late 1st century. These conclusions are furthermore not reliant upon the suggested construction date of the Antonine period suggested by Sommer (2012). As I have stated throughout this section, we cannot be sure of the construction date of Newstead Amphitheatre. Even if the amphitheatre at Newstead was constructed earlier, around the Flavian-Trajanic occupation of the fort complex, it would still be noticeably simple in terms of architecture and construction, especially when compared to urban examples of the same period such as at London and Chichester.

5.3: Charterhouse on Mendip Amphitheatre

5.3.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

The amphitheatre at Charterhouse was first proposed by Rev. H. M. Scarth in 1858. The monument was surveyed and partly excavated in 1909 by Gray (Wilmott, 2008, 127-8). However, this very short excavation as "unsatisfactory" and Gray noted the issue of ploughing over the site within living memory and as such the height of the banks could not be recovered (Wilmott, 2008). Small scale excavations took place at Charterhouse within the Romano-British settlement over 1961 – 1967 though these did not culminate in a full-scale excavation of the area (Budge *et al.*, 1974). More recently, in 2007 the Archaeological Survey and Investigation team at English Heritage undertook a measured survey of the earthwork remains at Charterhouse (Fradley, 2009). This also included architectural investigation and analysis of aerial photographs. Fradley (2009, 99) produced a comprehensive report of this series of investigations at Charterhouse that focuses "entirely on the Romano-British settlement" and makes use of the English Heritage report. This report does provide significant detail relating to the amphitheatre architecturally and contextually. Fradley's work does provide significant insight into the amphitheatre and does make use of Gray's original excavation report from 1909. Unfortunately, it seems that the monument has not been the focus of excavation since Gray's excavation.

The amphitheatre on the Mendip hills again introduces us to another 'category' of Romano-British amphitheatre. Wilmott describes this example as a "rural amphitheatre" (Wilmott, 2008, 127) due to its context. It is further worth noting that this is the only definite example within this category in Britain according to Wilmott (2008, 56). However, this categorisation by Wilmott is also not definitive, as a military presence has long been recognised at this location, a clear example being the small fortlet at the southern end of the site overlooking Blackmoor Valley which has been dated to the decades following the initial Claudian invasion of A.D.43 (Fradley, 2009, 108). This fact may call into question the categorisation of this amphitheatre, the monument being perhaps another example of an amphitheatre of military origin. The fortlet is believed to have been the successor to a promontory enclosure from the Pre-Roman Iron Age occupation of the site. However, there is evidence of a continuum of human activity in the area dating back to the Mesolithic period (Fradley, 2009, 115-6). Another significant and unique aspect of this settlement compared to those I have discussed so far is the industrial and economic importance of the mining industry at Charterhouse on Mendip. The Romano-British mining operation at Mendip is considered to be one of the earliest and most important industrial sites in Britain (McFarlane, Lundberg, Neff, 2014). Additionally, it has been widely

"accepted" that a substantial mining industry existed at Charterhouse in the pre-Roman period, though direct evidence is sparse (McFarlane, Lundberg, Neff, 2014, 432). As I discussed earlier within this project, the Roman interest in British metalliferous resources predated the invasion of A.D.43, Cornish tin appears to have been traded across the Mediterranean as early as the 4th century B.C. (McFarlane, Lundberg, Neff, 2014, 438). According to Whittick (1982) the Roman production and export of lead pigs established at Charterhouse was underway no later than A.D.49. This would make the Charterhouse settlement vitally important in an industrial and economic sense.

Considering Wilmott's categorisation, Charterhouse does appear unique compared to those amphitheatres I have previously analysed. This may be translated to the architecture and uses of the amphitheatre which was located on a hillslope above the Roman 'fortlet', and lead mining site believed to have been of a Claudian foundation (Wilmott, 2008, 127-8). Overall dating evidence for the amphitheatre itself is very poor, mainly reliant on one piece of Samian ware buried below the earthwork in the east entrance and Roman pottery found on the upper levels of the redeposited sand of the south bank. Wilmott has commented, "there is little doubt that the earthwork is of Roman date, though it is impossible to be more specific" (Wilmott, 2008 30) in relation to the construction date of the amphitheatre; a sentiment which from my own research unfortunately appears to be the case. This is made more problematic by the long-term use of the settlement and mines at Charterhouse. The GB cave record indicates a first "modest peak" in lead mining activity between A.D. 50 – 150 (McFarlane, Lundberg, Neff, 2014, 438). However, a lead minimum in the late 2nd century suggests mining at Mendip may have diminished due to political instability (Whittick, 1982). After this the lead record kept climbing steadily and reached its peak around A.D.400 but continuing until the end of the Roman era around A.D.600 (McFarlane, Lundberg, Neff, 2014, 438). The dating of the amphitheatre could possibly be further investigated based upon the architecture of the monument. However, as with various Romano-British examples such as Silchester or Newstead, simple or minimalistic architecture could just as easily be down to the choices or requirements of those behind the amphitheatre's construction as it could be an indicator of funding or status. As such, the architecture of the amphitheatre itself cannot be viewed as evidence in relation to the construction date.

On the issue of who was behind the construction of the amphitheatre at Charterhouse, the two main questions to consider are the nature of the wider settlement and the possibility of military intervention. The size of the structure is certainly significant, over the banks it measures 71.62 x 61m with the arena measuring 32m long east – west and 24.38m wide

(Wilmott, 2008, 127-8). It may be worth noting at this point when considering the possible categorisation and constructional origin of this amphitheatre that it has similar dimensions to the two auxiliary examples in Britain at Newstead and Tomen-y-Mur. Again, considering the possible motivations and who is responsible for the construction of the amphitheatre at Charterhouse, it is vital to investigate who the amphitheatre may have been constructed for. I would suggest, either it was constructed specifically to serve the military occupying the 'fortlet', or it was used by the settlement as a whole including military and civilian inhabitants. Due to the placement of the amphitheatre in relation to the fortlet and the settlement, it seems more probable that the amphitheatre was not just constructed in relation to the fortlet, though it is labelled as a "fort" in figure 5.4, an issue I shall discuss later on in this section. This does not rule out the possibility of the military being responsible for the amphitheatre's planning, funding or construction, rather perhaps making it less likely.
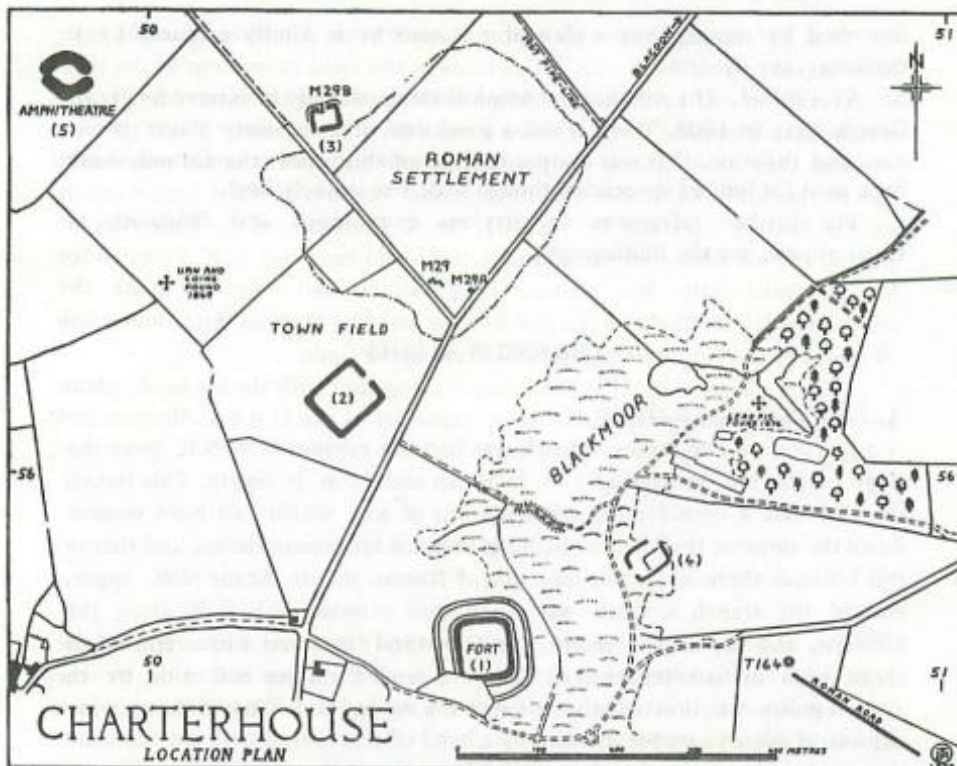
Figure 5. 4, area plan of the Charterhouse settlement based on ordnance survey, Budge, Russell, Boon, 1974, 329.

More recent excavations have revealed the scale of the settlement at Charterhouse. Fradley has placed a "conservative" estimate at around 27 ha (66.7 acres); he further comments that the inclusion of "ambiguous" earthwork elements surveyed and excluding the amphitheatre and fortlet the settlement may make up 36 ha (88.9 acres) (Fradley, 2009, 115). This is notably large even when compared to early *coloniae* designed for settling veteran soldiers such as at

Lincoln where the area within the defences was approximately 16.6 ha (41 acres) (Wacher, 1995, 132). However, urban centres with amphitheatres in Britain are mostly classified as *civitas* capitals such as London, Chichester and Silchester, the settlement at Charterhouse is still noticeably smaller in size. London was the largest example of a public town at over 130 ha (Millet, 1990).

I agree with Fradley that on the most part the general and problematic assumption that the site was just a "mining colony" conjures up the wrong connotations in relation to the nature of the settlement (Fradley, 2009, 116). It is evident from excavation that not only was this settlement large, including a fortlet and an amphitheatre, there also appears to be a significant amount of wealth present here. This can be noted through artefacts recovered during earlier excavations, although examples of coins, gemstones, pottery and brooches may be to some extent expected within urban contexts. Unique artefacts such as a bronze human 'mask' and a hoard of 900 coins dating up to A.D.284 have been found at the Charterhouse settlement (Fradley, 2009, 116-7). In total at least 65 building-platforms of varying sizes have been recorded throughout the Romano-British period. It must be noted however, these were not all necessarily occupied at the same time, as has been demonstrated by excavations at the nucleated settlements on Salisbury Plain (Fulford *et al.*, 2006, 48-86). Still, it is "equally the case" that the number of building-platforms uncovered through excavation do not demonstrate the actual entire number of structural platforms constructed, this is especially true when considering areas affected by post-medieval plough regimes (Fradley, 2009, 117). During excavations at Hill Ground in the 1960s significant evidence of stone building was recovered that appeared to have no corresponding earthwork identified by the present survey (Fradley, 2009, 117). Thus, the construction work throughout the settlement at Charterhouse may be even more significant than recorded through excavation.

The characterisation of the Charterhouse settlement as a whole appears evidently more than just a mining colony. Fradley has commented in relation to the settlement that the most "conspicuous evidence" of high-status elements were on the settlement periphery with the amphitheatre and fortlet, but internally possible centres "include the terraces enclosure recorded on the Upper Rains Batch" (Fradley, 2009, 117). When compared to other rural settlements such as at Salisbury Plain, though Charterhouse is also a nucleated settlement, there is no evidence of any form of field plan. Ploughing ridges recorded at the Hundred Acre Field suggest an earlier field-system, but this is unreliable since they follow the alignment of the post-18th century field layout, probably related to an episode of ploughing during the later periods. Unlike at Charterhouse on Mendip, the extensive agricultural systems identified at

Salisbury Plain "confirmed its rural status" (Fradley, 2009, 117). The economy at Charterhouse appears primarily based upon the mining industry there, and Fradley has rightly identified the settlement as a "dense, nucleated settlement based on a principally non-agricultural economy", calling into question whether it should be classed as 'urban' or not (Fradley, 2009, 118). This is a vital issue when considering the context, construction and significance of the amphitheatre there. I can understand why Wilmott (2008) would consider this amphitheatre as 'rural' due to its location, although the connotations that come with this categorisation in my view are problematic. The size of the settlement, military presence and evident diverse nature in terms of wealth and construction suggests Charterhouse may have formed a sort of socio-economic centre for the Mendip region (Fradley, 2009, 118). I would however be hesitant to label the settlement as 'urban' in the same sense as other examples of Romano-British towns such as London or Chichester. It is evidently an industrial centre and therefore, I would argue, not urban in the same sense as a *civitas* capital, where the construction of public buildings would be primarily motivated through incentives such as pursuit of political or social status, to display one's wealth or to 'beautify' the town as a whole. I nonetheless understand why Wilmott has categorised the amphitheatre at Charterhouse differently from all other examples throughout Roman Britain, since contextually it is certainly unique.

The importance of the Charterhouse settlement in an industrial sense as attested to by Fradley (2009) may be a key issue in relation to the construction of the amphitheatre. Just as with other examples with different contexts such as London and Newstead, this idea of them being economic, social or military 'centres' has been a factor of paramount importance behind the construction of the amphitheatres there. It also appears evident that there was a noticeable level of prosperity among the population at Charterhouse. The extensive housing at Charterhouse also differentiates it from other lead-mining centres such as at Flintshire and Shropshire (Fradley, 2009, 115-120). The status of Charterhouse in an industrial sense and the wealth this created may provide an explanation for the amphitheatre's construction. The fact that the settlement was occupied over multiple centuries, the lead mining not reaching its peak until around A.D.400 would give the settlement the necessary time to develop. It was not a temporary town or camp. This may have motivated individuals or groups residing there to actively invest into the settlement with public buildings. However, other examples that might be expected such as bathhouses have not been located. Nonetheless, the simplistic construction of the monument may be an indication that it was not constructed to display status or civic pride.

An alternative theory in relation to the construction and funding of the amphitheatre relies heavily on the presence of the fortlet. Todd (2007) has suggested through limited excavation that this fortlet consisted of two phases of enclosure, a polygonal enclosure and a later square enclosure, both formed of a bank and outer ditch (Todd, 2007). Fradley's survey (2009, 108) has however identified a third phase of this enclosure. These phases are dated in the decades following the Roman invasion of A.D.43, though for how long the fortlet was occupied is not known specifically. There is currently no universally accepted definition for what can be considered a "fortlet" compared to a fort, though the distinction, I would argue, is certainly important. In many cases they can be identified by their size, exemplified by figure 5.5. However, as Symonds notes, this is not always the case and creates a further issue considering where to draw the line in relation to the size of each category (Symonds, 2017, 8-9). Suggestions have been made, Mackensen (1987, 69) recommended drawing the line at 2000m^2 and Walker (1989, 105), one of 4150m^2. An additional question is that if the only real distinction is size, why have the specific phrase at all, rather than just small fort (Symonds, 2017). The distinction suggested by Frere and St Joseph is useful here and is especially relevant to my own investigation and the importance of the fortlet at Charterhouse. They suggest a fortlet can be defined by an absence of an administrative headquarters building or *principia* (Frere, St Joseph, 1983, 135). I am in agreement with Symonds as he mentions that nothing resembling a true *principia* has been detected within an installation indicative of a fortlet (2017, 10). There have been examples proposed such as the buildings at the fortlets at Tisavar, Tunisia and Castleshaw, Greater Manchester; though these are not definitive. The Castleshaw structure has also been interpreted as a workshop, commander's quarters and *265ansion* (Redhead, 1989, 62-5). The central building at Tisavar also is likely to be the ground floor of a multi-storey tower like structure (Gombeaud, 1901, 88).

