

sent volume. His cautious comments on the pottery chronology employed for surveys in the 1970s in Jordan should have been taken to heart by all scholars involved.

Graf is one of a number of scholars who have been insisting for years that there is a need to reassess the relationship between the settled population and the nomads and pastoralists (No. III 18-20, 24; No. X: 'Rome and the Saracens: Reassessing the Nomadic Menace'). Rather than seeing two antagonistic groups, where the latter represents a systemic threat to the existence of the former, he has made an attempt to understand the complex relationship between various parts of the population of the region.<sup>5</sup> The last article, Chapter X, on Rome and the Saracens, is a valuable discussion of the information about Rome and the Arab nomads. Graf here joins in a debate in which he clearly takes sides, criticising the conclusions of S. Thomas Parker and discarding the theory that the pre-Islamic Arabs formed a continuous threat to the stability of the Roman provinces. Wherever one stands on these matters, it is clear that these essays, now accessible in one volume, are indispensable reading for anyone interested in the field.

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David Braund, *Ruling Roman Britain: Kings, Queens, Governors and Emperors from Julius Caesar to Agricola*, London and New York: Routledge, 1996. xiv + 217 pp.

The sub-title is important. This perceptive and illuminating book is not a study of how the Romans governed Britain, although it does devote a chapter to what the Romans (or Cicero, at least, and some Greek philosophers) thought were the moral duties of a provincial governor. It does not claim to be a history of Roman Britain. The map includes the frontiers which Domitian's neglected conquest forced upon his successors, but the book ends with Agricola's recall from Britain, barely forty years after the Claudian invasion, when Hadrian's Wall was still forty years in the future, and altogether the Romans would be ruling Britain for another 325 years. There is a passing allusion to 'a new and more advanced group of camps', but Braund never names a Roman military base; and of Agricola's crowning victory at Mons Graupius he says, 'the site of the battle need not detain us'. It will not be another of those insular books about Roman Britain. The author's perspective is the view from Rome. 'In writing Britain' Romans such as Caesar and Tacitus were 'also writing Rome'. What ties the book together are 'the three interwoven strands of geography, imperialism and monarchy': Britain before the invasions was a land of legendary remoteness,

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5 The interpretation of the Safaitic inscriptions in No. X has been criticized extensively by M.C.A. Macdonald, 'Nomads and the Hawrān in the Late Hellenistic and Roman Periods: A Reassessment of the Epigraphic Evidence,' *Syria* 70 (1993), 303-413, at 335-46; cf. Graf on pp. xiii f. of the introduction to the present volume.

another world beyond the greatest river-crossing of them all, the Ocean; it was ruled by kings and even queens, and it was conquered by Roman generals and emperors.

Students of Roman Britain complain that ancient authors seldom write about Britain, and Braund's introductory 'Reading Roman Britain' (a summary of the book chapter by chapter) ripostes that 'it seems to me to be more rewarding to consider how and why they write about it at all'. These are repeated as the book's last words, and by then the reader will be convinced. Julius Caesar, for example, writes about Britain because he invaded it twice; without moral justification, it may be objected, without military necessity, escaping disaster by the skin of his teeth, and securing neither booty nor long-term submission. All these objections he brilliantly evades or rebuts in his disingenuous *Commentaries*. By the all-important criterion of politics at Rome, his invasions were a great success; a well-planned irruption into a new world, celebrated at Rome by unprecedented public thanksgiving.

Augustus, despite encouragement from the Augustan poets, never invaded Britain. Braund examines the famous apologia in Strabo's *Geography* (4.5.1-3): it does not claim that submission by British kings made the island 'virtually Roman property' [the Loeb translation], nor that one legion and some cavalry could have conquered and controlled it. The key word is *oikeian*, which Braund translates as 'Roman-friendly, or akin to the Romans'. He acquits Strabo of believing that Augustus had annexed southern Britain, and thinks that what he says accords with Augustus' own view that client kingdoms were 'limbs and parts of the empire'. However, it is harder to acquit Strabo of minimising the force needed. Braund insists that the passage must be taken literally: the legion and some cavalry would have exacted taxes and (presumably) have imposed direct rule only on those tribes which were now importing luxury goods to the great profit of the Roman treasury, but not on the island as a whole. This interpretation is surely correct. But did Strabo then think that this hypothetical garrison would also have been sufficient to prevent outside interference with the direct exploitation of south-east Britain? With hindsight we may still feel unease.

