



Cartimandua: Queen of the Brigantes. By Nicki Howarth

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pp. 3, 243). The result is a rather conventional treatment, structured chronologically with a couple of regional chapters dealing with Britain and south-west Europe (especially Iberia).

Any such book must address definitions — what is Celtic art? Harding's resolution of his scope is problematic. He focuses on the C-word and, while noting the critique of pan-Celticism over the past decade or two, sets his canvas to take in 'the art of ... population groups ... identified as Celtic on ethnic or linguistic grounds' (p. 262). This allows him to look beyond La Tène art — but it is precisely such definitions of 'Celtic', broad to the point of meaningless, which have been at the centre of the intellectual storm. What is an 'ethnic Celt'? For Harding, this seems to derive largely from Classical views. Does any such ethnicity correlate with language? Or with art styles, themselves endlessly changing, influenced and influencing, reinvented and reinforced? This is not the place to scratch at slowly healing wounds but, while a broad canvas is a good thing, we should not assume there is any homogeneity to it. Harding's book essentially comprises a series of regional case studies at varying dates and scales — and it is exactly such regionality, and the juggling of taphonomic bias (areas with burials or hoards and those without), local and regional variability, and transregional stylistic similarities which a book on the archaeology of Celtic art must address. This work leaves such issues unanswered. While a useful summary of the areas it covers, it leaves much of the field for further research. The archaeology of Celtic art remains to be written.

FRASER HUNTER

CARTIMANDUA: QUEEN OF THE BRIGANTES. By NICKI HOWARTH. Pp. 158, Illus 14. History Press, 2008. Price: £18.99. ISBN 978 0 7524 4705 6.

A thorough overview of the sources for Cartimandua of the Brigantes, this very readable book explores the tribal and personal contexts of this politically astute first-century tribal leader. The author's holistic approach to her subject of interweaving archaeological and historical material with her own and others' commentaries allows the drawing out of themes such as women in power, freedom fighting, human sacrifice, military strategies and the different theories behind the territorial conflicts between Cartimandua and the man who had been her consort, Venutius.

The author explains that she 'often reference[s] popular media in [her] initial attempts to digest and assimilate information', but then very effectively deconstructs the modern stereotypes popularly ascribed to women in power, such as 'power-hungry seductress' of Cartimandua and 'wronged mother' of her contemporary, Boudica, ruler of the Iceni. The use of popular culture to reference the past creates further mythologies to be deconstructed which are hard to shift; no writer can escape their own cultural and personal biases.

Tacitus refers to Vellocatus, whom Cartimandua had made her new consort, as the *armigerus* ('armour-bearer') of Venutius (*History* 3, 45), a position of prestige. Howarth considers the possibility that the Roman-style name of Vellocatus may reflect the fact that he was the son of a high-ranking Roman family placed within the household of the Brigantian ruler. There may have been previous personal connections between Cartimandua's family and Rome; perhaps she had visited the city herself during her long reign. The idea that Cartimandua had a Roman 'husband' (to use a Roman phrase) is an interesting one and which, as Howarth suggests, may partly explain the attack by Venutius on Brigantian territory in AD 69, at the same time as Cartimandua faced rebellion from factions within. Auxiliary troops were despatched to rescue her, but were unable to keep her in power.

In the section 'The Queen, the Woman, the Invention', Howarth discusses how, in the process of appealing to their audience, classical writers reflected the moral standards and sentiments of their own cultural background and social context. Their portraits of female rulers such as Cleopatra of Egypt, Boudica of the Iceni and Berenice of Cilicia have been elaborated by later commentators who compared and contrasted them with the queens of their own time. Dio described Boudica as 'having intelligence greater than women in general ... a very tall stature, most masculine form and also the sharpest glance, she had the harshest voice ...' By ascribing to Boudica the aspects of a male commander, Dio portrayed Boudica as outraging her gender and transgressing by far the accepted

classical social norms of female behaviour. Cartimandua, by contrast, was an ally of Rome throughout her rule. She captured the rebel war leader Caratacus, whose fame had spread as far the emperor himself, and delivered him in chains to the Roman authorities. Despite this, Tacitus still sought to criticize her in order to appeal to his elite Roman readers. He described how a quarrel arose between Cartimandua and Venutius that led to war and how she captured his relatives, enraging her enemies who were very concerned about the prospect of female rule (*Annals* 12, 40); a sentiment his readers would empathize with. Tacitus had previously stated that the Britons saw no difference between male and female rulers (*Agricola* 16), which would have shocked his audience and emphasized the barbarity of native society.

Howarth speculates on the fate of Cartimandua after her overthrow in AD 69, and the aspects of her identity as a provincial ruler within the Roman empire. Her image in her own time and her later reception are both considered. Howarth comments that 'Women in antiquity were largely defined by their relationships with men'; and that as a woman in power referenced by classical authors, Cartimandua is still being objectified by writers, female as well as male, today. This book takes a fresh approach to a figure in British antiquity, showing Cartimandua to have been a resourceful ruler who was able to balance the responsibilities of leadership in her own territory with those to Rome.

CHRISTINA UNWIN

STANWAY: AN ELITE BURIAL SITE AT CAMMULODUNUM. By PHILIP CRUMMY, STEPHEN BENFIELD, NINA CRUMMY, VALERY RIGBY and DONALD SHIMMIN. Pp. xx and 495, Illus 257. Society for the Promotion of Roman Archaeology (Britannia Monograph Series, 24), 2007. Price: £46.00. ISBN 978 0 907764 35 9.

Stanway represents one of the few high-status cemeteries which span the period from the first century BC to the immediate post-conquest period that has seen thorough, modern excavation. The importance of the Stanway cemetery for understanding the social processes involved at the time of Roman conquest should not be underestimated, with many of its finds, including a gaming board and surgical instruments, representing unique insights into Late Iron Age society.

This is a substantial volume and the thoroughness with which it deals with the material, supported by a wealth of high quality line drawings and photographs, is to be commended. This is partly a result of the high standard of excavation which was undertaken under very difficult conditions. Also included are a number of longer discussions, including one on Iron Age and Roman gaming and another on graffiti; both provide useful contributions in their own right. A wealth of detailed information is provided alongside discussions on the location and state of finds, all of which stimulate a range of questions over the practices taking place and the roles of such items as expressions of power and identity. Together, this will undoubtedly make the site a focus for future debate.

Other aspects of the site are less thoroughly discussed; for example, its topographic location and relationship of the cemetery to the earlier enclosure, despite the potentially highly significant implications of this juxtaposition. In view of the continued visibility of the earlier enclosure, and its apparent high status, what meaning might this space have conveyed to its later reuse? Considering recent discussions of the significance of earlier features on Iron Age landscape use and the creation of mythical antecedents for some oppida by Late Iron Age elites, these issues seem worthy of greater discussion.

From the wealth of material the author constructs a detailed and often convincing narrative of the development of the site and the burial rites. However, it is within the final discussion where some conclusions might be questioned. Can we really, for example, be so sure as to say that Enclosures 3–5 represent the burial place of the same family? Questions of the origins of the interred individuals and nature of the identities expressed are also an area that receives less theoretically driven discussion than might be desired, particularly considering the extent of research in this area in the last two decades. It seems strange, for example, to be so confident as to describe the 'Doctor' as 'certainly a Briton'. Not only does it seem feasible that the individual might be an immigrant, but also such