

DESTRUCTION, ASSIMILATION AND EXPANSION OF BELIEFS

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE BRIGANTES

'... Petillius Cerialis at once struck terror into their hearts by invading the commonwealth of the Brigantes, which is said to be the most numerous tribe of the whole province [Britain]: many battles were fought, sometimes bloody battles, and by permanent conquest or by forays he annexed a large portion of the Brigantes.'

(Tacitus Agricola xvii.1)

A contemporary of Boudicca, Cartimandua ruled the Brigantes from a base in North Yorkshire. She allied herself with the Romans and in AD 52 handed over to them the British leader Caratacus. Archaeological excavations at Stanwick in North Yorkshire have turned up Roman building material that suggests that an important building was being built for the local ruler, soon after the invasion of Britain. It seems, however, that Cartimandua's allegiance was not universally popular with her people and between AD 52 and AD 56 there were several uprisings against the Romans. Cartimandua ruled the tribe until AD 69 when her personal behaviour turned the people against her and with Roman assistance she fled into exile; her ex husband, Venutius, continued to stir up trouble for the Romans.

The annexation of the north was bloody and brutal; the Brigantes had been an irritant for too long and were to be subjected to the full might of Rome. Villages were burnt, crops destroyed, the men were slaughtered and the families enslaved, the aim was to so terrorize the population that they would become acquiescent and submissive. Marching camps across the region and the forts at Corbridge, Vindolanda and Carlisle provide harsh evidence of the might of Rome.

NEW MARKETS & TRADING PATTERNS

From Military Base to Settlement

The army provided a nucleus of people with Romanized tastes and the money to spend indulging them, the catalyst for the Romanization of the north of England. The traders had a market that could be exploited and moved themselves and their families nearer to their military customers creating civilian settlements, *vicii*, close to the forts. In order to take full advantage of this business opportunity they locals had to adapt and accept the coinage offered. In turn they too aspired to the Roman lifestyle, developing the market further and forming a group of people well placed to make a profit out of the army.

The Roman administration suppressed the local warriors, forbidding them to carry arms and conducting rigorous searches to ensure that this new rule was adhered to. This removed the legal market for decorated weapon fittings so metal workers and had to start



The Roman view of the world, based on the Ptolemy's *Geographia*, written in the first century AD

Image © Tyne Team/Deja Crew

making new types of object for this new market. Decorations on these objects indicate the British origins of their makers rather than Roman world; brooches often feature swirling patterns in coloured enamel and sculpted heads are enlarged with almond-shaped eyes, the male faces sporting impressive moustaches.

Standard sets of equipment were required by the Roman army and it appears were specific requirements for the pottery that was used for preparing, cooking, and serving food. This is particularly reflected in the potsherds found on military sites which range from cooking pots with lids to flagons for wine as well as dishes and beakers. Whilst they imported some items, like Samian Ware, many items were not available locally so they set up local production centres.

CHANGE IN RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

The Romans brought their own gods with them along with a distinctive form of worship based on a bargain with the god. In return for a favour the worshipper made an offering on an altar dedicated to the god. This form of words '*Votum Solvit Libens Merito*, (Willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow)' inscribed on an altar indicates that it was erected as part of a bargain with a god.

The local inhabitants left no trace of the way they worshipped their gods; the idea of a spirit of a place as opposed to a sacred space was a Roman one but the appearance of the names of non-Roman gods on altars suggests that this type of worship was adopted by the locals. Pre-Roman figurative sculpture was not based on realism or the classical proportions that the Romans inherited from the Greeks. Instead figures had enlarged heads with almond-shaped eyes and the men often had impressive moustaches. Figures of gods, many of which have horns seen by the Britons as symbols of divinity and other carvings depicting gods and goddess in sets of three would seem to indicate that the locals were adopting Roman practices an alternative view is that they were being made by local craftsmen for the Roman incomers.

Food For Thought

- ♦ Uniforms worn by soldiers separate them from the civilian population, enhancing a sense of 'us and them'; but, who is the peace-keeper and who the invader, who the freedom fighter and who the terrorist?
- ♦ Modern armies also like their home comforts. The American troops in Afghanistan are able to buy familiar 'fast food' from Subway and MacDonald's.
- ♦ Some Roman gods were identified with those worshipped by the local inhabitants. Do dedications with both a local and a Roman name on them reflect two separate deities or are they two names for the same god? Is equal importance being given to both gods? Archaeologists are not sure.