Establishing that the structure at Charterhouse can be classified as a 'fortlet' impacts the context of the structure greatly and perhaps to what extent the members of the military stationed there were involved with the construction of the amphitheatre. Forts and fortresses can be viewed as "home bases for army units" (Symonds, 2017, 10); an example provided by Symonds of a unit report from Vindolanda, Northumberland revealed that more than half the unit was engaged on duties away from the fort (*TV II* 154). Those posted in fortlets appear to have been posted there temporarily; the diversity of designs is perhaps due to individual installations being "bespoke compositions" for specific tasks (Symonds, 2017, 7). This may to some extent explain the three different phases of enclosure at the fortlet at Charterhouse. There is also perhaps a significant psychological issue to consider in relation to fortlets.

Individuals separated from their home bases and lives they had built for months or years (Symonds, 2017, 11) were stationed at a new place for a specific reason. The amphitheatre was perhaps constructed in association with the fortlet during the early decades of occupation of the Charterhouse region. This may aid the possibility of military construction and funding, the amphitheatre assisting those who were briefly stationed at the fortlet by providing entertainment and cultural practises they might be used to from their home base or province. However, this is reliant upon the amphitheatre being constructed during the occupation of the fortlet. Dating for both appears to not be known and as such this is purely a theoretical connection, lacking specific evidence. Furthermore, if this factor played a significant role in relation to the construction of the amphitheatre at Charterhouse, one would expect to see many other notable examples of amphitheatres or other public buildings associated with fortlets. Within Britain there does not appear to be any specific examples of amphitheatres constructed in the direct vicinity of fortlets aside from the example at Charterhouse. When considering the maps depicted by figures 5.6 and 5.7, showing military installations of the Flavian period in both Wales and Scotland, the layout of the fortlets specifically does not suggest that they were constructed in relation to the amphitheatre we know of during this period. The majority of these fortlets during this period, and overall, in Britain, appear to have been constructed on the frontiers of Scotland. Due to the lack of amphitheatres in this location specifically during the Flavian period, there is evidentially no connection between the construction of fortlets and amphitheatres specifically. It is possible that other public buildings were constructed in place of an amphitheatre such as perhaps an ornate bathhouse, though evidence for this specifically appears lacking. The archaeology of the amphitheatre itself may support this, the size of the amphitheatre is noticeably like the auxiliary examples at Newstead and Tomen-y-Mur. Wilmott has further commented that the amphitheatre at Charterhouse has a "number of features in common with Tomen-y-Mur" (Wilmott, 2008, 130).
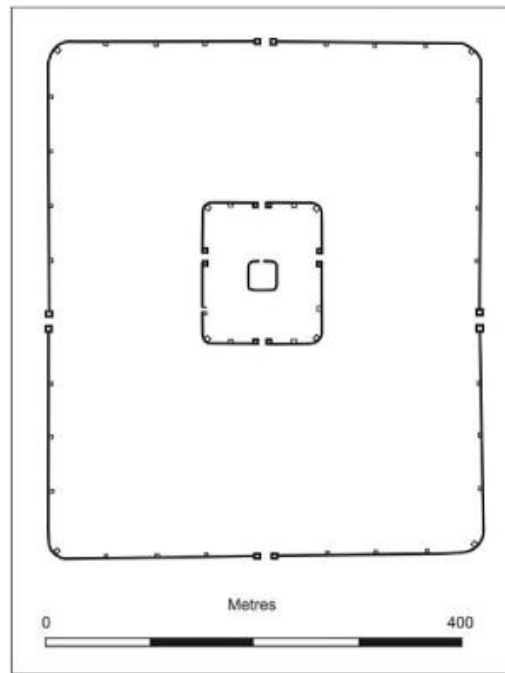
Figure 5. 5, the superimposed ramparts of the legionary fortress at Caerleon, the auxiliary fort at Wallsend, and the small internal fortlet enclosure at Old Burrow, Symonds, 2017, 8

Figure 5. 6, Map of military structures and roads throughout Flavian Scotland Symonds, 2017, 66.

Figure 5. 7, map of military structure throughout Flavian Wales and Exmoor, Symonds, 2017, 60.

At this stage, the placement of the amphitheatre away from the fortlet past the Roman settlement and the industrial nature of the settlement seemingly from straight after the invasion around A.D.49 would suggest that the monument is not strictly a 'military amphitheatre'. This is not to say that the military presence at Charterhouse could not have been used when considering the necessary knowledge for planning the amphitheatre or manpower for its construction. This could be separate from the possible military involvement in terms of funding and motivations behind the amphitheatre's construction. Romano-British military amphitheatres appear to have been constructed at places of great military significance. This is the case with Newstead presented as a sort of 'gathering ground' and 'springboard' for invasions into Scotland and at the larger legionary fortresses at Chester and Caerleon. The industrial significance and long-term socio-economic importance of the Charterhouse region may suggest that the amphitheatre was funded and commissioned by individuals or groups within the settlement like other urban examples.

The scale is noticeably larger than originally suspected, though the settlement is still not on the scale of *civitas* capitals of this period, such as London, Chichester or Silchester. The amphitheatre as such would not need to be as large. Additionally, the architecture of the structure may be explained through the use of the military in relation to the construction, especially when considering the apparent similarities to the auxiliary amphitheatre at Tomen-y-Mur (Wilmott, 2008). It may further be the case that the amphitheatre was constructed in a more pragmatic sense than other urban examples. While there is evidence of wealth the settlement appears to primarily act as an industrial centre, perhaps lacking the political and status driven motivations to construct public monuments noted at *civitas* capitals. As such, the requirement to construct these public monuments for political gains or to show off status would also not be as significant at Charterhouse. At this stage this appears to be like the more probable answer in my view, due to the somewhat 'rural' nature of the settlement. There is not enough definitive evidence for military funding and motivation to suggest that this is contextually a 'military amphitheatre'. The use of the military manpower may have certainly assisted when considering the construction and planning of the monument. The rural and industrial nature of this settlement and through this the amphitheatre is certainly unique in Britain.

5.3.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Charterhouse on Mendip:

There is much to consider in relation to the architecture of the amphitheatre at Charterhouse. Gray has noted that the entire monument has been ploughed over within his living memory

and therefore features such as the heights of the banks could not be recovered through excavation (Gray, 1909). However, Fradley mentions in his more recent survey the bank height as 19.5m wide and 3.3m high (Fradley, 2009, 110) in direct conflict with the earlier suggestion by Gray. As such, many aspects of the architecture of this amphitheatre cannot be identified and direct evidence or features are somewhat sparse despite excavations. The architecture of the monument may nevertheless give us a better idea of the structures origin in terms of who constructed it and their motivations.

Fradley mentions the current interpretation that the earthwork was a prehistoric monument in origin later utilised as some form of amphitheatre during the Romano-British period (Fradley, 2009, 113). What exactly the feature prior to the amphitheatre was is not known. The absence of an internal ditch may be due to the interior level having been lowered because of the construction of the amphitheatre (Fradley, 2009, 113). This is a noticeable feature in many of the amphitheatres I have analysed throughout this project, especially for the arena floor. One suggestion is that prior to the amphitheatre the site was occupied by a Bronze Age disc barrow due to three degraded barrows located nearby. The original monument consisted of a sub-circular bank of sandy soil obtained locally, with a layer of clay material also deposited near the base (Fradley, 2009, 113). The project of turning the monument into the amphitheatre involved lowering the interior area to form a somewhat level platform and probably to increase the seating capacity. The eastern entrance was re-cut and a new entrance on the western side was added and an outer ditch was cut on the north side "if not the whole monument" (Fradley, 2009, 113). Fradley has further suggested that this project may have also included a greater overall transformation of the monument from an original sub-circular plan to the 'elliptical' plan noted at the amphitheatre at Charterhouse (Fradley, 2009, 113). This would draw a significant and thought-provoking parallel to the amphitheatre at Dorchester.

Fradley has rightly pointed out that this would signify active engagement between the communities at Charterhouse, including the Roman military, Iron Age inhabitants and growing immigrant population as the settlement grew (Fradley, 2009, 116). The undertaking of this construction project, especially considering the structural parallel to the amphitheatre at Dorchester, seems to strengthen the proposal of military construction of the monument. It is still probable that the military were involved in the construction of the amphitheatre in terms of planning and the actual construction of the monument if the date were to align with the occupation of the fortlet at Charterhouse. I would still be very hesitant to suggest that this was a 'military amphitheatre'; especially due to the lack of specific dating of the monument, the knowledge and technology required to construct the amphitheatre from the disc barrow may

not have been only possessed by military engineers. The highly probable early date of the construction of Dorchester Amphitheatre, its context and its role as the first built in Britain indicates that the military were the only group capable and motivated to construct such a monument. However, if the Charterhouse Amphitheatre was constructed later, perhaps at a time in which amphitheatres and construction techniques were somewhat established in Roman Britain, the use of the disc barrow does not necessarily indicate military intervention. Rather, the use and redevelopment of a disc barrow may have made the job of constructing the monument easier than building the monument into a slope or on flat ground. Regardless, if the amphitheatre was indeed based upon a disc barrow it certainly shows a distinct evolution in terms of cultural needs and desires of the community at Charterhouse. Furthermore, the transformation of the earlier monument into the amphitheatre may have been culturally significant. Due to the long lasting pre-Roman occupation evidenced in Mendip as I referenced in section 5.3.1, this monument or landmark may have been recognisable perhaps for multiple generations prior to being transformed into an amphitheatre. This may act to some extent as a form of architectural continuity, especially if the monument before being an amphitheatre had acted as a significant landmark or meeting place.

The size of the amphitheatre measured 32 x 24.38m with the structure over the banks measuring 71.62m x 61m (Wilmott, 2008, 127-8) forming an elliptical structure. Fradley has given slightly differing figures, stating that the structure as a whole measured 69.5m east–west and 61.5m north–south. The interior space was recorded as 80 m^2 and the footprint of the entire monument around 210m^2 (Fradley, 2009. 110). This is certainly small when compared to urban and legionary amphitheatres throughout Britain. It is most comparable in size to the auxiliary amphitheatres such as Newstead and Tomen-y-Mur. The size of the amphitheatre is not all that surprising as I have previously mentioned. The settlement itself is larger than originally thought, according to Fradley (2009), though it is not comparable in size and probable population with the scale of urban towns, specifically *civitas* capitals such as London, Silchester or Chichester. Wilmott noted that Charterhouse Amphitheatre with regards to its outward appearance has features in common with Tomen-y-Mur (Wilmott, 2008, 130). The most "persuasive" being its position in a natural depression and the use of the spoil dug out from the arena to form the banks (Wilmott, 2008, 130). The soil was likely dumped between the timbers to form earthen banks as suggested at Newstead and Tomen-y-Mur (Sommer, 2009, 55). This technique has also been speculated to have been implemented during the construction of the multiple auxiliary amphitheatres discovered in modern Germany such as at Dambach, Zugmantel and Künzing (Sommer, 2009). However, the lack of dating evidence at

Charterhouse makes the significance of these features in relation to the introduction of amphitheatres into Britain over this period harder to recognise. Furthermore, the fact that the general construction technique of using the soil from the arena to form the banks has been identified to some extent in Romano-British amphitheatres of every category and construction origin I have explored means it is unsurprising that was also used at Charterhouse.

Analysis of the significance of the architecture of the amphitheatre at Charterhouse on Mendip is plagued by the lack of direct or even somewhat cautionary dating evidence available for the structure. Without at least a suggested or estimated date, it is hard to pinpoint the importance of these features in the overall context of my project. It may have been somewhat inspired by the similar project at Dorchester and if the dating were to suggest the amphitheatre was constructed at a similar time it may add weight to the probability of Charterhouse Amphitheatre also being of military origin very early into the Roman occupation of Britain. Alternatively, if the amphitheatre was dated later .those who constructed the amphitheatre may have not needed to rely upon the manpower, funding and knowledge of the military. This is a similar case when considering the features highlighted by Wilmott (2008) as discussed above. If this was perhaps one of the first or earlier examples of these techniques being used in relation to the construction of Romano-British amphitheatres, they would be far more significant but there again is no evidence pointing towards this. I would still propose the amphitheatre was not strictly military in origin, constructed to serve the settlement as a whole including the military and the miners as suggested by Wilmott (2008, 130). One of the main factors is again the distance which the amphitheatre was constructed from the fortlet itself (Fig.5.4). The architecture is certainly somewhat similar to the auxiliary amphitheatres of Newstead and Tomen-y-Mur, though the recognisable features are not solely representative of military construction, even more so without significant dating evidence. Additionally, the size of amphitheatre can be explained by the context and size of the Roman settlement at Charterhouse on Mendip.

5.3.3 Conclusions:

The settlement at Charterhouse certainly appears of unique importance within Roman Britain as well as the region being of significance in relation to mining prior to the Roman period (McFarlane, Lundberg, Neff, 2014, 432). It at this stage appears to be the only settlement of an at least somewhat 'rural' or primarily industrial nature in Britain to have an amphitheatre constructed alongside it. I would propose, as suggested by Fradley, that one of the principal reasons for this is the Charterhouse settlement acted as a socio-economic and industrial

centre for the Mendip region (Fradley, 2009, 118). However, I would be hesitant to categorise the settlement and as such the amphitheatre itself as "rural" as suggested by Wilmott (2008, 127) due to the connotations brought up by the word. It is evident from the more recent survey by Fradley (2009) that the settlement was significantly larger and more complex than originally thought than a mere 'mining colony'. Additionally, the significant amount of wealth that appears to have been possessed by some of the inhabitants as attested to by artefacts found through excavation, may further this suggestion that the settlement was of significant importance. The amphitheatre itself is also a testament to this since it would suggest that those residing within the settlement or the associated fortlet wanted to invest financially and architecturally into their home settlement.

It is certainly significant that the military installation at Charterhouse has been in my view rightfully classed as a 'fortlet'. However, there is no definitive archaeological connection between the fortlet and the amphitheatre and the distance between the two suggests to me that they are less likely to have been constructed together, or that the amphitheatre was built primarily to serve those within the fortlet. Conversely, I would suggest that the revolving door like occupations of the fortlet would more perhaps make those stationed there temporarily less likely to invest financially in the construction of the amphitheatre. The architecture of the amphitheatre itself, though Wilmott has pointed out it appears to have some features in common with the auxiliary example at Tomen-y-Mur (2008, 130), cannot be considered proof of military construction. The limited archaeological evidence available does not to me suggest military construction. The amphitheatre's size is somewhat explainable simply due to the size of the settlement and potential audience. The amphitheatre itself does make use of some common architectural techniques, such as the use of spoil from the arena to form the banks (Wilmott, 2008, 130). The significance of this in the wider context of Romano-British amphitheatres cannot be fully explored due or the lack of any noteworthy dating evidence. Overall, it is clear that the amphitheatre at Charterhouse is contextually unique, attached to what I would consider primarily an industrial settlement which has notable evidence of wealth. The settlement may be considered a "socio-economic" centre of the Mendip region, and as such is it somewhat understandable why this amphitheatre was constructed there.

5.4: Tomen-y-Mur Amphitheatre

5.4.1 Context, Construction and Funding:

T. Pennant wrote the first description of Tomen-y-Mur Amphitheatre in 1784. A fuller description was then later published by Allen in 1888 (Wilmott, 2008, 153). This seemed flawed, as Allen noted that the monument had a circular enclosure (1888). In 1938 Gresham recorded damage to the monument and provided some of his own interpretations of the architecture of the monument (Wilmott, 2008). The amphitheatre specifically is notably lacking when it comes to published materials or focused excavation compared to even the other auxiliary example at Newstead. The fort and settlement were investigated in detail by Evans in 1871 providing a lot of detail surrounding the excavations during the 19th century (Evans, 1871). More recently the military complex has been subject to aerial mapping with a report published by Driver and Browne (2008) noting the multiple features discovered throughout the complex. Geological and geophysical surveys were carried out in 2008 and 2009 revealed more about the settlement and were reported on by Jones in 2018 through the Snowdonia National Park Authority. The amphitheatre itself has not been subject to significant focused work or excavation since those recorded by Gresham in 1938, the more recent academic focus seems to encompass the military complex. It must be noted that even as a whole, published works on Tomen-y-Mur are lacking compared to most other Romano-British amphitheatres.

