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Women in Roman Britain

Lindsay Allason-Jones

When studying the women who lived in Britain between the first and fifth centuries CE, it is essential to begin by identifying exactly who is being discussed, as these women did not form a homogeneous group. Britannia had a population made up of the independent tribes who had inhabited the country before the Romans arrived as well as those people who followed the army and made their homes in the province, either temporarily or permanently, over the centuries. The latter could have come from the Mediterranean heartlands of the Roman empire, but could equally have originated in Africa, southern Russia, or Syria. Within both the native population and the groups of incomers, there would have been a wide variety of ideas as to the status of women and how they should conduct their lives. Trying to pick apart these ideas and attitudes from the written sources and the often contradictory archaeological evidence is not as simple as many modern scholars would wish.

It is unwise, for example, to rely on the ancient writers' descriptions of the province of Britannia. Writers such as Julius Caesar and Tacitus did not necessarily gather their information themselves, nor were they trained anthropologists, with sufficient evidence available to allow them to differentiate between hearsay, myth, and actual fact, and it would be unreasonable to expect them to do so. For example, in regard to the Britons, Julius Caesar recorded with some fascination that "groups of ten or twelve men have wives together in common, and particularly brothers along with brothers, and fathers with sons, but the children born of the union are reckoned to belong to the particular house to which the maiden was first conducted" (*De Bello Gallico* V.14). That this image of the sex lives of the women of Roman Britain was still current in Rome several centuries later can be deduced from the empress Julia Domna's query to the unnamed wife of the Caledonian chieftain, Argentocoxus, about "the free intercourse of her sex with men in Britain" (Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 77.16.5). This interchange may suggest that some British tribes were matrilineal. On the other hand, it is possible that in Argentocoxus' tribe there was a system similar to that of the Roman *pater familias*, but rather than becoming the

technical daughter of a male guardian, as in the Roman system, a widow became his nominal wife.

Alternatively, some of the British tribes may have practiced a system similar to that of the Levirate of the Sudan, where young widows are accepted into the homes of their dead husband's brother in order to protect the family line and keep their children within the kinship group. In cultures beset by warfare, when many men die young, leaving behind a high number of fertile widows, systems such as the Levirate are developed to ensure the continuation of kin groups and tribes. It is not unreasonable to suggest that some British tribes may have had such systems. We must, however, be cautious in presuming that anthropological sources will necessarily provide answers to our questions about the life, rituals, and laws of the indigenous population in pre-Roman and early Roman Britain. It is quite possible that the stories recorded by the ancient writers were nothing more than travelers' tales, based on no real facts and simply repeated as "evidence" of the weirdness of those who lived outside the boundaries of the empire.

Iron Age Britain was made up of many tribes and sub-tribes and, although we cannot be sure exactly where all the tribal boundaries lay (Allason-Jones 2009), we can be confident that the status and legal position of women varied from tribe to tribe (Ehrenberg 1989). Just because all these tribes are usually referred to by ancient and modern writers as "Celtic" does not mean that they shared the same attitudes to women as all other Celtic tribes. Recent research into Iron Age Britain indicates considerable divergence in the lifestyles, religious beliefs, and burial practices of the tribes (Haselgrove and Moore 2007). The careers of two women, Cartimandua and Boudica, as recorded by the Roman writers, indicate that this divergence included the status of women.

According to Tacitus, Cartimandua owed her position as leader of the Brigantes, a large tribe or confederation of tribes centered at Stanwick in Yorkshire, to "the influence which belongs to high birth" (*Histories* III. 45); in other words, Cartimandua was a noble woman suitable for high office. The written texts indicate that Cartimandua, and not her husband Venutius, was the ruler, although it is less clear whether she had inherited the throne or had been installed as ruler by the Roman authorities. The former is the more likely, given the Roman government's dislike of female rulers. As one reads the classical writers on the subject of Cartimandua, however, it becomes evident that they had little interest in her political status but were completely enthralled by what they regarded as her louche lifestyle.

