

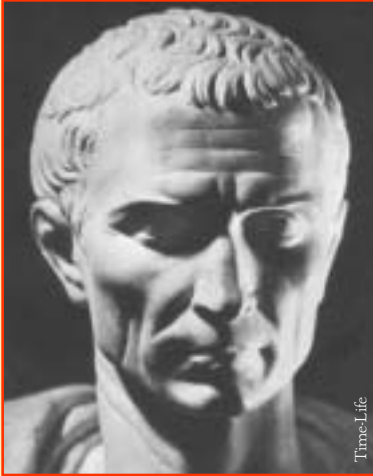
ALBION

A CLASSICAL ROMAN FONT

THE EMPEROR OF ROME was considered something of a joke. He was lame, he stuttered - and, though a descendant of a family which over the centuries had provided many great generals, Claudius had garnered no military laurels for himself. This was the situation, in the year 42, that he proposed to change.

It surprised nobody that he chose Britain. After all, everyone in Rome knew it was time that the distant, mist-shrouded island in the north was brought into the civilized world . . .

It had all been so easy. Four Roman legions, under the command of Aulus Plautius, had landed in Kent in the summer of A.D. 43. Marching through the south east, they routed the brother of the impudent chief



Caractacus and, a few days later, had smashed Caractacus' own force . . .

As soon as he heard that all was well, Claudius came across the narrow sea-channel with his elephants to watch the submission of the fiery Catuvellauni, a few miles north of the river Thames. Sixteen more of the island's tribes immediately sent messages of surrender . . . Claudius did not care. The military triumph he needed was now under his belt, and he stayed on the island for only sixteen days.

Adapted from Edward Rutherfurd's *Sarum* (Crown Publishers Inc., N.Y.), 1987.

Albion, the early name for Britain, was derived from the Latin word 'albi' (white), referring to the white cliffs of Dover as seen from the English Channel.

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