The amphitheatre at Tomen-y-Mur is the second example aside from Newstead that is associated with an auxiliary fort complex. As I discussed in relation to the auxiliary amphitheatre at Newstead, the rarity of Romano-British amphitheatres constructed in situ alongside auxiliary forts suggests that the examples that do exist must be important settlements in some respects. One of the primary factors I suggested for the construction of the amphitheatre at Newstead was the settlement's role as a gathering ground for troops from the surrounding areas as well as a 'springboard' for further invasions into Scotland as suggested by Jones (2012, 51). Additionally, it must be considered why those behind the construction of the amphitheatre at Tomen-y-Mur choose this location and the auxiliary fort? The fort is located in Snowdonia occupying a promontory on the east side of the Ffestiniog Vale about halfway down the slips of Myndd (Wilmott, 2008, 153) on a slope above the modern village of Trawsfynydd and Llyn Trawsfynydd (Jones, 2018, 2). Wilmott has stated the fort is at the centre of an "extraordinary archaeological landscape" mostly revealed through aerial photography (Wilmott, 2008, 153-4). This is further evident in the report by T, Driver and D, Browne (2008) recording the discoveries through "aerial reconnaissance and mapping" from

1964 – 2001. Furthermore, there has been a series of excavations at Tomen-y-Mur over the last two centuries with a watching brief taking place as recently as April 2018 by the Snowdonia National Park Authority in order to generally maintain the site (Jones, 2018, 1). However, Wilmott has highlighted the lack of significant excavation efforts (2008, 153) resulting in the specific dating of features at this site not being well understood.

The site chosen for this fort complex may provide an interesting indication of its importance in the wider context of the campaigns into Wales. The fort was positioned at the centre of "four great communications", where two main Roman roads crossed each other at Tomen-y-Mur (Evans, 1871, 190). This would make the fort complex at Tomen-y-Mur certainly an area of strategic and infrastructural importance. The geological position of this fort complex perhaps allowed it, much like Newstead, to act as a 'gathering ground' or 'springboard' for troops when planning further campaigns. Additionally, the importance of Tomen-y-Mur logistically for the movement of troops and supplies would also be significant, especially earlier on when it was considered a frontier fort complex.

There appear to have been two periods of occupation at Tomen-y-Mur. The fort seems to have originally been built in the Flavian period around A.D.77-78, as part of Agricola's early campaigns (Driver, Browne, 2008, 3). This certainly looks probable considering the timeline of the Roman invasion into Wales demonstrated by figure 5.8 and the position of Tomen-y-Mur as shown in figure 5.9. The Flavian fort measured some 1.75ha (4.3acres) according to Wilmott (2008, 153) and 2.03ha (5 acres) as recorded by Crew and Webster (2010). Both seem to agree on a roughly Flavian date and primarily timber and earth construction, though direct evidence of this appears somewhat lacking. As is to be expected, and in a similar vein to the auxiliary fort at Newstead, the purpose and motivations behind the construction of the fort itself are specifically to assist with or act as a presumably somewhat temporary base for expansionary campaigns within Britain. Similarly, to Newstead again, this early fort was constructed of turf and timber. The first phase of construction and occupation lasted until the Hadrianic period in which it was reconstructed in masonry around A.D.110 – 120, though Wilmott had further proposed that the fort complex was subsequently abandoned by A.D.140 (Wilmott, 2008).
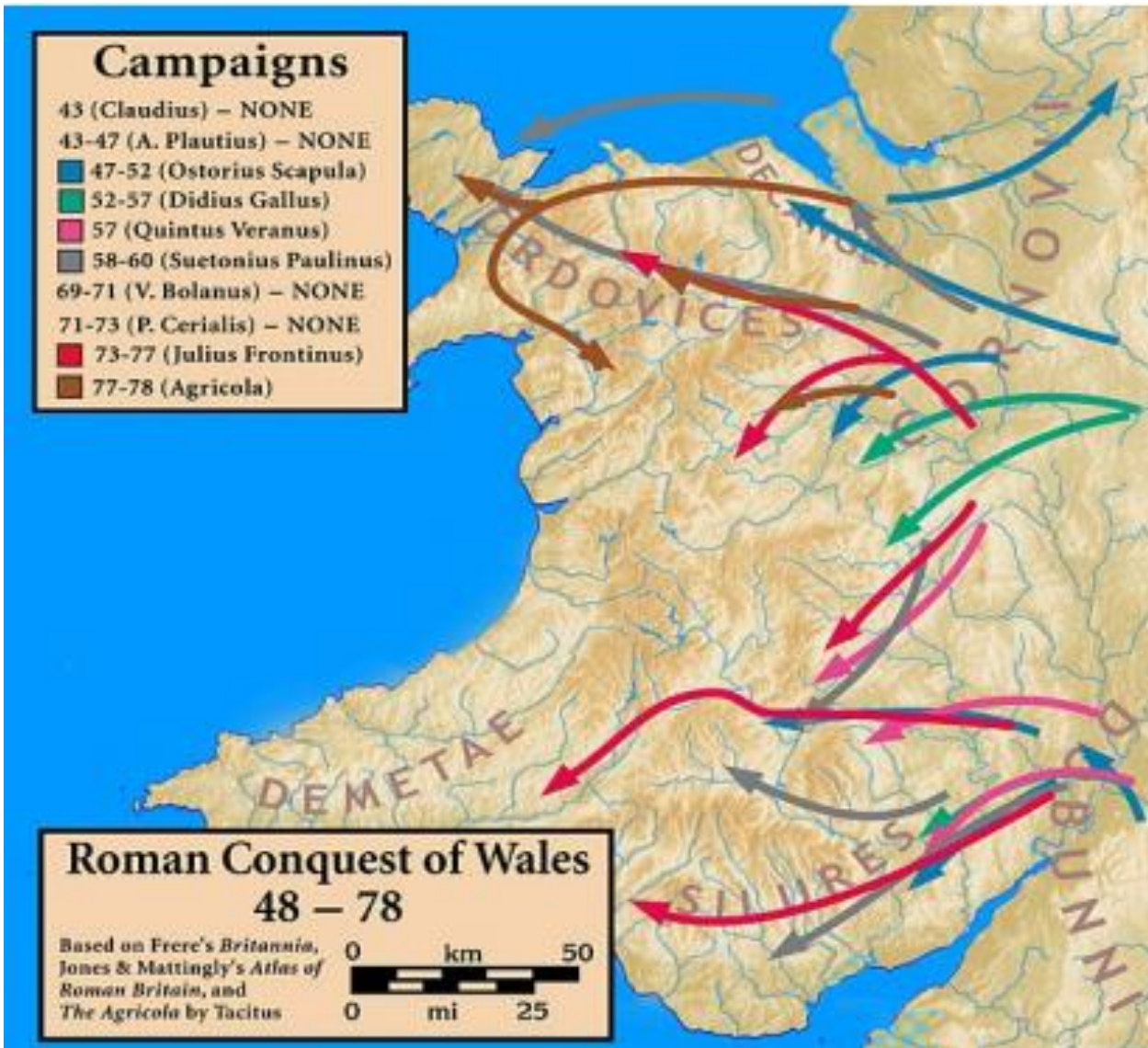
Figure 5. 8, Roman Conquest of Wales between A.D.48 – 78, Jones, Barri, Mattingly, 1990.
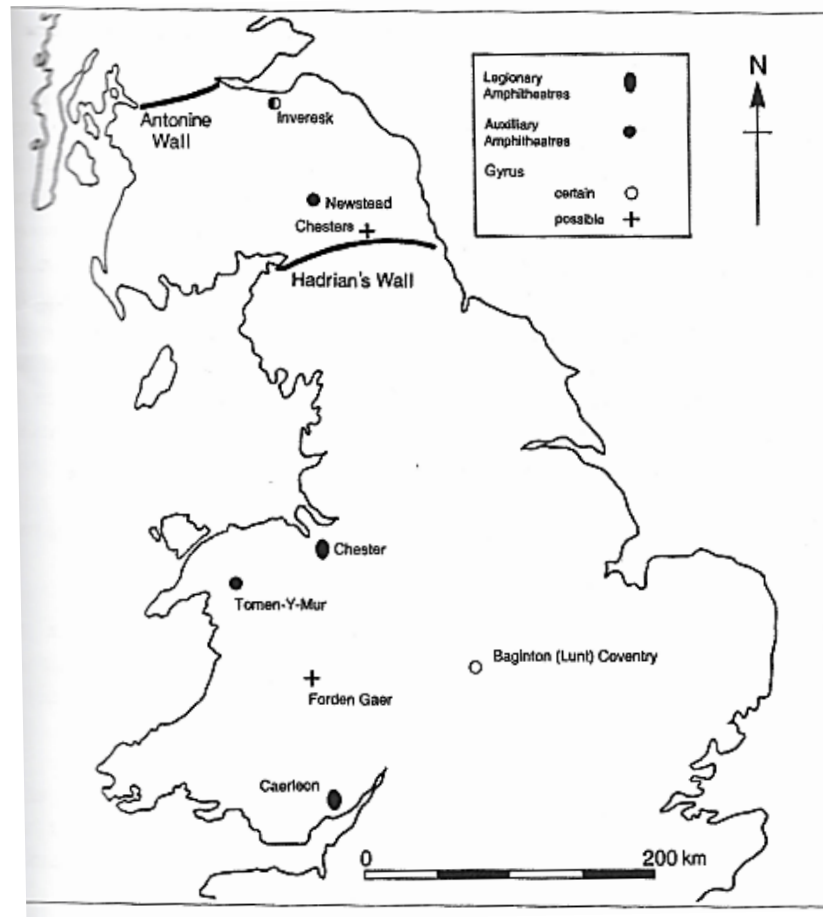
Figure 5. 9, amphitheatre sites of the north and west of Britain, *Chris Evans,* Wilmott, 2008, 47.

The later masonry fort overlays the earlier timber one and measured around 1.34ha (3.3 acres) as recorded by Wilmott (2008, 153) and 1.56ha (3.85 acres) according to Jones (2018, 2). The main feature to take away from these measurements is the noticeable reduction in the size of the fort after being reconstructed in masonry for the brief occupation in the Hadrianic period. One must consider the motivations behind the reconstruction of this fort complex, the conquest into Wales coming to an end very soon after its original construction in the late A.D.70s (Nash-Williams, 1969, 2). This is not to suggest that the region was completely pacified of course, and heavy military presence may well have been required to continue. Guest has proposed that during the 40 years or so after the conquest of Wales came to an end a substantial military garrison was sustained there; the architectural evidence for this is clearly indicated through figures 5.10 and 5.11 (Guest, 2008, 34-5). However, there appears to be a notable "recession" of Roman influence in Wales during the mid-late 2nd century (Phipps, 2016, 19), as demonstrated by figure 5.12.

Figure 5. 10, Roman military installations in Wales A.D. 75 – 100, Tomen-y-Mur marked in red, after Guest, 2008, 36.
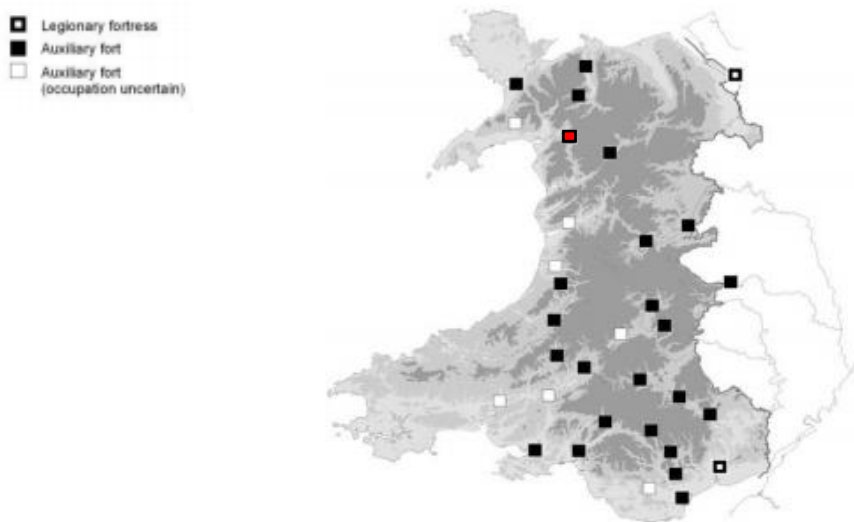
Figure 5. 11, Roman military installations in Wales A.D.100 – 125, Tomen-y-Mur marked in red, after Guest, 2008, 37.
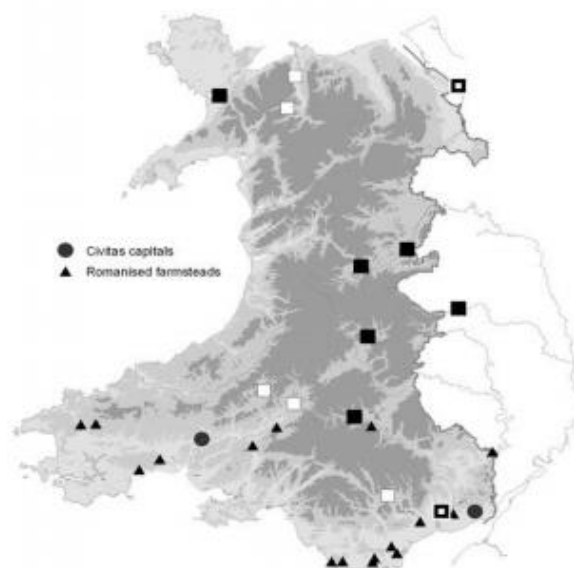
Figure 5. 12, Roman military installations and 'Romanized' settlements in Wales A.D. 125 – 165, Guest, 2008, 7.