The first record of Cartimandua in the surviving texts is of her betrayal of Caratacus to the Romans after he had sought refuge at her court following his defeat by Ostorius Scapula. "From this," recorded Tacitus, "came her wealth and the wanton spirit which success breeds," and she divorced her husband and took his armor-bearer, Velllocatus, as her lover (*Histories* III. 45). Tacitus offers two versions of the subsequent tale as a warning of what can occur if women do not behave in the approved Roman way. In *Histories* he states that "her house was at once shaken by this scandalous act" (III. 45), and as a result her husband, supported by outraged tribesmen, attempted to oust her from office. In the *Annals*, however, Tacitus records that "her enemies, infuriated and goaded by fears of humiliating feminine rule, invaded her kingdom with a powerful force of picked warriors" (XII. 40). This second version reveals more about Tacitus' Roman attitude to women than it offers an accurate record of a political situation, as Cartimandua had already been accepted as their ruler by the Brigantes. It is possible that she had revealed an intention to invade the lands of neighboring tribes or created some other political uncertainty that offered Venutius the opportunity to stir up rebellion. Whatever the situation, the Roman

army appears to have considered the *status quo* as being in the best interests of the province and provided the necessary support to ensure Cartimandua retained her throne. Venutius' coup was defeated, although he made another, more successful, attempt in 69 CE (Casson 1945; Richmond 1954; Mitchell 1978; Braund 1984; Howarth 2008).

The story of Boudica, as recorded by Tacitus and Cassius Dio, also provides an exciting story, designed to confirm in Roman readers' minds that such behavior was only to be expected from barbarians, rather than to archive an unbiased and accurate description of a historical event. Boudica (also referred to as Boadicea or Boudicca) was the wife of Prasutagus, king of the Iceni tribe, who was confirmed as a client king of Rome in 47 CE. We know remarkably little about her, considering the vast number of books and films that have emerged over the years with Boudica as the heroine. According to Cassius Dio, "in stature she was very tall, in appearance most terrifying, in the glance of her eye most fierce and her voice was harsh; a great mass of bright red hair fell to her hips" (LXII. 2.4). Even in the face of this detailed description, however, caution must be used, as female leaders who hampered the Roman advance across the known world are invariably described as large women lacking femininity. For example, Candace of Meroe (modern Sudan) was described by Strabo as "a masculine sort of woman and blind in one eye" (*Geography* XVII). All we can be sure about is that Boudica had two daughters, to whom Prasutagus left his kingdom jointly with the emperor Nero.

Space is too short here to discuss the various versions and details of Boudica's rebellion, but two points can be made. First, despite the limited information about both women, Boudica has, over the years, attracted more interest than Cartimandua, and as a result considerably more has been written about her—perhaps because in the nineteenth century Cartimandua's private life would have limited her appeal as a womanly role model, whereas Boudica's fight for her daughters' rights would have struck all the right notes. Second, each generation creates a new Boudica, depending on the political climate of the time. A quick trawl through Google Images reveals a fascinating development from the well-bred aristocrat of John Opie's painting of 1793, *Boadicea Haranguing the Britons*, to the inspired and courageous Boadicea (also *Haranguing the Britons*) depicted in H. C. Selous' painting of c. 1840, who would have appealed to a Britain that had recently crowned the young queen Victoria. There are also striking contrasts between the motherly Boudica of J. Havard Thomas' 1913–15 sculpture, owned by Cardiff City Council; the feisty, liberated woman portrayed by Alex Kingston in the 2003 film *Boudica*; and the curiously muscular Boudica painted by fantasy artist Jed Dougherty in 2006. These images remind us that, as well being aware of the ancient authors' biases when discussing the women of Roman Britain, we must consider the mindset of more modern writers and artists, who invariably use Boudica to express their own attitudes to women.