Braund is well known for his first book, *Rome and the Friendly King*, and it is no surprise that the kings — and queens — of Roman Britain interest him professionally. Queens especially, those disturbing anomalies which, like Cleopatra and Agrippina the Younger, not to mention Berenice, seduced male Roman writers with 'the sexuality of power and the power of sexuality'. A survey of the elusive pre-Claudian coin-legends is followed by three chapters on the kings who negotiated with Augustus, and on the better documented client-rulers of Roman Britain. This documentation is dangerous, however, since our sources have their own moralizing agenda; they are the historians Tacitus, a source so major that he is omitted from the index, and the inferior Cassius Dio. Here is loyal Cogidubnus, the king who helped the Romans enslave the Britons. (This paradox appeals to Braund as it did to Tacitus, for when Claudius bestows military decorations for the invasion of Britain upon a freedman eunuch, he comments: 'The problem of slavery was never far away from imperial conquest'.) Then there is Caratacus the noble savage betrayed by adulterous Queen Cartimandua the Brigantian, whose political difficulties are wilfully ignored by Tacitus; and of course Boudica the Icenian, who is a wife and mother in the *Annales*, the victim of Roman imperialism.

Boudica is much the most interesting, for here we have three accounts: Tacitus' first thoughts in the *Agricola*, his extended account twenty years later in the *Annales*,

and the *Roman History* of Cassius Dio. Careful examination reveals their moralizing, and the sad subjectivity of historical truth. Braund establishes all this without recourse to old-fashioned *Quellenforschung*, beyond a mention that Dio may have used Cluvius Rufus. He notes that there is more praise than criticism in the *Agricola's* picture of Boudica's conqueror Suetonius Paulinus, but avoids the obvious explanation that Tacitus was the admiring son-in-law of an officer favoured by Paulinus. He notes that there is a 'modern orthodoxy' which accepts the critique of Paulinus by the new procurator Classicianus, but although he illustrates Classicianus' famous tomb in London, he does not transcribe its inscription nor allow that Classicianus may have seen Britain from a different perspective. Perhaps he overworks the difference between the *Agricola* and the *Annales*. The former is brief and allusive, it includes the howler tacitly corrected in the *Annales* that Boudica led the Brigantes, and the very passage (*Agric.* 16.1) which is quoted as depicting Boudica 'in the role of a female and royal leader' consists of information which recurs in *Ann.* 14.35. Nonetheless, after reading Dio as well as Tacitus, we must agree that 'to seek historical reality behind or beneath these images of powerful women in Britain is largely to miss the point', which for Braund is that they tell us more about Roman attitudes to women in power than about these powerful women in particular.

The final chapter is an extended but selective summary of Tacitus' *Agricola*, the biography of an ideal ruler, *Agricola*, contrasted with the reigning emperor, Domitian. Why then is Britain central to the narrative? Once again Braund avoids an obvious answer: that *Agricola's* career is unique among the senatorial careers known to us, because his military experience — as legionary tribune, as legionary legate, and as army commander — was confined to a single province. Britain is simply 'the realm over which *Agricola* can display his talents as a ruler'. The setting of a Roman governor's biography might have been any of the Roman provinces, just as we may hope that Braund will next write a book about the Roman literature of Gaul, perhaps, or of Africa, Anatolia, or Judaea. It would be excellent historiography 'largely eschewing archaeology', another lucid, wide-ranging, up to the minute analysis of the literary accounts however allusive they may be, of the Roman involvement with Britain or wherever. This may not appeal to dirt archaeologists, but it should be required reading for those who still think that history can be reduced to a patchwork of literary sources taken out of context; and with luck it will encourage them to read, let us say Peter Salway's *Roman Britain*, to see how written evidence can be integrated with archaeological, and Roman Britain firmly placed within the wider context of Roman imperial preoccupations.

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Alexander Demandt, *Die Kelten*, Reihe Wissen, München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1998. 128 pp. ISBN 3-406-43301-4.

Als 1993 für eine Ausstellung zu Bayerns keltischer Vorgeschichte der Titel 'Das keltische Jahrtausend' gewählt wurde, bedurfte dies aus Sicht der beteiligten