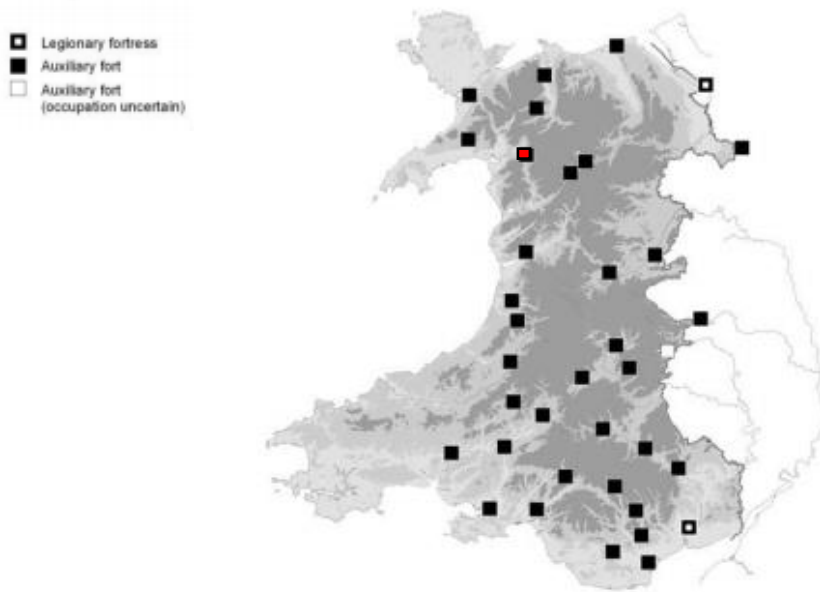This overall recession of the military presence in Wales over the early 2nd century may explain the suggested date of abandonment of the fort around A.D.140 by Wilmott (2008). Phipps noted that little was documented by the Romans concerning Wales after the completion of the conquest (2016, 11); a sentiment seemingly agreed upon by other authors. Manning noted that after Tacitus no Roman historians specifically mentioned Wales (Manning, 2001, 108). As such primary sources concerning the reason for this general recession are lacking. Guest has noted that from the reign of Hadrian the garrison at Wales was "steadily reduced", suggesting that the north had become the focus of military activity. He proposes that by A.D.160 only perhaps five auxiliary forts in Wales were occupied (Fig.5.12), with these mainly comprising of the bases of Legion II Augusta and Legion XX Valeria Victrix on the approaches into and out of Wales (Guest, 2008, 34-5). Additionally, it appears that the earliest withdrawals of troops from Wales coincided with the foundation of the *civitas* capitals at Caerwent and Carmarthen (Guest, 2008, 35). The region becoming stable and allowing for the foundation of significant Romano-British towns would explain the divergence of military resources and manpower to the northern frontier where it was required. This would explain Tomen-y-Mur not being marked by Guest on figure 5.12, even if we take Wilmott's (2008) suggestion in relation to the abandonment date of around A.D.140. In this instance Tomen-y-Mur may not have been considered essential to the security of Wales past this date. However, it is somewhat strange

that it was rebuilt in the Hadrianic period, especially if Guest is correct that the reduction of the garrison in Wales began under or just after the reign of Hadrian (Guest, 2008, 34-5).

There does not appear to be a notable period of inactivity or abandonment between the Flavian and Hadrianic occupations and construction phases of the fort complex at Tomen-y-Mur. This may suggest that the reconstruction of this fort was due to the earlier Flavian complex falling into disrepair and requiring to be rebuilt, though there is no direct evidence for this. By the time of the masonry phase of Tomen-y-Mur, the primary frontier in Britain would have been pushed much further north into Scotland with the construction Hadrian's wall underway by A.D.122 (Witcher, Tolia-Kelly, 2010, 4). This may explain the evident recession of Roman military installations in Wales during the mid-2nd century. In terms of Tomen-y-Mur, regardless of whether the reconstruction was motivated by the earlier fort falling into disrepair or not, the funding and work required to rebuild the complex in masonry may suggest that it was a site of significance. I would suggest that this was primarily due to the location of the fort, as I mentioned earlier, connecting to the two main Roman roads in this region (Evans, 1871, 190). Therefore, the site may still have been vital in terms of transport and communications. Additionally, even though the conquest of Wales seems to have been completed decades earlier, the role of the fort complex to maintain a military presence and as a Roman military 'centre' is still highly probable in the early 2nd century. It is impossible to say whether those behind the construction of the masonry fort complex were aware of the approaching abandonment around A.D.140 but this seems highly unlikely. The abandonment of the fort may simply be due to it not being necessary anymore. As demonstrated by figure 5.12, there are no Romano-British settlements in the area surrounding Tomen-y-Mur. Thus, it may have been important militarily and in a logistical sense during the campaigns of Wales and later into the early 2nd century. However, by A.D.140 it may have simply become obsolete and somewhat unnecessary in both regards and thus was abandoned.

Examination of the architectural features and buildings present within the fort complex and surrounding site may further give some insight into the importance of the site and the military presence there. Tomen-y-Mur has been described as one of the most complete military complexes in Britain (Driver, Browne, 2008, 2). The site is considered a "remarkable survival" from the early Roman campaigns into north-west Wales (Driver, Browne, 2008, 4). The complex includes the fort itself, a civilian settlement (annex), a partly excavated bath house, a parade ground, and the amphitheatre, though the parade ground is thought by Gresham to be unfinished and is overlooked by a large tribunal mound (Gresham, 1938) (Fig.5.13). Additionally, the site includes the second largest concentration of "Roman practice camps" in

Wales, there are believed to be at least 14 located (Wilmott, 2008, 153). Unfortunately, as Wilmott mentioned there appears to be no significant dating evidence for these features (2008, 153). However, the notable presence and amount of training camps would suggest that Tomen-y-Mur acted as a sort of military centre during its period of use.
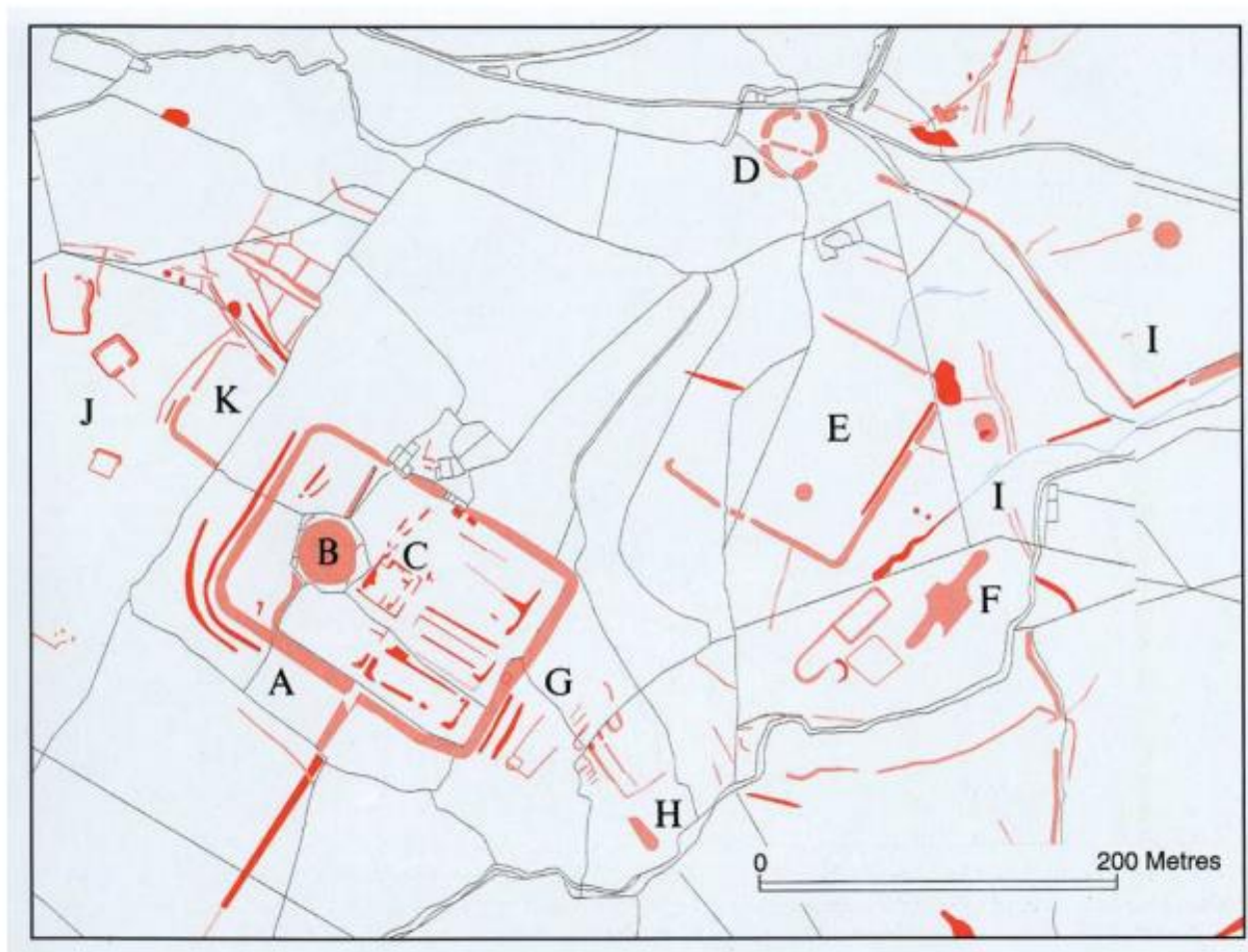
Figure 5. 13: Tomen y Mur, Royal Commission air photo mapping, (Crown Copyright, all rights reserved, RCAHM CD2003_606_055. 100017916, 2007), Driver, Browne, 2008. Labelled features:

A. Roman fort

B. Medieval castle

C. Matchmarks of buried stone

   structures

D. Amphitheatre

E. Parade ground

F. Winged tribunal mound

G. Remains of bathhouse and rest-house

H. Bridge abutment for Roman road

I. Leat for bathhouse

J. Roman practice camps

K. Annex to Roman fort

The lack of notable dating evidence for any of these features is a significant issue. In terms of the practice camps, it could be proposed that at least some were constructed and used primarily during the earlier Flavian occupation at Tomen-y-Mur due to the requirement for trained troops for Agricola's early campaigns. However, one would expect that the fort complex and surrounding area would require military personnel throughout the entire time it was occupied. Furthermore, due to the location of Tomen-y-Mur and its position connected to the two main roads of the region, even after Agricola's campaigns troops could make use of these camps and be transported to wherever they were required.

The architecture of the structure may provide some insight into when it was possibly built and shall be considered thoroughly in section 5.4.2. The amphitheatre itself is smaller than urban or legionary examples, and more comparable to examples at Charterhouse and Newstead. The monument consists of an earthen bank enclosing an arena around 32 x 26m, the banks constructed of "stony soil" (Wilmott, 2008, 154-5). Noticeably this monument appears at this stage architecturally similar to the other auxiliary amphitheatre at Newstead, though the arena is somewhat smaller with the example at Newstead measuring around 37 x 30m, (Wilmott, 2008, 152). This is hardly surprising considering the probable similar origins of these monuments. I would not suggest that the seemingly simplistic construction of the amphitheatre at Tomen-y-Mur is representative of an early construction date, though. If the amphitheatre was constructed during the Hadrianic masonry rebuild of the fort complex, one could expect that it would also be of masonry construction. Like the example at Newstead, the amphitheatre here may have been constructed in this simplistic manner and using these materials out of pure choice, rather than a lack of funding, resources or knowledge. Especially considering the primarily military context of Tomen-y-Mur Amphitheatre, it is possible that a grandiose monument displaying wealth and status was not necessary and the amphitheatre was built as a convenient place to host events and gatherings. The distance of Tomen-y-Mur from any non-military settlements in Wales as shown by figures 5.10 – 5.12, may further aid this idea. Though Tomen-y-Mur could be considered a 'centre', it must be recognised that this was primarily in a strictly military sense; the site was perhaps somewhat disconnected from the political and economic motivations that encouraged the funding of construction projects within larger urban centres and towns. One could argue that it would be unlikely that the amphitheatre was constructed during the masonry rebuild due to the early date of abandonment after this. However, as I prefaced earlier, I would argue that those behind this period of building were not aware of the rapidly approaching abandonment. Dating the

construction of the amphitheatre at this stage does not seem possible without further excavation and direct evidence.

Considering which groups were behind the funding and construction of the monument one would expect the military to be responsible, as at Newstead. The fort complex itself was most probably constructed by the military and through imperial funding, though unlike at Newstead, no specific garrison has been identified (Wilmott, 2008). I would suggest that the significance of Tomen-y-Mur in a military and logistical sense continued throughout the fort's occupation. The eventual masonry rebuild of the fort complex is evidence of this even into the Hadronic period. This idea of the fort complex as an important 'centre' is again like the example at Newstead, and I would suggest is one of the principal reasons behind the construction of the amphitheatre at Tomen-y-Mur as opposed to any of the other many auxiliary fort sites throughout Wales. This may have been the last opportunity for many members of the military to attend events of this nature before being sent out on campaigns or deployed elsewhere in the province during the later period of the occupation. Furthermore, the position of the amphitheatre outside the fort itself (Fig.5.13) may suggest that it was used by those visiting from surrounding forts or settlements. It is evident from figures 5.10 and 5.11 that there were multiple other auxiliary forts in the area surrounding Tomen-y-Mur. Since Tomen-y-Mur was connected to the two main roads that ran through the area (Evans, 1871) it would be the logical place to construct an amphitheatre within the north of Wales, to serve those residing within these forts as well as individuals passing through or visiting the complex. Though there is an annex present at Tomen-y-Mur, little appears to have been reported about it and it is not specifically dated. The annex was probably primarily inhabited by those associated with the military but not directly serving at the fort, or individuals involved in trade who were visiting or passing through the settlement. It seems unlikely that individuals residing within the annex would have funded a project such as the amphitheatre though it is a possibility. At this stage, I would suggest that the amphitheatre itself was constructed and funded through the military due to the significance and location of Tomen-y-Mur.

5.4.2 The Architecture of the amphitheatre at Tomen-y-Mur:

As I have demonstrated, there are clear issues when investigating the dating and construction techniques at the amphitheatre of Tomen-y-Mur. However, there have been various architectural features of the monument that could shine some light on these. As I highlighted, Tomen-y-Mur Amphitheatre is not comparable to many other examples throughout Britain in terms of size and architecture. Though the remains of the fort complex appear to have been

well preserved, in 1938 Gresham recorded the damage that had occurred to the monument since its construction. The entrances at the ends of the long axis and the lines of the slate works tramway which was driven through the earthwork created two additional gaps. Gresham also pointed out that a sheep-dip, pens and a field wall had cut the southern side of the monument and additionally that the banks had been damaged (Gresham, 1938). Furthermore, as Wilmott (2008) highlighted the excavations in relation to the amphitheatre specifically are still somewhat lacking.