This caution in regard to specific women must also be exercised when using ancient texts concerning law, as it pertained to women in general (on women and law see Levick, this volume, Chapter 7). It has become increasingly clear that each province in the Roman empire had a legal code that was developed to amalgamate the existing native law codes with that of Rome. It is also clear that these legal codes changed through time, and that a law passed in the first century CE may not have been on the statute books two centuries later. The surviving law codes reveal that some laws were continually being adapted or even reintroduced, as, for example, the laws requiring women to be under the legal guardianship of *patria potestas* (Allason-Jones forthcoming). In Rome during the first century BCE, Cicero declared that guardianship for women was only reasonable, as "our ancestors established the rule that all women, because of their weakness of intellect, should be under

the power of guardians” (*Pro Murena* 27). But in Egypt in the reign of Constantius II, letters in the archive of Flavius Abinnaeus, a cavalry officer in charge of the fort of Dionysias in the Fayum, indicate that women were often left to fend for themselves when their appointed *paterfamilias* failed to carry out his duties (Bell et al. 1962: 116–17). It is unlikely that those British tribes who had been used to a female leader would have seen eye to eye with Cicero about the intellect and legal needs of women, whatever their standing in society.

The extensive quantity of epigraphic evidence available for the study of Roman Britain can also hide from view those women—the majority—who left no written evidence of their existence. Most of the inscriptions found in the province are related to the military; indeed, the practice of epigraphy is invariably referred to as a military habit, and most of the tombstones, altars, and building inscriptions from Roman Britain are certainly to be found in the Military Zone. It has been estimated that only ten percent of the inscriptions surviving from the province refer to women (Allason-Jones 2005) and the content of this ten percent varies from merely a name to potted biographies. For example, most graffiti on pots simply indicate who owned that pot at some stage in its life: Vitia is only known from the letters “VITIA X” scratched on a grey-ware pot from Darenth villa (“Vitia, her mark”: Wright and Hassall 1971: 298, no. 54).

The tombstone of Regina, from South Shields, on the other hand, provides not only an image of Regina with her clothing, jewelry, and furniture but also a clear inscription recording that, although she herself was a tribeswoman of the Catuvellauni who died at the age of thirty (*RIB* 1065), she was the freedwoman and wife of Barates, a Palmyrene (see Figure 34.1). The suggestion that her husband, who was clearly wealthy enough to



Figure 34.1 Tombstone of Regina from South Shields (*RIB* 1065). Photo: courtesy CIAS, Newcastle University.



Figure 34.2 The Aemilia finger ring, from Corbridge, is decorated with the letters “Aemilia Zeses” (Amelia may you live) in the *opus interrasile* technique (RIB 2422.1). Photo: courtesy CIAS, Newcastle University.

commission an elaborate tombstone in the Palmyrene tradition, was a trader in furs comes from a memorial at Corbridge to a man called Barates who may or may not have been Regina’s husband—Barates being a common name in Palmyra (RIB 1171). Regina’s tombstone offers compelling evidence for mixed marriages in Roman Britain, for the bi- or trilingual abilities of the population, and for clothing and the wearing of jewelry. It also poses the still-unanswerable question of how Regina became enslaved when she appears to have been born a freewoman of the Catuvellauni sometime in the late second century CE. Inscriptions are seized upon by archaeologists as offering reliable data, but their readings can often result in more questions than answers.

The epigraphic record is strongly biased towards the upper- and middle-class Romanized population, especially those with links to the military, for they came from a group with a tradition of publicly recording their lives, achievements, and activities. Further, such people could afford to do so—it is unlikely that Regina, as a British freedwoman, would have considered commissioning such a lavish tombstone for herself. The Palmyrene influence of the carving, as well as the Palmyrene text under the Latin epitaph, confirm that the memorial was to Barates’ taste and reflected his funerary traditions. The occasional small finds that provide the names of their owners, such as the Aemilia finger ring from Corbridge (Figure 34.2), which may or may not be the earliest Christian artifact from Roman Britain, may reflect the taste of their wearer but alternatively could indicate the taste of their gift-givers or forebears (Allason-Jones 1991).

Only fifteen percent of the inscriptions that refer to a woman reveal her to be of low status—for example, Armea, the girlfriend of a tile-maker at Binchester (RIB 2491.146),

and Verecunda, the actress and associate of Lucius the gladiator at Leicester (*CIL* VII 1335. 4), and much of this evidence is from graffiti rather than formal inscriptions. The balance is redressed slightly by the lead curse tablets found at Bath and Uley (Tomlin 1988—referenced as *Tab. Sul.*; Woodward and Leach 1993). The writing tablets from Vindolanda, Carlisle, and elsewhere (Bowman and Thomas 1983, 1994, 2003; Tomlin 1998, 2003) often reveal fascinating details of the concerns and problems of ordinary women, such as Oconeia, who had a pan stolen from her at Bath (*Tab. Sul.* 60), or Tretia Maria, who was cursed by an anonymous enemy at London (*RIB* 7). Again, however, it is important not to read too much into the sparse information about individual women. Was Vilbia, for example, who is referred to on a lead tablet from Bath, a slave or a concubine, and was she really the victim of a dastardly kidnapping plot by a group of eight named people (*RIB* 154)?

