

**Frénée-Hutchins, Samantha**, *Boudica's Odyssey in Early Modern England*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2014; hardback; pp. 242; 14 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. £60.00; ISBN 9781472424617.

The Renaissance was fuelled by the invention of the printing press and the rediscovery of classical texts. For Samantha Frénée-Hutchins, this fuel burned in early modern England 'the moment when Boudica's story was re-discovered' (p. 1). *Boudica's Odyssey in Early Modern England* is a superb, diachronic study of the Icenian queen who unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow Roman rule. Frénée-Hutchins has compiled a unique sourcebook that 'reassesses national memory by tracing the historical re-birth and circulation of Boudica's story in the Tudor period to the imaginative re-configurations of her body in the early seventeenth century' (p. 2).

Boudica offered an image of mixed usefulness, making this an important reassessment. For Elizabeth I, Boudica both defended 'her nation and its religion from invaders' (p. 173), and demonstrated the incompatibility of female leaders and military campaigns. For her successor, James I, Boudica both legitimised the creation of the Kingdom of Great Britain and served as an awkward reminder of how an 'ambitious and calculating mother' (p. 5) could overshadow her successor.

The book is divided into five chapters. The first details the rediscovery of Tacitus's *Annals* and *Agricola*, and Cassius Dio's *Roman History*—the classical sources for Boudica—and their appearance and use in Tudor historiography. Chapter 2 analyses Boudica's emergence in the later decades of Elizabeth's reign. The Icenian queen was used, Frénée-Hutchins argues, to historicise female rule, and 'often came to the fore during moments of national crisis' (p. 52). Chapter 3 moves the analysis into James's reign, focusing on Boudica's dual use in uniting the 'two sovereign kingdoms ... under the ancient name of Britain' (p. 85), and as a symbol of the populace's relief at the return to masculine rule. The widespread ambivalence towards James's union is expanded in Chapter 4, with Frénée-Hutchins focusing on Boudica's dramatic appearances, especially in John Fletcher's *Tragedie of Bonduca*. The highlight of the book is the final chapter, which examines Boudica's odyssey beyond early modern England. 'Boudica's name', Frénée-Hutchins observes, 'was to become a byword for a patriotic heroine and a call to arms in the defence of Britain' (p. 180). [page 267]

Frénée-Hutchins's fascinating study successfully traces Boudica's 'rather obscure and tragic beginnings ... to the national identities of the English and British of the sixteenth century, on to its imperial aspirations of the nineteenth century and its global range in the present day' (p. 201). While the text would have benefited from closer copy-editing and more thorough referencing, these are minor complaints. The content is engagingly written and comprehensively researched, and will be a useful resource to anyone interested in political imagery in early modern England or the reception of the classical world in the Renaissance.