The structure itself consists of an oval earthen bank with an arena measuring 32 x 26m (Wilmott, 2008, 154) (Fig. 5.14). The arena itself is slightly smaller than the only other auxiliary example in Britain at Newstead which measured around 37 x 30m (Wilmott, 2008, 152), though still the sizes are noticeably similar. The dimensions are also still comparable with the international examples noted previously at Dambach and Europos (Sommer, 2009). Gresham (1938) has estimated the original bank height and width to be around 3.05 x 9.10m. This is an assessment that Wilmott appears to agree with despite the banks and arena being overgrown with marsh grasses (Wilmott, 2008, 154). As is to be somewhat expected, the centre of the arena was hollowed out and the spoil was used to construct these banks (Wilmott, 2008, 154); this technique has been noted to some extent in every amphitheatre in Britain I have looked at throughout this project thus far. This feature at Tomen-y-Mur Amphitheatre was considered by Wilmott to be the most "persuasive" of those it had in common with the example at Charterhouse on Mendip (Wilmott, 2008, 130). However, as I have stated, the very common use of this technique diminished the significance of it being identified at both amphitheatres. Wilmott even refers to this technique as "a signature of all earthwork amphitheatres in Britain" (Wilmott, 2008, 154), a sentiment that I would very much agree with. The importance on a provincial scale of the utilisation of this technique at Tomen-y-Mur is hard to judge due to the lack of significant dating evidence in relation to the construction of the amphitheatre. Regardless, given the earliest possible date of construction around A.D.78 this technique has been identified at multiple Romano-British amphitheatres prior to this both of military construction like Dorchester Amphitheatre and urban examples such as Silchester Amphitheatre. Especially considering the probable military origin of Tomen-y-Mur Amphitheatre, this construction technique could be considered standard practice by this period.
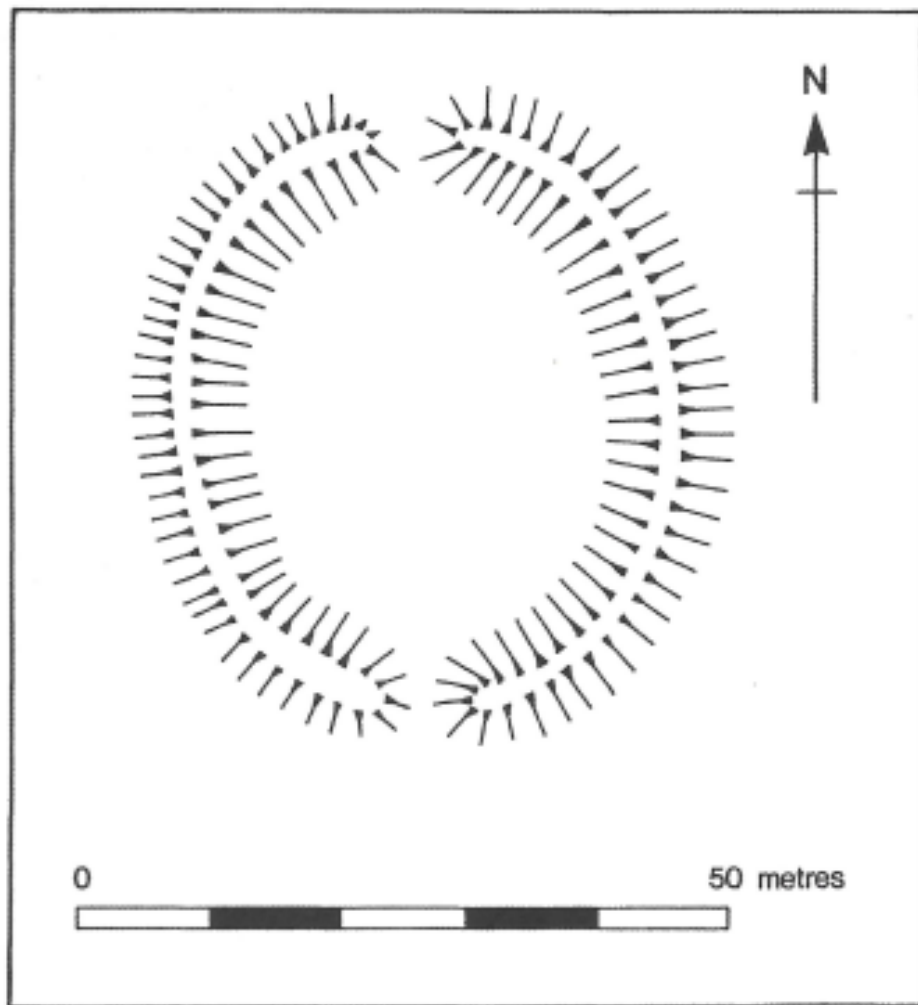
Figure 5. 14, plan of the earthwork amphitheatre at Tomen-y-Mur, *Chris Evans,* Wilmott, 2008, 154

Focusing on the banks, as mentioned previously they were constructed of "stony soil" and the internal face is "relatively vertical" suggesting that there was an arena wall originally (Wilmott, 2008, 154). Wilding has proposed this may have been created using vertical slate slabs similar to those used in nearby field boundary walls (Wilding, 2005). However, he noted rightly that without the discovery of these slabs within the arena or even at the amphitheatre site specifically this cannot be proved. One would assume that there was an arena wall of some sort to form the near vertical internal face. It is possible Wilding's proposition is correct and the slabs were later robbed out, or the internal wall was constructed out of timber which has degraded over time. The construction techniques and the architecture that can be identified at Tomen-y-Mur Amphitheatre appear somewhat simplistic similar to other military examples at Newstead and even earlier at Dorchester. The similarities architecturally to the amphitheatre at Charterhouse on Mendip as noted by Wilmott (2008) are certainly significant, especially considering the distance between the two sites geographically, contextual differences and the

as I proposed probable civilian origin of the amphitheatre at Charterhouse despite the notable military presence and fortlet at the settlement. However, as I have highlighted these similarities between the amphitheatres at Charterhouse, Newstead and Tomen-y-Mur are constrained to techniques also noticed at most amphitheatres in Britain regardless of origin or context.

The main similarities of them are through more general construction techniques such as the formation of the banks, the materials used and the size of the monuments. They are all still distinct when considering their specific architecture and features, demonstrating clear preferences of those behind their construction. This is perhaps more significant when comparing Newstead and Tomen-y-Mur specifically, due to their similar contexts. Though, the comparison between legionary amphitheatres at Caerleon and Chester is comparable, both were contextually and functionally similar but not identical. At this stage, Newstead Amphitheatre appears more complex architecturally and it is certainly larger, though this presumption is also due to the problematic lack of excavation of the amphitheatre at Tomen-y-Mur. Sommer (2009) has noted through detailed investigation of auxiliary amphitheatres discovered on the frontiers across the empire, that with exception to the stone monument at Porolissum in Dacia, all amphitheatres attached to auxiliary forts show similar structure. They are comprised of a sunken circle, oval, elliptical or square centre arena such as at Burladingen, Germany, clearly defined by a stone wall or timber revetment (Sommer, 2009, 54-5). Similar to Newstead Amphitheatre the notably small size of the amphitheatre at Tomen-y-Mur can be explained through the monument's context. This may also be applicable to other examples noted by Sommer (2009) seeming to have similar dimensions to the two examples in Britain perhaps due to their immediate context in serving those who resided within the auxiliary forts. Through my research I have not come across any notable estimations of the population at the Newstead or Tomen-y-Mur auxiliary complexes or the capacity of the amphitheatres. However, the small size of these amphitheatres would suggest that it was primarily constructed to serve those inhabiting the fort complex, the surrounding area such as the practice camps or individuals visiting.

At this stage, the architecture appears simplistic, perhaps representative of the military context where those behind its construction were not as focused on the acquisition of power and status through this monument, but rather constructing the amphitheatre to be more functional than representative. The noticeable comparisons to the amphitheatres at Newstead, Dorchester and Charterhouse would lead me to still propose that the Roman

military funded by the government were responsible for the construction of this amphitheatre at Tomen-y-Mur.

5.4.3 Conclusions:

The lack of excavation and direct dating evidence at Tomen-y-Mur in relation to the amphitheatre is still a significant issue. At this stage, I am not in a position to suggest a solid date of construction or which phase of occupation the amphitheatre may have belonged to. However, the context and form of the monument does allow some conclusions to be drawn. Contextually the amphitheatre appears similar to the example at Newstead. This is somewhat predictable due to them being the only two known examples of 'auxiliary amphitheatres' in Britain. The question of why the amphitheatre was constructed at Tomen-y-Mur is certainly significant, especially when there appears to be multiple other auxiliary forts in proximity to it. When considering the motivations behind the construction of Tomen-y-Mur Amphitheatre, I would suggest that the fort complex was at some point a military centre, certainly around the time of its original construction in the Flavian period during Agricola's early campaigns in Wales. As I have highlighted, the fact that this fort complex appears to have been reconstructed around the Hadrianic period (Wilmott, 2008) perhaps suggests that it was a project of special significance. The location of the fort connecting to the two main roads within the region may have further contributed to the importance of this fort complex. In this sense, it may have also acted as a gathering area for troops from surrounding forts or those from further away, perhaps demonstrated by the large number of practice camps identified there (Wilmott, 2008, 153). As such, constructing the amphitheatre here would make sense and perhaps even amplify the status of the fort complex as a 'centre' for the military in the region. The architecture of the amphitheatre itself appears simplistic, more so than at Newstead Amphitheatre; though it is important to take into account that this may be down to a lack of excavation. The size of the amphitheatre is certainly interesting, though this may be explained contextually, one would expect it to be perhaps larger if Tomen-y-Mur was a significant centre for multiple surrounding auxiliary forts.

5.5: Amphitheatres of unknown dates in use

5.5.1 Possible uses of the Newstead Amphitheatre:

Considering that the uses of amphitheatres reflect their context and the wishes of the audience, Newstead Amphitheatre in this respect appears somewhat unique in Britain at this time. It seems apparent that the Newstead Amphitheatre was "nothing like" the largest amphitheatres of the Roman empire (Clarke, Wise, 1999, 397) or even Britain during this

period. The in my view mainly pragmatic attitude towards the monument's construction differentiates it, not just architecturally from other military examples such as Caerleon and Chester, but also in terms of the motivation behind its construction and probably its uses. Unfortunately, at Newstead the finds from excavations were sparse and "much poorer than the assemblages from the other areas of the site" (Wilmott, 2008, 152). Furthermore, there is no direct evidence of the garrison during the Flavian period of occupation, though due to the size of the complex the presence of cavalry might be anticipated (Hanson, 2012, 65). Various artefacts such as bridle bits, harness mounts, three parade or sports helmets, two elaborate leather chamfrons and spearheads, one with a graffito referring to *turma,* (Latin meaning 'swarm' or 'squadron' referring to a Roman cavalry unit) confirm the presence of cavalry during the Flavian – Trajanic period (Hanson, 2012, 65-68). Hanson has further proposed that both legionary troops and auxiliary cavalry can be attested at the site in the Antonine phases. Richmond proposed a cavalry unit may have been housed in the area demarcated by the dividing wall (Richmond, 1948). This interpretation is viewed as outdated, though Hanson has pointed out the addition of the *principia* of the *basilica exercitatoria* assuming its function has been correctly identified as a training ground related to horse riding may lend some support to the presence of cavalry during this phase (Hanson, 2012, 69). This would lead me to suggest that during this period the primary audience in relation to the events within the amphitheatre would consist of both auxiliary and legionary soldiers and cavalry. This may certainly have influenced what events took place within Newstead Amphitheatre.

Munera may have played a role in demonstrating different types of combat or instilling certain virtues into soldiers (Bateman, 1997, 82). This may have been especially important at the Newstead Amphitheatre considering its wider role as a springboard into the invasions of Scotland. This would be, in my view, a vital time to train before pushing further into Scotland and the amphitheatre could have possibly played a significant role in this. Due to the presence of cavalry during the Antonine occupation, it would be possible to make use of horses in the events of Newstead Amphitheatre. I would presume this would be in a safe manner though, as to not waste resources needlessly. As I proposed in relation to Silchester Amphitheatre, the use of horses within the arena has been linked to the military. Unlike most other Romano-British examples I would suggest that it is most probable the Newstead Amphitheatre was used for a combination of entertainment and to some extent training for the troops stationed or visiting the fort complex. The events likely tailored to the potential audience of members of the military (both legionary and auxiliary) just as events in the urban amphitheatres of Britain were dictated primarily by the will of the audience but for alternative reasons such as gaining

popularity, status and political power. The lack of direct evidence in relation to events I have suggested such as *munera* is certainly an impediment when considering the use of Newstead Amphitheatre. Thus, my estimations are based primarily of the context on the monument and role of the fort complex as a whole during the Antonine period.

5.5.2 Possible uses of the Charterhouse on Mendip Amphitheatre:

The events which may have taken place within the amphitheatre at Charterhouse are especially hard to pinpoint due to multiple factors. The apparent lack of direct evidence is certainly an issue, though it is one that has also been present when considering this exact question at multiple other amphitheatres I have investigated. I would propose the nature of the settlement at Charterhouse is a key barrier when attempting to consider what events may have taken place within its amphitheatre. The industrial settlement is unique in Britain due to an amphitheatre being constructed there. There are clear indications of wealth within the Roman settlement at Charterhouse through higher status artefacts located there. As such, it certainly seems plausible that the amphitheatre could be used to host public events, rather than just made use of by the military also present at the settlement. Fradley has suggested that the amphitheatre was perhaps used infrequently or only maintained for a short period, due to no identifiable roads or tracks leading to the monument. Though he expands upon this considering the levels of cultivation throughout this area in later periods which may have removed any trace of these features (Fradley, 2009, 113). Currently, the western entrance leads out directly into the field, but evidence through excavation suggests that the Romano-British entrance was nearly 1m below the current surface level. This indicates the level of earth movement that has occurred since the time of abandonment (Fradley, 2009, 113). In this instance I think 1m would be enough to obscure a simple track leading to the amphitheatre. The architecture of the amphitheatre itself I would argue is not an indicator of how much or how often it was used. The seemingly simplistic design of the structure and the size may be indicative of the reasons behind its construction and the context in which it was built. One could introduce a comparison to Dorchester as I have referenced throughout my analysis. However, Charterhouse lacks direct evidence of architectural disrepair and apparent lack of interest identified through the archaeological remains of Dorchester Amphitheatre (Chapter 3).

Theoretically, if the fortlet was occupied in a period in which the amphitheatre was in use, the members of the military were highly likely to have influenced or been involved with the events and entertainment held at the monument. However, even if this was the case, the context of

this amphitheatre is still vastly different when compared to 'proper' military amphitheatres such as those at Caerleon, Chester or Newstead. This is primarily due to the distinction I discussed earlier between forts linked to military amphitheatres like those mentioned and the fortlet that was constructed at Charterhouse. Furthermore, in relation to the psychological considerations of these soldiers removed from their "home bases" (Symonds, 2017, 10) the suggestion that they might push to recreate entertainment and practices from these fortresses or provinces seems more probable. However, the nature of the settlement and architecture of the amphitheatre at Charterhouse are limiting factors to what events might have been possible there. Due to the passive nature of the settlement, in that it is not on a frontier such as the example at Newstead or associated with specifically the military as a whole, I would be hesitant to suggest the amphitheatre was used as a training ground for the soldiers of the fortlet. Though this is certainly possible, the factor I mentioned earlier of the distance between the fortlet and the amphitheatre would suggest they were not specifically linked or that the amphitheatre was certainly not initially constructed to be used as a training area. This is further based upon the premise that the amphitheatre was in use at the same time as the fortlet was occupied, which seems probable but unprovable thus far.

An alternate theory is that the amphitheatre was used for events by just those within the civilian settlement or by the settlement including the fort and perhaps those from other areas nearby. Fradley has considered Charterhouse an industrial and socio-economic centre of the Mendip region (Fradley, 2009, 118). In this case, the settlement probably attracted individuals involved in the mining or trade industries in the province or from elsewhere in the empire. Presumably, due to the notable artefacts that display wealth found at the settlement, events within the amphitheatre would have been funded or requested by these individuals or groups. One might expect the events in this instance to be somewhat similar to elsewhere in the province or the empire as a whole, within the limitations of the rural context of Charterhouse and the architectural limitations of the amphitheatre itself. Moreover, since no other area suitable for large scale gatherings has been located at the settlement of Charterhouse, the amphitheatre might have been the only option to host religious or ceremonial gatherings. If the theory in relation to the amphitheatre being constructed from a Bronze Age 'Disc Barrow' (Fradley, 2009) is to be believed, this may give the site further ritual significance in the mind of local people present at the settlement, though this again is purely hypothetical. Due to the rural nature, it is further probable that the transport of especially exotic animals for events such as beast-fighting was severely limited. Though the evident wealth of some present within

the settlement would perhaps make the importation of exotic animals possible, it would certainly not be on the same scale as larger urban centres.

5.5.3 Possible uses of the Tomen-y-Mur Amphitheatre:

No artefactual evidence attesting to specific events or displays at Tomen-y-Mur has been found. As such investigating the uses of the amphitheatre shall mainly be considered through the context of the settlement as a whole. It is worth taking into account that any events which did take place would be for a primarily military audience who may already be accustomed to certain displays and events, perhaps even expecting these as a standard practice. Architectural aspects are also significant, principally the notably small size of the monument and the heights of the banks perhaps acting as limiting factors when considering what events were possible or at least practical within the arena. Furthermore, having investigated multiple 'military' amphitheatres in Britain, perhaps most significantly in this instance the auxiliary amphitheatre at Newstead, some expectations of what they were used for may be applicable to the example at Tomen-y-Mur.