Relying too heavily on the epigraphic record can also result in an inaccurate picture of the women's day-to-day activities. For example, if the evidence of the artifacts and parallels from other provinces is ignored, it would be easy to fall into the error of presuming that the women of Roman Britain engaged only in domestic work and were not involved in manufacturing or other income generation outside the home. Indeed, from inscriptions we know of only two women who are recorded by their profession. As one is a priestess (*RIB* 1129) and the other, the previously mentioned Verecunda, is an actress (*CIL* VII.1335.4), they are unlikely to be representative of all the women of the province. However, the number of male artisans who have left written evidence of their existence in Roman Britain is hardly more impressive, despite the huge numbers of smiths, potters, miners, etc. who must have existed in the province over time. In this context, having the names of only two women is less significant (Allason-Jones 1996).

The women who are lost to us are not only those who could not afford an inscription, had no reason to compose one, or did not come from a tradition that considered an inscription to be a useful means of communicating with other people or the gods: some women are mentioned on inscriptions but still manage to remain invisible. The struggle to persuade academics that there were women attached to Roman forts, particularly on the northern frontier of Britain, has been long and hard, and somewhat curious given the number of women who are recorded on altars and tombstones (Campbell 1978; Saller and Shaw 1984; Roxan 1991; Allason-Jones 1995, 1998, 1999, 2003a, 2005; van Driel Murray 1995; Phang 2001; Allison 2006a, 2006b, 2008, 2009).

Even today, many academics tend to concentrate on the wives, daughters, and concubines of the military. They thus overlook the mothers, mothers-in-law, sisters, and nieces of the soldiers who served in Britain (Allason-Jones 2003a, forthcoming). At Risingham, one of the outpost forts north of Hadrian's Wall, Dionysius Fortunatus buried his mother Aurelia Lupula (*RIB* 1250). A soldier commemorated at Caerleon, who died "on the German expedition" at the age of thirty-seven, had clearly been responsible, even during his absence, for his mother Tadia Vallaunia, who died at the age of sixty-five, and his sister, Tadia Exuperata, who survived to erect their joint tombstone (*RIB* 369). Another sister, Vacia, buried her brother Aelius Mercurialis, a *cornicularius*, at the frontier fort of Great Chesters (*RIB* 1742). There are more examples but these serve to remind us that, despite inscriptional and mortuary evidence indicating that the norm in the province was two children per family, most people in Roman Britain had extended family networks and were not merely members of nuclear families (Allason-Jones 2005: 30–6; see also Allason-Jones 2003a).

A final group of women has remained invisible in the epigraphic record: those who lived in the country from the early third century onwards. The latest consular date for an inscription from Roman Britain is 286 CE, a date that can be deduced from a dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus (*RIB* III.3299). After that, the practice of inscribing names on stone blocks, or even marking one's possessions, died out in the province. As a result, it is not possible to name ordinary individual people after that date or to identify their existence, except through the evidence of their unmarked belongings (Collins and Allason-Jones 2010). These belongings can be notoriously difficult to assign to a male or female owner. Britain does provide a rich quantity of Roman material culture, particularly jewelry found in graves, which can indicate the sort of artifacts being worn and at what date. This jewelry can sometimes indicate where on the body such objects were worn or carried. There are only a few visual depictions of women on tombstones or wall paintings, and it is not clear whether, or how, they can be taken as accurate images of individuals. As Swift has pointed out, the majority of images that show how women wore their hair, clothing, and jewelry come from other Roman provinces and thus may not be relevant to everyone in Britain (2011: 203). Swift further points out that "representation at death may also show an ideal rather than actual version of typical dress." We must, therefore, work with the tools available to us, namely the artifact assemblages.

