



MOTHER HILL

A brief exploration of land, tribe and deity

MAM TOR

- **Mother Hill** - 517 m high – near the village of Castleton in the **Peak District** – Hope Valley
- **Late Neolithic to Late Bronze Age**
Two **bowl barrows** *2
- **Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age**
Univallate (single rampart) **hill fort** -
'stock enclosures, redistribution centres, places of refuge and permanent settlements' *3



Mam Tor *4

BRIG

- Brig - Brighid - Brigid - Brigantes - Brigantia
- PIE $*b^hrǵ^h-s$ > PC $*brigs$ -
hill – high – exalted - $*brīg-$ **worth – honour**
- Old Irish - brí 'hill'
M Welsh, M Breton and M Cornish - bre 'hill'
briga, brig, bre are found in brigantī,
brigid, Brit, Brigantia, brigantīnos, brenhin,
brigant – many attested Celtic toponyms,
theonyms, hydronyms and ethnonyms *5



BRIGANTES

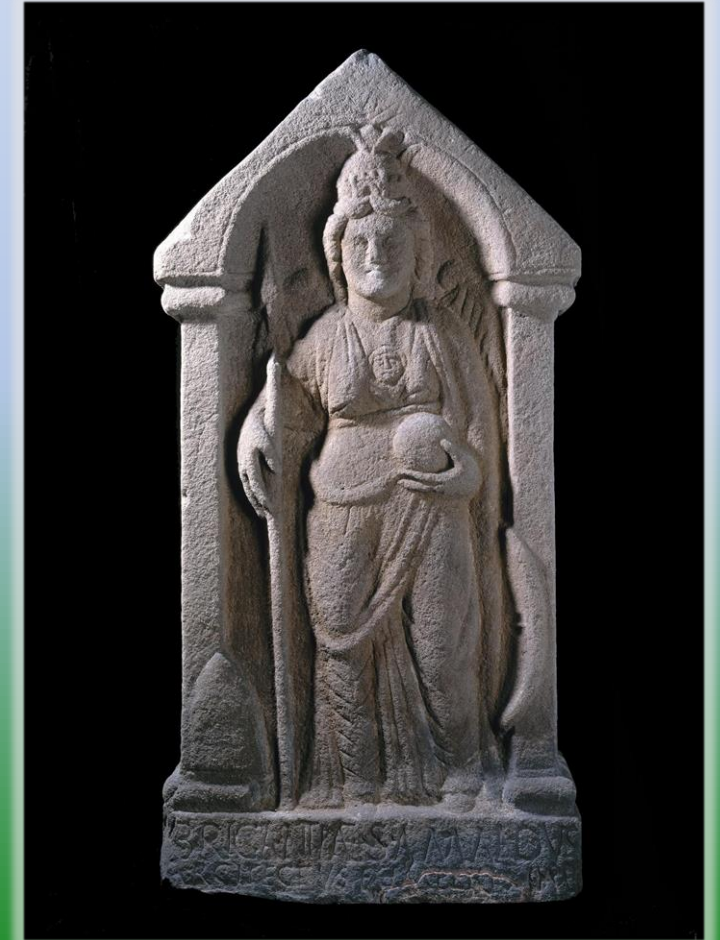
- Powerful and important confederacy of tribes in Northern Britain - **hill-dwellers** or **goddess?** *7 *8
- **Descended from Bronze Age peoples** in the area *9
Tacitus writes about their uprising and subsequent alliance under Cartimandua, much to Rome's relief *10
Ptolemy confirms their location *11
- Archaeological evidence points to several key strongholds – **Stanwick** is the best candidate for their administrative capital prior to Romanisation *12



Brigantian Mask *13

BRIGANTIA

- ‘**The High One**’ - Protective goddess of the Brigantes - personification of the tribe *14
- Later identified with **Minerva, Fortuna** and **Victoria** in Roman times with spear, wings, mural crown, globe or omphalos stone – she is **Brigantia Caelestis** at Hadrian’s Wall *15
- For the Brigantes she functioned as a guardian **warrior**; a **healer** for the tribe; and as the focus of a **water cult** *16



Brigantia *17

CASTLETON

- **Boundary** stone heads – ‘greater frequency in upland than lowland’ – southern and northern ‘edges’ of Briganti territory and ‘distinct clusters of carved stone heads’ in Peak District *18 *19
- Stone Head from Rose Cottage in Castleton beneath Mam Tor near the **Russet Well** – possibly not Brigantia *20
- **May - Garland Day** – ‘customs were Christian adaptations of pagan rituals’ – **King** is enveloped in a flowery **Queen** – flowers are locally picked *21 *22



Castleton Head *23

MOTHER HILL

- Were they the Brigantes?
- Was Brigantia deified here?
- Was the water below honoured?
- Do modern ways echo the ancient?
- Does the land itself inform sacred practice?



Me on Mam Tor

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