The size of the structure appears to be a noticeably limiting factor. Wilmott has commented that the arena "feels very small when one stands in the middle" (2008, 155) despite being of similar size to Newstead Amphitheatre. Wilmott further mentions that there would be at most room for two gladiators to fight simultaneously (Wilmott, 2008, 155). There is no direct evidence of gladiatorial events at the amphitheatre at Tomen-y-Mur. As I discussed with previous military amphitheatres such as Caerleon and Newstead, *munera* may have played a significant role when it came to displaying different types of combat and instilling specific virtues into soldiers (Bateman, 1997, 82). This may be even more relevant when considering the role that Tomen-y-Mur may have played, especially if it could be considered a centre or gathering place for soldiers before Agricola's early campaigns. This seems very reminiscent of the role played by Newstead, as a sort of 'springboard' for invasions into Scotland (Jones, 2012, 51). Considering this, gladiatorial events may have been possible, though as Wilmott stated on a very small scale and the lack of direct evidence is an issue.

The presence of practice camps may also be significant. These may suggest that the amphitheatre was not needed for events related to training troops. However, the amphitheatre is still the primary structure capable of hosting larger scale events or training displays such as the possibility of gladiatorial games. Perhaps more common events such as beast fighting or animal displays also took place at Tomen-y-Mur, though again, there is no direct evidence for these either. Wilmott comments that the arena walls would have been low

given the height and circumference of the banks. As such "one cannot imagine" that wild beast events could have been presented safely. Rather, he suggests that it would be possible for smaller scale events such as a tethered bear baited by dogs; though there is no evidence of tethering such as the block at the amphitheatre of Chester (Wilmott, 2008, 155). The lack of architectural, artefactual and dating evidence is a significant impediment when considering what events may have taken place at Tomen-y-Mur Amphitheatre. While the small size of the structure would certainly limit events, it may have been satisfactory when considering the size of the fort complex and population. In terms of events however, at the most there may have been small scale gladiatorial games or beast fights. The amphitheatre may still have been used for less violent events such as religious festivals or ceremonies due to it being the largest monument in the fort complex capable of acting as a gathering place for these events.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion:

The primary focus of this project has been to consider the introduction of Romano-British amphitheatres and how they represented cultural change throughout Britain during the Roman occupation. Despite the significant academic focus on amphitheatres, limitations in relation to their significance within Rome specifically or in Britain analysed from purely archaeological and contextual perspectives have left this issue severely overlooked. This has created a notable disconnect between the emergence of Romano-British amphitheatres archaeologically and the unique culture that surrounded them. Previous methods such as the general categorisation of Romano-British amphitheatres based on their contexts have proved important, established by works such as Wilmott's *The Roman Amphitheatre in Britain* (2008). However, this approach in my view overlooks the individual importance of these monuments as manifestations of spectacle culture at a local level and thus can only draw comparisons between them in relation to their contextual categorisations such as 'military' and 'urban'.

Investigating the emergence and spread of these monuments individually from a chronological perspective has further demonstrated the areas from which the knowledge, influence, and inspiration behind the construction of these monuments may have been transferred both throughout Britain and the wider empire. Furthermore, the implementation of the creolisation model has allowed me to exhibit the organic process of cultural change in relation to the emergence of amphitheatres. These monuments evidently represented a distinctly Romano-British spectacle culture on both a provincial level and locally within their individual contexts. Additionally, considering the diversity of experience and perspective if the lower orders of society in conjunction with the wealthy elite responsible for building these monuments highlights the importance of considering these amphitheatres as a product of cultural change across society. Rather than top-down approaches focusing on the role of the elites within Roman Britain, different individuals and groups had their own parts to play in this process of cultural change.

6.1 Introduction and spread:

Through taking this chronological approach when analysing the initial introduction of amphitheatres to Britain, there is a noticeable connection between the military and amphitheatre construction throughout the province, with six of the twelve examples I have studied being constructed by the military in my opinion. However, when considering the wider issues of the emergence and spread of amphitheatres throughout Britain the significance of 'categories' such as 'military amphitheatres' diminishes. This is due to the voluntary nature of

the construction of amphitheatres and engagement with spectacle culture throughout Britain. Somewhat regardless of context and 'category' the motivations and means behind the construction of Romano-British amphitheatres appear similar throughout the province. While categorisations are useful in displaying the general context of these monuments, and perhaps drawing conclusions between these groups specifically, the approach is limiting when considering them as unique representations of localised culture. Furthermore, rigid categorisation of these monuments gives way to potential focus on the issue of which specific category each example belongs to, shifting the focus away from the questions of how and why these monuments emerged in Britain both individually and collectively.

The construction and context of Dorchester Amphitheatre as the first example in Britain demonstrates this. As noted, (3.2) the monument was constructed to temporarily serve the military stationed at the camp at Dorchester prior to the foundation of the Romano-British settlement around A.D.60 (Wacher, 1995). In this instance, the significant role of Dorchester Amphitheatre in essentially paving the way for the adoption and adaptation of amphitheatres throughout Britain appears unintentional by the military. Its construction was not a deliberate plan or agenda to introduce this physical aspect of spectacle culture to the new province alongside the Roman administration. This was also represented through the form of Dorchester Amphitheatre. The "erratic" layout noted by Bradley, as well as there being no clear evidence of maintenance, suggests that it was constructed only to serve those in the military camp on a temporary basis (Bradley, 1976) (3.2). Despite the probable intentions behind the construction of the first amphitheatre at Dorchester, how it was perceived by those outside the Roman military in my view is what led to the adoption of amphitheatres by the inhabitants of Roman Britain and their spread over the province.

The voluntary nature of engagement with this new aspect of Romano-British culture was perfectly demonstrated at the later urban settlement of Dorchester. While Dorchester Amphitheatre would later be associated with the Romano-British settlement there, the early abandonment of the monument in the 2nd century as well as the absence of maintenance I believe displays a lack of interest by those inhabiting the town (Bradley, 1976). Essentially, those living within the settlement by that time showed little interest in the amphitheatre and therefore were not motivated to make use of or maintain the monument. In some sense, this aspect of culture simply did not take off at Dorchester specifically. Despite this, it appears likely that it did inspire the construction of the first truly 'Romano-British' amphitheatre at Silchester around 80 miles away perhaps not long after, between A.D.55-75 (Fulford, 1989, 13). This exemplifies the importance of my chronological approach to this topic, especially

when considering the initial construction of the 'early' amphitheatres of Britain. Silchester Amphitheatre is the first example of an 'urban' amphitheatre not constructed by the military. In this instance, we can see how initial construction of Dorchester Amphitheatre by the military led to the unintentional transfer of this aspect of spectacle culture to urban populations within Romano-British towns.

However, it is evident that the initial emergence and spread of amphitheatres over Britain was not as simple as a single chronological line of influence between Romano-British towns and military settlements. This was exemplified early by the construction of the amphitheatres at London (3.4) and Chichester (3.6). Both examples are unique within Britain. Although Chichester does share some features such as the use of masonry (Wilmott, 2008) and the possible application of the 'four-circle' method with the legionary amphitheatre at Caerleon, neither in my view appear to have been directly inspired at least architecturally by earlier examples in Britain. This demonstrates the individuality of these monuments but furthermore that Roman Britain cannot be considered a closed system of influence and culture. The cultural changes brought on by the creolisation process in Britain throughout this period are a product of being absorbed into the Roman administration and wider empire due to the freedom of movement and culture that came with it. As I noted in relation to Chichester (3.6.1), the knowledge and awareness in relation to the construction of the amphitheatre may have even stemmed from the military role the settlement had prior to the town being established, soon after the invasion. Meanwhile London's role as an economic centre and the accompanying influx of wealth and trade may have brought individuals already accustomed to the construction and use of amphitheatres from elsewhere within the empire, perhaps related to the settlement's Romano-Gallic origins (Wallace, 2015) who were now willing to invest architecturally into the thriving town.

This has further demonstrated the individual aspects of cultural change. While early examples such as London and Chichester do not appear to have been architecturally inspired by earlier Romano-British amphitheatres, the spread of awareness of amphitheatres as being an option for architectural munificence is also significant. This has been a notable divide throughout my project, in my view there are three main factors that are required for the construction of an amphitheatre. (1) An awareness of the possibility, (2) a desire to fulfil it and (3) the technical knowledge and financial resources to put that desire into practise. While all of these are important, the significance of choice is still crucial as a driver of cultural change. Groups may have had the resources available, and knowledge required to construct an amphitheatre, but simply did not wish to engage or invest with this aspect of culture. This may have been due to

external factors such as the risk involved in allocating such a large amount of wealth and resources to the construction of an amphitheatre that might not cause a lasting impression on the contextual and surrounding population, as seen at Dorchester and Chichester. Though, as highlighted by Mattingly's approach, this choice to engage with this specific aspect of traditionally Roman spectacle culture may have been steered on an individual level by the experiences of these people.

It cannot be assumed that the awareness of amphitheatres as an option and the knowledge required for their construction spread through Britain simultaneously. This is due to both the nature of architectural munificence in relation to amphitheatres and the routes by which knowledge of amphitheatres may have been transferred to and throughout Britain. Chichester Amphitheatre was potentially the latest urban example to be built during the 1st century before the death of Cogidubnus around A.D.70-85 (Boon, 1974). However, the town had notable military origins between A.D.44-5 (Down, 1988, 16) with significant industrial activity under the reign of Nero evidenced by the earliest bathhouse and related inscription (Down, 1988, 22). Like Silchester, Chichester is also believed to have been under the rule of Cogidubnus (Wacher, 1995, 255-60). It seems hard to believe those at Chichester were simply unaware of amphitheatres during this period until its construction or did not possess the knowledge to construct one, especially considering my own hypothesis in relation to the transfer of knowledge from the town's significant military origins. Rather, it was not until this point that those behind the construction of Chichester Amphitheatre desired such a monument or simply had the available resources to construct one.

6.2 Motivations for construction:

While the transfer of these aspects of knowledge, capability and resources were all required for the introduction of these monuments in Britain, and further allowed under the new administration, the attraction of amphitheatres specifically over other monuments is responsible for their emergence throughout the province. This introduces another central question from this project, the issue of why amphitheatres were chosen by those behind their construction. A notable and significant trend here is that the majority of Romano-British amphitheatres, regardless of context, were constructed and or refurbished alongside other large scale building projects within their respective settlements. Individuals and groups took advantage of these periods of construction to leave their own architectural mark on their settlement and the landscape in the form of an amphitheatre. In this instance, amphitheatres could be considered comparable to any other public monument such as a bathhouse or forum.

The intention behind the dedication of public buildings and monuments in Britain specifically has been well documented (Blagg, 1990), with those behind their construction wishing to gain political and social status through their funding and construction. In urban settings such as at Silchester, elites such as Cogidubnus may have encouraged the construction of more traditionally Roman monuments to cement their own political status. Even if this was the case, I do not believe that the construction of amphitheatres was encouraged, rather those behind construction programmes throughout Romano-British towns were free to choose such a monument if they wished. This further demonstrates the freedoms in relation to building and architectural munificence under the Roman administration in relation to the construction and expansion of towns throughout Roman Britain, especially the *civitas* capitals.

However, this still does not provide an answer as to why amphitheatres were chosen specifically or why amphitheatres may have been constructed outside of urban contexts where political motivations were not as prevalent, such as such as the earliest amphitheatre at Dorchester or the auxiliary amphitheatres of Newstead and Tomen-y-Mur. The main answer here I believe is that the potential functions and roles of amphitheatres elevated them above other monuments, especially in relation to spectacle culture and entertainment. This aspect carries over every category and context of Romano-British amphitheatres and those across the empire. The role of amphitheatres within both urban and military contexts extends far beyond that of other monuments such as a forum or bathhouse. Crucially, they provided a service that spanned across society through the differing social and political classes. This is also applicable to a bathhouse or a standard theatre, although amphitheatres in Britain could provide a much larger venue and a much more versatile space in relation to potential uses. This is demonstrated by the prominent example of the theatre-amphitheatre of Verulamium, or the contextual religious importance of London Amphitheatre (Hingley, 2018). The choice to construct these amphitheatres was intrinsically linked to their intended roles and uses that other monuments could not have provided. This further demonstrates just how these monuments were a produce of cultural change on such an individual contextual level.

While the construction of amphitheatres was funded and authorised by the wealthy individuals and groups probably well connected within the Roman administration, the function of these monuments was reliant upon the willing participation of wider society outside of the elite. However, this only provided further incentive for those to construct them, especially during the expansion of the Roman administration through Britain. Amphitheatres provided the ability to host large scale events and gatherings for the people not only within the specific settlement but in many cases in Britain from the surrounding hinterlands. I have noted many

times throughout this project the role these settlements and military installations where amphitheatres were constructed often took as a centre within their region, such as at London, Tomen-y-Mur, and Verulamium. London Amphitheatre provides an interesting example due to its religious connotations being constructed in a likely 'ritual zone' (Bateman, 2009, 159-160), and perhaps providing a physical manifestation of the area's ritual importance in the Walbrook Valley (Hingley, 2018). Meanwhile, at legionary amphitheatres such as those constructed at Chester and Caerleon, events for entertainment as well as potential uses in relation to military training and demonstrations may have occurred. The possibilities of what amphitheatres offered to both those who constructed them and those who attended events held within them made them an attractive option as monuments in Britain. To some extent, this demonstrates the versatility of these monuments on an individual cultural level. While settlements in Roman Britain were by no means monolithic in a cultural or contextual sense, amphitheatres as something traditionally Roman, have been woven into the existing cultures and contexts of these Romano-British settlements.

The location and size of the amphitheatre and the impact this had on the landscape is also significant. These monuments fundamentally transform the landscape in which they are built. The construction of Dorchester Amphitheatre through the transformation of the Neolithic henge (Bradley, 1976) would have certainly influenced those who had become accustomed to that landmark, whether the Roman military intended this or not. This can be noted at all examples I have considered. Even smaller examples such as Silchester Amphitheatre would have certainly made a mark on the landscape of the town. This can be further noted through the position of these amphitheatres regardless of context being constructed outside of the settlement walls, often beside main roads such as at Carmarthen (4.7). While the size of these monuments could necessitate this, the impact it may have had on those visiting, inhabiting, or even passing by the town is significant. However, on this note, none of these aspects of amphitheatres are unique to Britain. The functions of the monument, its physicality, and the knowledge and funding it took to construct are issues applicable to amphitheatres throughout the empire. This is not to suggest the perception and or the reaction of those who witness the construction of or viewed these monuments was also the same. Again, the individual experience of these people and groups will have guided their views in relation to this process on both an individual and wider contextual level. However, as I have stressed, the integration and success of these monuments as physical manifestations of cultural change to flourish within these individual contexts requires them to be culturally accepted by wider society. I believe that the issues I have tackled throughout this project have relied on how the

emergence of amphitheatres took place, how they may have been perceived by those residing in Britain specifically somewhat collectively within their individual contexts, and how this influenced amphitheatres as a manifestation of a new Romano-British spectacle culture.