It is important, however, that we not introduce our twenty-first century baggage into our studies of these artifacts. This principle holds for studies of all periods but is a particular problem in the Roman period, as generations of Britons were educated in the classical tradition. This tradition caused scholars to absorb the Roman mores and attitudes and to presume that, if the Romans did things in a particular way, it must be a sensible way to do things. Such presumptions were followed by the circular argument that, if we do things in this way, therefore, it is only reasonable to expect the Romans to have done things in the same way. This scenario has been discussed in detail by Richard Hingley (2000). If we use modern, or more usually mid-twentieth century, attitudes to identify artifacts as being used solely by men or women, then we endanger our understanding of the data. The Romans were not politically correct people, and there is no point in trying retroactively to make them so.

In the early 1990s researchers were tempted to use the evidence of the finds as a basis for their theories of space allocation within buildings or sites, but it has become clear that attributing gender to individual finds or even groups of finds is not a simple task. Carol van Driel's work on shoes, particularly at Vindolanda, has shown that shoes can be attributed to male, female, and infant wearers, but they are found more often than not in rubbish deposits (van Driel Murray 1995); because they were discarded, we cannot easily assume that women and children were in the forts. Necklaces, earrings, hairpins, and objects made from jet (Allason-Jones 1995, 2003b) were worn mostly by women, and the large crossbow brooches of the fourth century are mostly associated with military and civilian elite men (Collins 2010). Once an artifact type is firmly associated with one sex or the other, however, the discovery of such an object in a context that links it irrefutably with "the wrong sex" requires some tortuous arguments to explain the apparent anomaly (Allason-Jones 1995; Swift 2011; see also Allason-Jones 1988).

Even when an artifact is found within a grave, we must be confident that the body itself has been correctly identified as male or female. The case of a skeleton found at Catterick, for example, is instructive: it was discovered wearing a necklace, two bracelets, and an anklet. This large skeleton was initially presumed, because of this jewelry, to be a woman—but it proved to be that of a male aged between twenty and twenty-five years. It is now

postulated that the individual was one of the transvestite priests of Cybele who castrated themselves in her service and tended to wear female dress and adornments (Wilson 2002a: 176–8, 2002b: 109 no. 8, 177 nos. 1–3, 384 no. 952, see also 41–2).

The discovery of “female” artifacts in religious contexts has also led to some interesting discussions. John Clayton, very much a man of his time, worked on the hypothesis that the jewelry found in Coventina’s Well on Hadrian’s Wall indicated female worshippers, referring to “lovesick damsels” who, he believed, “cast into the Well their spare trinkets in the hope of obtaining the countenance of the Goddess in their views” (Clayton 1880: 310). All the inscriptions from the Well refer to male worshippers, a fact that may not be significant, as the ratio of female dedicators to male in Roman Britain is about one in ten. Coventina herself is clearly female, so a piece of jewelry may have been considered an appropriate offering with which to attract the attention of a female deity. The assemblage found in the Well is very mixed, however, and does not show a preponderance of *ex votos*, hairpins, and bracelets that might suggest a high proportion of female worshippers (Wheeler and Wheeler 1932: 42; Allason-Jones 1995: 29–30).

Several projects (led by the GIS work of Penelope Allison 2006a, 2006b, 2008; see also Becker 2006) have attempted to use artifact assemblages to identify the presence of women in Roman military contexts. This innovative work, however, has been seized upon by young scholars, who have not always grasped the problems inherent in this methodology—problems that were quite clear to the original researchers. Becker laid out the primary need first to catalog the finds (Becker 2006: 37); but one must then check the assemblage for oneself, rather than rely on the published catalogs. Many site reports published in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were selective in what they published, as are some twenty-first century reports, and as a result many incomplete or unidentifiable objects were omitted. Objects traditionally identified as being female, such as bracelets or hairpins, may survive as broken fragments, but were excluded for lack of space or importance.

In assessing an artifact assemblage, the importance of what is not there should also be taken into consideration. Such a category may include objects that have been made from recyclable material, such as glass or metal. Mike Bishop (2011: 115) has stated, in reference to Roman military equipment: “In order to understand what Roman military equipment can tell us, we need to feel comfortable about its taphonomy: in other words, how did it get into the archaeological record and what happened to it before, during, and after that event?” The same is equally true of artifacts that might indicate the presence of women. In 1989, Bishop offered the opinion that there were six reasons that military objects were deposited: concealment, burial rites, dedications, battles, booty, and chance.

