

unimportant detail in the grand scheme of things, Haynes highlights the clear difference between the accidental knocking over by Pandora of an unstable jar, and the calculated opening of a forbidden box in the understandings and interpretations of the story in centuries hence. Interesting correlations are also drawn between Pandora and other female figures, for example, the similarities between Pandora's story and that of the biblical Eve, both characterised as the first woman, set up and doomed to fail from her very creation.

The chapter on Medusa resonates particularly strongly with current feminist discourse, relating to the blame attributed to women for the crimes perpetuated against them. In many interpretations Medusa has been reduced to little more than Perseus' battle trophy, a disembodied head, despite being blameless for her transformation into a monster in some early versions of her story. Throughout the volume Haynes seeks to challenge and reframe these perceptions, questioning why these women have come to be viewed the way they have and to explain their changing interpretations over time.

Classical texts are also compared to their modern receptions through examples such as the *Twilight Zone*, *Wonder Woman*, Beyonce and Margaret Atwood's *Penelopiad* to exemplify the continuing influence of these texts on modern storytelling. It can sometimes feel as if the narrative jumps around at a breakneck speed, but these comparisons are effectively couched within the context of wider Ancient Greek society and culture and the pace makes for an invigorating and thought-provoking read.

Despite some of the strongly worded arguments presented, the book never feels like a single-minded diatribe against Classical writers, with some such as Ovid and Euripides being highlighted as having written complex and strong female characters that hold their own against modern heroines. Rather, the book provides a more balanced and nuanced analysis to some of the thornier questions and debates of our current time.

Although not perhaps directly applicable to aspects of school coursework, *Pandora's Jar* provides numerous jumping-off points for deeper discussions about the interpretation and modern reception of female characters from classical literature and myth. It examines how these women's stories have come down to us through time and invites us to critically examine how these women were viewed and continue to be viewed in the current day.

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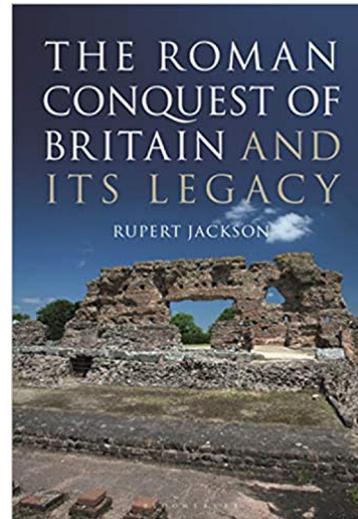
## The Roman Conquest of Britain and its Legacy

Jackson (R.). Pp x+347. Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. Paper, £27.99. ISBN 978-1-350-14937-3

Giles Dawson

Freelance Classics teacher, Oxfordshire  
gilesvdawson@gmail.com

The very title of this new survey gives a clear indication of its purpose. So, it should be judged on the degree of success it achieves



in describing and – hopefully, freshly – interpreting that 400-year period of our history. Jackson investigates why the Romans went so far (literally) to conquer territory of dubious profit to them; the process by which they did this; and what the effects of Romanisation were on 'Britannia'.

The author has spent most of his career in the law rather than academia; but his wide reading and enthusiasm for the revelations of archaeologists have put him in a strong position to add

positively and enjoyably to the ever-growing stock of secondary material.

All the important persons, places, troop movements and cultural developments are here. Jackson begins with a useful summary of 'Britain in the Iron Age', reminding the reader of the existence of a far-from-primitive 'Celtic' culture – coinage and all. Julius Caesar of course comes and goes (twice) then Jackson gets into his stride with an excellent sequence of 13 chapters taking us from the Claudian invasion of 43AD to the abandoning of Britannia early in the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

Especially interesting is the inclusion – for the first time in a full-length study of Roman Britain – of writing about the Bloomberg tablets. Discovered in 2010–13 in the City of London, these documents make a fascinating addition to our store of knowledge, not least because some of them date from the earliest decades of Roman occupation and the growth/development of Londinium. Dare we to hope for any further such discoveries?

Chapter 9 'The Romanisation of Britain in the 1<sup>st</sup> century' is particularly valuable. Jackson has thought long and hard about Romanisation actually means, and considers judiciously how this process differed between Britannia and other provinces. Chapters 17–20 ('Towns and Urban Life'; 'Life in the Countryside'; 'Religion in Roman Britain; and 'The Romano-British Legacy') summarise those topics admirably, and could certainly help the subject to come more alive for school students studying The Romans in Britain topic for GCSE Latin 'Literature and Culture'.

At practically no point in his narrative can the author resist a sharp aside or humorous comment. Not all of these work terribly well. After a digest of Tacitus' account of the occupiers' foul treatment of Boudica and her daughters following the death of Prasutagus, Jackson writes: 'The Romans had much to learn in the sphere of bereavement counselling.' Silly, and even a bit tasteless. More apposite perhaps is his observation, re the production of Tacitus' *Agricola*: 'It is a brave man who publishes books about his wife's family.' Hit-and-miss jokiness aside, this book is the most informative (for its length) that can be imagined. It will be a valuable addition to any school library – not least for the up-to-date quality noted above – and should be reckoned useful for A Level and early undergraduate Classical studies too.

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