6.3 Differential responses:

This introduces the issue of perception when considering how individuals and groups may have responded and reacted to the emergence of these amphitheatres. The wealthy members of the elite within the Roman administration responsible for funding and commissioning their construction may have viewed them as 'traditionally Roman' in a symbolic sense and an avenue to further political gain and social status. However, the majority outside of this group may not have viewed amphitheatres as Roman at all, even when we consider the first example at Dorchester. The transformation of the henge would have been a notable change to the landscape for those familiar with the area, though to what extent the new amphitheatre would be considered specifically 'Roman' by those residing in the surrounding area is unclear. This demonstrates the importance of discrepant experiences and identities (Mattingly, 2004). These individual's perceptions of this monument will have been influenced by their experiences and awareness or lack of, in relation to the Roman invasion and introduction of the Roman administration to Britain. Even outside of specifically being considered 'Roman', the building may demonstrate the military and engineering capabilities of an invading force, especially for those who witnessed the construction of the monument. However, I believe this would not have been as important for those living at Dorchester and its surrounding hinterlands. This comes back to the physicality and grandiose nature of amphitheatres and their meaning to those in Britain during this period in relation to cultural change. With the expansion of towns such as London and Silchester over the initial post-invasion period and their accompanying amphitheatres, it is difficult to suggest to what extent these monuments would be associated with Roman power specifically or the regime of local elites like Cogidubnus. The monuments were built and funded voluntarily by individuals and groups to be used by the inhabitants of these towns and their surrounding hinterlands. The freedom to construct these monuments is telling, not to suggest that the Roman administration was not oppressive in many other ways, but within the realms of amphitheatre use and construction the administration in Britain did not seem to have an agenda.

As such, they did not have any interest in the representation or perception of these monuments, rather these aspects of amphitheatres were expressed by the groups and individuals responsible for their construction and funding. It is vital to remember that although

amphitheatres are viewed as a traditionally Roman invention by us in the modern day, this is not applicable to those inhabiting Roman Britain during this period. The perception and cultural meaning of amphitheatres was assigned by those who constructed, used, viewed, and were actively invested in their maintenance within Britain, not within Rome, or just those within the administration who were aware that these monuments were traditionally a representation of Roman culture. In this sense, the cultural change in relation to the emergence and adaption of amphitheatres throughout Roman Britain was steered not by the Roman administration but a combination of those within Britain who constructed them, and the wider masses who used and viewed them. This aspect of cultural change was allowed to emerge and evolve organically, without an overall agenda. Amphitheatres were constructed individually as manifestations of creolisation at a local level within their related communities.

6.4 Differential construction:

Crucially, this freedom extended far beyond where and when to construct amphitheatres but also to how to construct them. Each Romano-British amphitheatre is architecturally unique, I believe, as a representation of the context in which they were constructed and the desires of the individuals or groups responsible for their construction. The transfer of knowledge and construction techniques on a case-by-case level may be considered a limitation in this regard. There are architectural features and techniques that can be noted at almost if not every example I have investigated, such as the use of spoil from the construction of the arena to construct the *cavea*. However, this is such a basic and obvious technique that it seems simply to be the best option, rather than indicative of the transfer of technical knowledge in relation to the construction of these monuments. Furthermore, examples such as the need to import extra material to finish the bank's construction at Silchester during the first phase (Wilmott, 2008, 98-9) demonstrate that, while techniques could be replicated, limits imposed by the topography of the landscape or available funding and materials show that changes to the planning of these monuments were often necessary. One could suggest that this furthered the individuality of these amphitheatres as representations of not just culture but also the physical landscape on a local level. The choice to overcome and shape the surrounding landscape to construct these monuments only further demonstrates the will and motivation of those behind their planning, funding, and construction to take part in this cultural phenomenon. This may further serve to demonstrate the importance of amphitheatres culturally and politically within Roman Britain.

A key point here in relation to the uniqueness of these monuments is again the aspects of choice, intent, and expression. Wilmott's (2008) categorisations demonstrate this generally through notable architectural differences between the amphitheatres constructed by the military and in urban contexts, or more obscure examples such as the rural amphitheatre at Charterhouse and theatre-amphitheatre of Verulamium. However, looking deeper and considering these monuments individually demonstrates the limitations of this categorical approach. When investigating the emergence of Romano-British amphitheatres, the first 'military' example of Dorchester inspired the construction of the first 'urban' amphitheatre at Silchester, and they share some architectural features (3.3). Furthermore, I have categorised Dorchester Amphitheatre as 'military', though architecturally it has more in common with the amphitheatres in urban contexts such as at Silchester even by the monuments second timber phase in the 2nd century, compared to those constructed by the military at Chester and Caerleon. When considering the individuality of the architecture and form of these monuments, categorisations are only related to their context, and general form. Even when comparing the two legionary examples at Chester and Caerleon it becomes evident that they are very different architecturally. Both are manifestations of the individual choices of those behind their construction, demonstrated by vastly different forms and features such as the number of entrances and the early inclusion of a *nemeseum* at Chester Amphitheatre. However, they also exhibit the limitations of their specific contexts, exemplified at Caerleon by the size of the amphitheatre being limited in order to fit it into the fortress site (Wilmott, 2008, 143-4).

A reliance on the somewhat culturally nebulous term of 'military' and even this case of 'legionary' amphitheatres perhaps overlooks the fact that these monuments were constructed by predominantly different groups of people. The only thing drawing these people together is the connection to the military as an occupation. While this may have had cultural implications, the stark architectural differences between the monuments within this category further exhibits the individuality and localisation of these amphitheatres and the cultural change they represent. If we consider the possibility of Chichester Amphitheatre being a product of knowledge transferred through the settlement's significant military origins, and inspired by the architecture of Caerleon Amphitheatre, one could also consider it a 'military amphitheatre' as a product of military knowledge and engineering, just not built in a military context at the time of construction. This only further demonstrates that the role of these categorisations can only be used to describe the specific context and very general form of these monuments in some instances such as the 'theatre-amphitheatre' at Verulamium at the time of its construction.

Beyond this, it is a very restrictive approach when considering the process of creolisation that formed the localised culture surrounding these amphitheatres.

It could be assumed that early into the Roman occupation of Britain amphitheatres would have taken on a more traditionally 'Roman' form architecturally with this aspect fading over generations as cultural change took place with the formation of a distinctly Romano-British administration. However, this is evidently not the case in relation to amphitheatres. The first urban example at Silchester provides an especially useful example of the individuality and architectural freedom in relation to their construction. The monument bore little resemblance to what could be considered a traditional Roman amphitheatre, most notably incorporating an almost circular arena (Fulford, 1989, 13) which separated it architecturally from the only earlier example at Dorchester. It appears that the cultural change in relation to the construction, form and use of amphitheatres in Britain occurred and even flourished during the initial post-invasion period, beginning, I believe, with the construction of Dorchester Amphitheatre. This again demonstrates how this occurred naturally, untethered by any overall provincial administrative or government rule, perhaps not even on a local level. The stark deviation from what would be considered traditionally Roman architecture at Silchester Amphitheatre would suggest that those behind its construction had no intention of replicating monuments that would be considered 'Roman'. 1st century amphitheatres at London and Cirencester perhaps align more architecturally with Roman traditions, but even these are still vastly different from one another. I would propose that these are more representative of their individual contexts and the origins of these settlements, than of a desire to construct monuments in a Roman fashion.

With the emergence and spread of masonry architecture into urban contexts after A.D.100, the forms of Romano-British amphitheatres could be viewed as moving towards the Roman ideal architecturally, becoming more comparable to the legionary examples at Chester and Caerleon. The issue here then becomes, was there a cultural shift towards what could be considered a traditionally Roman ideal in relation to the form of amphitheatres over the centuries after the invasion? As Roman and British culture blended, was this aspect of Roman architecture strived for as an advancement from originally unique and distinct timber amphitheatres such as those at Silchester and London? The answer to this still in my view requires an understanding of the motivations behind these architectural changes and how they may have been perceived within the realm of cultural change and advancement. A simple answer may again just be due to the transfer of knowledge in relation to masonry work for the construction of amphitheatres and a thriving province where individuals were now capable of

producing the resources and finances necessary for these projects. If there was a shift over the 1st century towards a more traditionally Roman ideal of architecture this could have also occurred incrementally, without anyone setting out to achieve this outcome.

Cirencester Amphitheatre was the first fully masonry urban amphitheatre. The transformation of the quarry alongside the readily available stone supplies (Holbrook, 1998) seemingly provided a great opportunity for this project, though it does not explain how those behind the construction of the monument were capable of doing so. As Hingley (2018) suggested it was not just the lack of available stone that prevented urban amphitheatres from being constructed out of masonry prior to A.D.100. Though, this is not strictly the case either, Chichester Amphitheatre as I proposed (section 3.6) was constructed during the late A.D.70s – 80s and was built with a masonry arena wall and entrance passages (Wilmott, 2008, 109). As I suggested, this was possibly due to the origins and context of the town with relation to the military. The arena as noted by White (1936) was comparable to that at Caerleon. Cirencester also grew into a *civitas* from early military origins as a *vicus*, perhaps explaining how those behind the construction of the amphitheatre were capable of working with stone when the opportunity presented itself. In this instance, again it appears that knowledge was transferred through the military, perhaps over generations after the invasion. However, the masonry construction of Cirencester Amphitheatre specifically in my view was primarily down to the context of the monument, with such ready supplies of stone and the quarry itself giving a perfect opportunity for the masonry amphitheatre.

During this later period, we see both amphitheatres such as Cirencester and Verulamium constructed from stone originally, but also past monuments such as at Silchester and London reconstructed in masonry over previous timber forms. Rather than demonstrating a shift towards 'Roman' ideals in terms of architecture, I would propose that the construction of masonry amphitheatres both originally and as later phases of past monuments was more due to the thriving Romano-British settlements and again the freedoms they had when it came to constructing public monuments. This is certainly the case at Cirencester, though the seemingly perfect situation leading to the masonry construction of the Cirencester Amphitheatre is not mirrored throughout Romano-British settlements during this later period. The next example chronologically was the reconstruction of London amphitheatre in masonry, rebuilt from scratch around A.D.125-130 (Hingley, 2018, 169). As I outlined (section 4.3) this I believe was a result of London thriving, and reaching its peak during this period (Hingley, 2018). Consequently, the resources and funding necessary for such a project would have been available. Additionally, with other projects occurring at the same time such as the forum's

west and east ranges and the construction of the Cripplegate fort (Hingley, 2018), this revitalisation of London provided a perfect opportunity for people to make use of architectural munificence for their own social and political gains. The status of London as an economic centre in the province may have drawn wealthy individuals to the town already possessing the knowledge necessary to reconstruct the amphitheatre or able to now commission that knowledge from architects and engineers. Additionally, as highlighted throughout this project the masonry phase of London Amphitheatre may have been due to those within the town capable of planning such a monument now possessing the available resources and being inspired to invest architecturally into the wider scale redevelopment of the town.

This situation can also be noted at Silchester, with the town undergoing a period of significant urbanisation over the 2nd century (Boon, 1974) (section 4.6) coinciding with the second timber phase of the amphitheatre. The amphitheatre was again rebuilt in masonry around A.D.250 (Wilmott, 2008, 100) perhaps also a period of urban expansion based on the work of Clark and Fulford (2011) at *Insula IX* close to the forum-basilica at Silchester. This is also applicable to masonry amphitheatres originally constructed during this period such as Cirencester, Carmarthen, and Verulamium. As noted, (section 4.3) Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre appears to have been constructed during a large-scale period of urbanisation and redevelopment of the town after its near destruction by Boudica. This was made possible by the town thriving economically and culturally. The construction of the amphitheatre in the mid-2nd century crucially lines up with the peak of the pottery industry facilitated by links to London (Niblett, 2001) which as mentioned was also reaching its peak at this time (Hingley, 2018). Carmarthen Amphitheatre (4.7) also seems to be a product of the flourishing economy of the settlement with the town becoming one of the largest coastal trading destinations (James, 2003, 24-7) during the Roman period.

This theme of amphitheatres being constructed during a period of wider urbanisation and alongside other significant public monuments was noted during their initial emergence in the mid-1st century. The construction of London Amphitheatre's first timber phase during the reconstruction of the settlement after the Boudican revolt (section 3.4) could be compared in this sense with the construction of the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre almost a century later contextually, as both settlements were undergoing a period of reconstruction and revitalisation after near destruction. So, it appears that the situations and motivations behind the construction of these later masonry amphitheatres in urban contexts remained the same over this period. One could even propose that the transition towards stone construction further cemented these monuments as a part of Romano-British culture. The use of masonry

gave the amphitheatres a sense of intended permanence. This may especially be applicable to those rebuilt in masonry, such as at London and Silchester. However, unlike the initial emergence of these monuments, this spread of masonry amphitheatres does not appear to follow the same chronological track of influence.

Rather, influence and inspiration appear to move back and forth between one site an another. For example, the earlier amphitheatre of Cirencester may have inspired the masonry reconstruction of London Amphitheatre in terms of demonstrating the viability of masonry construction. However, architecturally, the later rebuild of Cirencester amphitheatre around A.D.155-160 brought it more in line with the example at London, including features such as interior decoration and coping stones within the arena (Wilmott, 2008). This may also display a level of interconnectivity through Britain during this later period as well as the individual freedoms in relation to architecture the people responsible for the construction of these monuments had. However, this may also have hinged upon the role of London specifically during this period as in my view the most significant economic centre in Britain. Furthermore, London Amphitheatre during this period did seem to be at the forefront in terms of architecture within the sphere of urban Romano-British amphitheatres. Even if this was the case, this exhibits again the significance of choice and the localised nature of the culture surrounding these amphitheatres. While the second phase of Cirencester Amphitheatre may have been inspired architecturally by the example at London, the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre was vastly different architecturally and culturally, even when considering the significant economic connection between the two settlements noted by Niblett (2001).

6.5 Romano-British spectacle culture:

While I have stressed the individuality of these amphitheatres due to their immediate contexts and through the development of cultural change on a localised level, they together represent a manifestation of what can be considered Romano-British spectacle culture. However, this is not represented in terms of an aesthetic 'ideal' in my view, certainly not in relation to architecture being perceived as explicitly 'Roman'. Despite the later phase of Cirencester Amphitheatre perhaps being inspired by London amphitheatre, it was still unique aesthetically and contextually. Both monuments during this period are more comparable architecturally to legionary examples at Caerleon and Chester, but contextually and functionally they remain vastly different. These choices were not made to bring them more in line with what could be considered Roman. Rather, the technological and architectural progress was due to the associated settlements flourishing economically and culturally under the Romano-British

administration. Those responsible for the construction of these monuments were freely expressing their needs and desires in relation to spectacle culture, the amphitheatres being a physical manifestation of the opportunity and choice to do so.

The variety in the forms and contexts of later Romano-British amphitheatres continues to demonstrate this. The second timber phase of Silchester Amphitheatre in the mid-2nd century despite the spread of masonry work throughout the period is notable. Due to the reasons for the remodelling (4.6) timber may have been the best choice within the context of the settlement, further exhibiting the importance of the monument and its lasting significance. It is crucial to note that the use of masonry should not be viewed as necessary over this period, it was now just more of a possibility throughout Britain. In this instance, there may have been a lack of funding and resources to dedicate to the amphitheatre, or even a lack of capability in relation to its construction. Perhaps those behind the remodelling of the amphitheatre were unwilling to invest in a masonry remodelling of the monument, dedicating their funding to timber repairs and remodelling on a smaller scale instead. However, it does demonstrate the role the amphitheatre took within Silchester, since it could have easily been left to decay or dismantled. As noted, (4.6) this was seemingly the choice made when repairs were a necessity. With the full masonry rebuild of Silchester Amphitheatre being undertaken almost a century later (Wilmott, 2008), it may have been the case that those behind the project were more willing to divert their funding and resources to the project when it came time for repairs again. This highlights the situational nature in this instance of the construction and reconstruction of amphitheatres. Though this is also applicable to those constructed in the 1st century, the resources, time and funding required could have been invested into any number of monuments or projects. The fact that an amphitheatre was chosen reflects their significance as a part of an emerging, and in these later cases, lasting Romano-British spectacle culture. Furthermore, this demonstrates the balance between the choice to invest into this process of cultural change and the capability to do so within these individual settlements and contexts. Whether or not repairs and remodelling was prioritised over other projects in my view will have been based on both the significance culturally of these amphitheatres within local contexts, and the individual choices of those in control of the necessary funding and resources. Again, this may have been based on various motivations, but also on their individual experiences and roles under the Roman administration.