To Bishop’s original list may be added two further considerations: (1) a catastrophic event, such as the eruption of Vesuvius at Pompeii in 79 CE, and (2) abandonment of the object because it was broken or no longer had any value. As a rule, only objects that cannot be recycled or reused for another purpose are thrown onto the rubbish heap and, as Bishop pointed out, in these circumstances, “only items which were susceptible to damage in the first place stood a chance of ending up in the ground” (Bishop 1989: 1). In other words, undamaged objects would be handed on, sold, or stolen; they would thus remain in circulation. In the case of the excavations at Housesteads and Wallsend, one study used the artifacts to suggest that the individual buildings that replaced the traditional barrack blocks at these sites in the late third century were married quarters (Daniels 1980). This conclusion was found to be based on a flawed understanding of the

context of the individual finds. A more detailed examination revealed that most of the apparently feminine objects were recovered from redistributed material used in repairs to the rampart backing, so they provided no evidence for who lived in the fort buildings (Rushworth 2009).

It is essential to bring a clear understanding of how Roman forts and towns work before attempting to decide whether an object is or is not out of its gender context. Evidence from artifacts and inscriptions has long confirmed that a number of women lived inside forts. For example, the commanding officers would have had their wives, children, and female servants with them; indeed, two of the earliest and most famous women in the Military Zone are commanding officers' wives: Sulpicia Lepidina, wife of Flavius Cerialis, prefect of the ninth Cohort of Batavians at Vindolanda, and her correspondent, Claudia Severa, the wife of a commanding officer at another, unnamed fort (Bowman and Thomas 1994). Julia Lucilla, a senator's daughter, married to Rufinus, the commander of the outpost fort of High Rochester in Northumberland, is another example of a commanding officer's wife who was in residence in a military establishment along with her retinue of servants (*RIB* 1271, 1288).

Centurions were also among the military who were allowed to marry while serving, prior to the Severan edict of 197 CE, which extended this right to all serving soldiers. The wives of some of these centurions are known from epigraphic evidence; for example, Flavia Baetica, who was married to a centurion serving on the Antonine Wall (*RIB* 2115), and Aurelia Censorina, who buried her centurion husband, Aurelius Super, at York (*RIB* 670). Careful assessment of the distribution pattern of feminine artifacts in forts invariably reveals that they come from within the commanding officers' houses or centurions' quarters.

The second most common context for female artifacts within forts is road surfaces or the drains at the roadsides. In Britain, forts are invariably built with roads passing through them. After the establishment of the Vallum on Hadrian's Wall, if one wished to go from north to south or south to north there was little choice other than to go through a fort. In these circumstances objects could be dropped. Equally, women may have needed to enter a fort to make a complaint to the commanding officer or sort out a tax problem. There is evidence that markets were set up inside the forts of Newcastle and Wallsend in the fourth century; markets would certainly have brought women into the forts on a regular basis (Brickstock 2010: 86). The argument that women were present in forts has long been won; attention now needs to concentrate on exactly where and when they were there, as well as why. Thus, for example, we know from a tombstone from Roman Carvoran, a fort on Hadrian's wall, that Aurelia Aia, wife of Aurelius Marcus, died at Carvoran (Figure 34.3), but we do not know when or where she lived.

To conclude, anyone studying the female population of Roman Britain must be alert to the biases of both classical writers and modern scholars. In particular, students should not presume, relying on modern criteria, that artifacts can be assigned to one gender or the other; they should always check the accuracy of the context in which the objects were found. It is also important to recall that the Roman empire covered a vast geographical area while the province of Britannia lasted from the Claudian invasion of 43 CE to an uncertain date around 410 CE. During this time many women from across the empire will have visited the province, bringing with them material possessions from their homelands as well as their moral, religious, and familial traditions. Such travel provides a rich mix of evidence that needs to be treated with common sense and care.