In my view the unique individual and or group choices and contextual representations involved in this process of culture change are highlighted further when considering examples such as the one known theatre-amphitheatre at Verulamium constructed in the mid-2nd century

(Wilmott, 2008 & Frere, 1983). This seems to have been impacted by the highly probable Gallic cultural influence at Verulamium (4.3), as well as the settlement's economic and geographical connections to London thought to also have Gallic origins (3.4). In this instance, the lack of other theatre-amphitheatres found in Britain despite the notable theorised Gallic influence at multiple major settlements such as London (3.4), Verulamium (4.3) and Silchester (3.3) again displays not only the multicultural nature of the province but also the crucial aspect of individual choice and freedom when it came to constructing these amphitheatres. Despite the Gallic influence at other settlements, those behind the construction of these monuments may have not been familiar or interested in this specific cultural aspect. Meanwhile, those at Verulamium who constructed the theatre-amphitheatre chose to invest and express it their own way. Despite the individuality of the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre contextually and architecturally, as I have highlighted, the monument was also a result of the thriving town, with the choice to designate resources towards an amphitheatre exclusively.

6.6 The military amphitheatres:

Much like urban examples, the legionary amphitheatres underwent significant changes both contextually and physically over the Roman period. The later phases at both Caerleon and Chester seem to have been somewhat opportunistic. With the spreading of legionary forces throughout the province to work on other building projects (4.4 and 4.5) such as Hadrian's and the Antonine wall, these amphitheatres seem to have been neglected for significant periods over the 2nd century. However, upon the return of military forces to both settlements the monuments were reinvigorated and modified. In both instances, the amphitheatres' forms seem to have represented a desire to enhance the experience of audience members though perhaps focusing on different groups. The removal of the boxes at Caerleon (4.4), thought to have been specifically for higher status individuals, is juxtaposed by the changes to Chester Amphitheatre seemingly focused on the higher seating backs enhancing the experience of this same group (4.5). This further exemplifies the individuality of these monuments despite such stark similarities contextually, and how unique experiences and ideals may have shaped this process of cultural change. The motivation of individuals to allocate resources to the modification of these monuments after a period of abandonment demonstrates the lasting impact these monuments had on those who built, viewed, and used them. Upon the return of these groups to the settlement the amphitheatre was still a monument of significance and one which they intended to make use of. This may have been less significant due to the military context if the monuments played a significant role in the training of troops or military exercises.

The connection between amphitheatres and the military is a consistent theme throughout the Roman period in Britain. Both the first example at Dorchester and the final constructed at Richborough in my view were constructed and funded through the military. The military appears to have acted, even if unintentionally, as a consistent and significant source of knowledge for the construction and general awareness of amphitheatres throughout the province. Much like the original example at Dorchester, the auxiliary amphitheatres of Tomen-y-Mur (5.4) and Newstead (5.2), in my view, were constructed functionally to serve those stationed at the fort complexes and surrounding area. In this sense they could be considered detached from the more political and social sphere of spectacle culture that both urban and to some extent the legionary Romano-British amphitheatres were manifestations of. This is further demonstrated through their architecture. Both auxiliary amphitheatres in my view were most probably constructed in the 2nd century. Despite this, they are very simplistic architecturally compared to urban masonry examples during this later period. Both were constructed primarily of timber and earth (Wilmott, 2008) providing interesting parallels to the first example constructed at Dorchester both architecturally and contextually.

It is evident that there was a vast number of auxiliary fort installations throughout Britain (chapter 5), but only two auxiliary amphitheatres have been located. As noted, (chapter 5) the roles taken by the settlements of Tomen-y-Mur and Newstead seem to have been the primary reasons for the construction of these amphitheatres. Both seem to have acted as gathering places for soldiers prior to major campaigns, Newstead especially as a 'springboard' for further invasions into Scotland (Jones, 2012. 51). This may explain why these amphitheatres were constructed associated with these forts specifically. In this instance, if we consider these monuments to be detached from the culture surrounding architectural munificence for social and political gains, their construction again highlights the significance of the role amphitheatres may fulfil within communities. They were constructed for what an amphitheatre specifically could provide the settlement, as emphasized earlier. Ultimately, I would suggest that this is one of the primary reasons for the emergence and continued construction and use of Romano-British amphitheatres. As I have stressed, spanning the categorisations, individual contexts and architecture, and the motivations behind their construction, the choice to construct the amphitheatre instead of any other monument was due to the role and potential functions of amphitheatres specifically that other monuments such as a forum, bathhouse or even a theatre could not provide. Furthermore, this significant link between Romano-British amphitheatres may perhaps makes the motivations behind their construction beyond their potential function and role less significant. When considering their

impact on the process of cultural change relating to spectacle culture specifically, the role Dorchester Amphitheatre took in paving the way for this process and the emergence of amphitheatres in Britain was not at all dependant on the specific motivation behind its construction or the individuals responsible within its associated settlement, it was primarily due to the choice to construct an amphitheatre at all.

6.7 The amphitheatres in use:

Based upon this, the functions, and roles of these amphitheatres outside of architectural munificence have also been an area of significant study throughout this project. However, through this some issues have emerged. The significance of the contexts of these monuments in relation to their form and the motivations behind their construction would further suggest that the events held within them were also products of the specific context of the amphitheatre. While we can imply that the transfer of amphitheatres would have come along with the transfer of knowledge in relation to the events traditionally held within them, as I have demonstrated there was not a significant effort put towards purposefully pursuing spectacle culture due to it being traditionally Roman. This individuality may also be notable when considering the events held within Romano-British amphitheatres. While architecturally, the transfer of knowledge in relation to building these monuments would dictate specific rules in relation to their construction, or techniques that were most efficient, this is not necessarily the case in relation to the use of amphitheatres. There are no rules in relation to their use and no 'best way' or more efficient method of making use of these monuments.

Due to the lack of direct evidence in relation to the use of these amphitheatres collectively and on an individual level in Britain we must work with a very incomplete picture of what the events and games within them may have looked like. Without direct evidence to the contrary, it is possible that the monuments could have been used exactly as they were in Rome. For example, one may expect amphitheatres associated with the military specifically such as Caerleon, Chester or Newstead to have hosted events with their military audience in mind. As noted, (3.8.4) it has been suggested *munera* played a significant role in relation to training through the demonstration of different types of combat (Bateman, 1997, 82). To what extent the significance of this role held by military amphitheatres, especially those constructed during the 1st century at Chester and Caerleon, would have diminished over the centuries as the frontier moved further north and the administration took over through the wider urbanisation of the province is also important to consider. At the auxiliary amphitheatres of Newstead and Tomen-y-Mur training events may have been one of the primary reasons behind their

construction in the first place, especially due to their roles as potential gathering grounds and springboards for troops prior to campaigns into Scotland and Wales.

Despite this, the role these amphitheatres took in relation to the military and entertainment were not mutually exclusive. The use of these amphitheatres for entertainment is still critical when considering the culture surrounding them, whether for the purpose of entertaining troops or the wider public in urban settings. One could argue that the latter was more based upon the potential political gains. Though even here, the military may have had some influence in relation to the events taking place. As I have noted throughout this project, the military were a key vehicle for the transfer of knowledge in relation to the construction of amphitheatres even in urban settings. When considering the emergence of urban amphitheatres such as at Chichester (3.6) where I would suggest the early military origins of the settlement may have influenced the later construction of the amphitheatre, knowledge in relation to the events held within it may also have been transferred to those in Chichester during this time. It follows that the transfer of culture surrounding the amphitheatre would include what they were used for. Meanwhile, at Silchester (3.3), though architecturally the monument is unique from what could be considered traditionally Roman, in order for it to be inspired by the military amphitheatre or Dorchester, the role the monument took, and the events held within it may also have been inspired by the earlier example at Dorchester.

Even when attempting to base investigations on the context of these monuments the lack of material or literary evidence specifically alluding the to the uses of these Romano-British amphitheatres is a significant constraint in many cases. For example, I have repeatedly stressed the multicultural nature of London, not only through its mixed Gallic, Roman and British origins, but further through its growth as a significant economic centre of Britain, potentially drawing in people from around the empire. The amphitheatre also being seemingly woven into the existing religious landscape of London within the Walbrook Valley (Bateman, 2009) only complicates this further. The religious context of the London Amphitheatre especially does provide us perhaps more room for speculation about the religious function of the monument and the culture surrounding it, though it does not indicate the specific events that took place within the monument. There are some specific examples of artefacts such as the notable amount of horse remains at Silchester Amphitheatre (3.8.2), the distal humerus of a brown bear in the contemporary layers of the arena wall during the later phase of London Amphitheatre (4.9.2) (Bateman, 1997) or even the tethering stone at Chester Amphitheatre (4.9.5) that may allude to some of the events that took place within these monuments. Again,

they serve to provide us with further possibilities and may be indicative of specific events, though they cannot be viewed as direct evidence of these exact uses.

There are also some examples in relation to the targeted modifications of amphitheatres as well as common features that may allude to what they were used for. The construction of the *nemesea* at Chester and Caerleon (Wilmott, 2008) certainly demonstrate a religious element to the uses of these amphitheatres. Meanwhile features such as *carceres* like those noted at the second phase of London Amphitheatre and at Cirencester may have been used as beast-pens to store animals during events. This may especially have been the case at London (4.3) due to the potential identification of a sliding timber trapdoor frame on the doorway of the southern chamber out into the arena (Bateman, 1997, 58). However, when considering the wider culture in relation to the uses of Romano-British amphitheatres, I believe it can be best demonstrated by the transformation of the monuments of Verulamium and Silchester. As established, the Verulamium Theatre-Amphitheatre both architecturally and as a cultural representation of the settlement, is certainly unique within Britain. It would make sense that the monument was constructed with specific events in mind. This is applicable to all Romano-British amphitheatres, though perhaps more physically notable at Verulamium. The emphasis during the first phase of the monument seemingly more onto the free arena space than the stage specifically, perhaps indicates the popularity of events was focused within this area. However, during the monument's second phase of construction soon after (Wilmott, 2008, 126), far more emphasis was placed on the stage itself, significantly reducing the size of the arena (Wilmott, 2008). In my view, this physical change was most likely a result of a cultural change surrounding the events held within the amphitheatre. The popularity of specific events revolving around the stage may have caused those behind this project to transform the amphitheatre to better suit these.

The purposeful architectural modifications reflecting preferences in relation to the uses of these monuments may also be the case when analysing the multiple phases of Silchester Amphitheatre. I placed significant focus upon the role of the arena and its near circular shape during the first phase of the monument in relation to the events perhaps held there (3.8.2), though over the second and third phases of the amphitheatre (4.6) this also changed, transforming into more of a traditional oval by the final masonry phase (Wilmott, 2008, 64). This may be representative of a change in the use of the monument, though it is difficult to suggest what events may have been possible or more suited to the circular arena but not in the later oval one. As amphitheatres emerged and changed physically to represent their immediate and individual contexts, one would assume the uses of them did as well.

6.8 Cultural change:

While to us, amphitheatres will always be regarded as 'Roman', the amphitheatres of Roman Britain should be viewed as unique and distinctly Romano-British. They are individual manifestations of localised spectacle culture within their associated communities, while also being connected to form a provincial culture distinct from what could be considered traditionally Roman or British. This exemplifies the importance of considering the creolisation model when investigating the emergence of amphitheatres as physical manifestations of cultural change throughout Britain. As I have demonstrated, this cultural change in Britain occurred organically. There was no grand transfer of knowledge to Britain requiring those inhabiting the settlements how to construct these monuments, just like there was no purposeful transfer of spectacle culture surrounding them. Engaging with this aspect of traditionally Roman culture in the first place was a choice, demonstrated by their relative scarcity over Britain. This also demonstrates the significance of considering 'discrepant identities', those who constructed, viewed, and used these monuments in Britain were free to project their own culture and ideas onto the amphitheatres. This would have been in my view a reflection of their own experiences and contexts. However, this process of cultural change further requires these monuments to be accepted and to flourish through the engagement of wider society outside of the elite and wealthy that constructed and funded them.

Without a larger system of integration, the adoption and adaption of these amphitheatres occurred organically and individually. Though I have highlighted potential and likely pathways of influence and inspiration between them, each amphitheatre while Romano-British can also be viewed individually as a representation of the desires of the groups and individuals behind its funding and construction, but even deeper as a manifestation of the local culture within its associated community. Ultimately, for the process of creolisation in relation to the emergence of Romano-British amphitheatres specifically to occur, it must happen at the localised level. However, in doing so, this process of cultural change spreads across the province entirely based upon voluntary investment, opportunity and engagement. By spreading between settlements and across the province, it forms a wider Romano-British spectacle culture. However, this wider culture does not detract from the significance of these amphitheatres as manifestations of localised cultural change.

The aspect of opportunity is also vital to this process. These monuments reflect the province flourishing economically and culturally at certain points over the Roman period. While the role of amphitheatres is what primarily motivated people to construct them, the importance of

architectural munificence and the necessity of wealth for their construction is undeniable. Throughout the Roman period these monuments were the result of opportunity, predominantly constructed alongside large scale building programs within their associated settlements. While it is evident that significant amounts of wealth and resources were necessary for the construction of these amphitheatres, the relative scarcity of these monuments throughout the province, and the range of contexts they were constructed in, suggests that there was not a direct connection between a settlement's wealth and the construction of an associated amphitheatre. However, when analysing the process of cultural change, the necessity for suitable opportunity and the specific choice to construct these amphitheatres are intrinsically linked. A large venue to host events for a multitude of reasons whether military training, religious festivals or just entertainment even if politically motivated further enriches the culture surrounding these monuments and allowed it to evolve and spread. While amphitheatres represented spectacle culture physically, they were also instrumental in spreading it, certainly more than other potential public monuments.

It is no coincidence that these amphitheatres were built often in relation to large urban towns or settlements that can be considered gathering grounds. This is even the case outside of the urban contexts such as at Tomen-y-Mur and Newstead. Regardless of context or the motivations behind their construction, amphitheatres function to promote spectacle culture and expose people to it on a large scale. Making use of the opportunity to construct an amphitheatre spreads awareness of spectacle culture and provides others with further opportunity to take part in this culture, perhaps even inspiring individuals and groups who were capable of doing so to construct their own. The importance of perception even on an individual level in relation to this process of cultural change through creolisation cannot be understated. While the physicality, architecture and uses of these monuments could have also displayed the wealth, political status, or specific messages of those responsible for them, how these were then interpreted and spread across settlements and the province was what drove this process. The freedom to express and interpret spectacle culture based upon their own perception allowed this process of creolisation to occur. Overall, the lack of an agenda or even interference in relation to the construction of amphitheatres supported their emergence in Britain. This allowed people to interpret and use these monuments in ways that were meaningful to them. This context also fostered cultural change by allowing it to occur organically through creolisation at a local level. Amphitheatres acted as the primary physical manifestation of this new culture, while simultaneously acting as instrumental tools in its spread and evolution over this period.

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