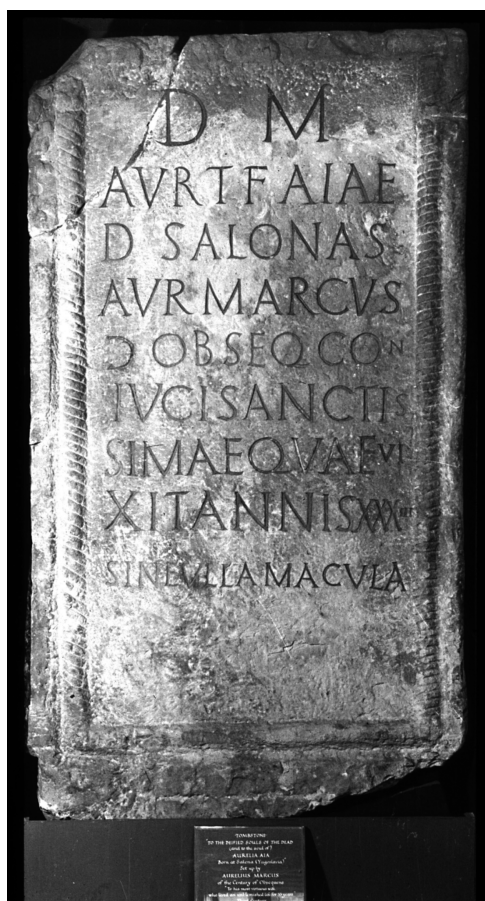


Figure 34.3 Tombstone for Aurelia Aia, daughter of Titus and wife of Aurelius Marcus, a soldier in the century of Obsequens (*RIB* 1828). Photo: courtesy CIAS, Newcastle University.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

For a general debate about Iron Age Britain, Haselgrove and Moore (2007) provide an excellent start, while Ehrenberg (1989) offers a comprehensive review of our knowledge of the lives of British women up to the first century CE. The many biographies of Boudica vary considerably in scope and quality; most recommended are Dudley and Webster (1962), Webster (1978), Trow (2003), Sealey (2004), Collingridge (2005), Hingley and Unwin (2005), and Waite (2007). On Cartimandua less is written, but see Casson (1945), Richmond (1954), Mitchell (1978), and Braund (1984) for detailed analysis of elements of her life. Howarth (2008) provides a lively and comprehensive discussion of Cartimandua and her political environment.

For an in-depth assessment of the evidence for the women who visited or lived in Roman Britain, from empresses to slaves, see Allason-Jones (2005), *Women in Roman Britain* (first edition 1989). For women from a single British site see Allason-Jones

(1998). For other aspects of women's lives in Britain see Allason-Jones (1996, 1999, 2003a, forthcoming). Phang (2001), Roxan (1991), and Saller and Shaw (1984) refer to the British evidence but take an empire-wide view. Much of the work that has attempted to use artifact assemblages for identifying the presence of women in Roman military contexts has been carried out in Germany (see Allison 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Becker 2006), but this scholarship offers a methodology and puts any future work in Britain in context. Researchers must, however, be clear as to which artifacts were worn or used solely by women; attention is, therefore, drawn to Allason-Jones (1988, 1995, 2003b) and van Driel Murray (1995).

For general introductions to artifacts in Roman Britain, see Allason-Jones (2011) and Collins and Allason-Jones (2010), both of which have lengthy bibliographies. The epigraphic evidence on stone can be found in Collingwood and Wright (1965; referred to as *RIB I* (*The Roman Inscriptions of Britain I*)), which covers all material found before 1955, while Tomlin et al. (2009: *RIB III*) amasses the monumental inscriptions found in the next half-century. Smaller inscribed objects found before 1987, invariably called *instrumentum domesticum* (domestic implement), have been collected in *RIB II*, which has been published in several fascicules by several editors. The hundreds of writing tablets of lead and wood found since 1973 are consolidated in *RIB IV* but can be found individually in volumes of *Britannia* or Bowman and Thomas (1983, 1994, 2003: Vindolanda), Tomlin (1988: Bath), Tomlin (1998: Carlisle), Tomlin (2003), and Woodward and Leach (1993: Uley). Military diplomata have been published by Roxan (1978, 1985).