

# ROMAN BRITAIN: Recommended Readings

## (\* = especially recommended)

### REFERENCE WORKS / GUIDEBOOKS:

Ordnance Survey Map, **Roman Britain** (6<sup>th</sup> edition, 2011)

English Heritage, **An Archaeological Map of Hadrian's Wall** (2014)

Museum of London, **Londinium: A New Map and Guide to Roman London** (2011)

\*B. Cunliffe, R. Bartlett, J. Morrill, A. Briggs and J. Bourke, eds., **The Penguin Atlas of British and Irish History** (2001)...*a very good combination of maps, illustrations, and text.*

Timothy Darvill, Paul Stamper and Jane Timby, **England: an Oxford archaeological guide to sites from earliest times to AD 1600** (Oxford Archaeological Guides, 2002)...*good listing of all the important sites.*

\*Jacquetta Hawkes, **A Guide to the Prehistoric and Roman Monuments in England and Wales** (1951, new edition, 1976)...*delightfully readable and personal tour of ancient British sites.*

David E. Johnston, **Discovering Roman Britain** (Shire Books, 3rd ed., 2002)...*good short listing of sites.*

Christopher Snyder, ed., **Early Peoples of Britain and Ireland: An Encyclopedia** (2 vols., 2008)...*useful reference.*

\*Roger Wilson, **A Guide to the Roman Remains in Britain** (4<sup>th</sup> ed. 2002)...*excellent and very detailed guidebook.*

### BACKGROUND: EUROPEAN AND BRITISH PREHISTORY

\*Barry Cunliffe, **Britain Begins** (2011)...*excellent coverage of the period from 10,000 BC to 1100 AD.*

Barry Cunliffe, **Europe Between the Oceans, 9000 BC—AD 1000** (2008)... *continental counterpart to Britain Begins*

Francis Pryor, **Britain B.C.: Life in Britain and Ireland Before the Romans** (2003)...*good coverage of prehistory.*

### LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT

Richard Hingley, "The Roman Landscape of Britain: From Hoskins to Today," in Andrew Fleming and Richard Hingley, eds., **Prehistoric and Roman Landscapes** ("Landscape History after Hoskins," volume I, 2007)

\*W. G. Hoskins, **The Making of the English Landscape** (1955; new illustrated edition with significant commentary and updates by Christopher Taylor, 1988)...*a wonderfully well-written classic. Many reprints, but this 1988 edition is the best.*

\*Nicholas Crane, **The Making of the British Landscape** (2016)

\*Francis Pryor, **The Making of the British Landscape** (2010)...*two big volumes with the same title, excellent blends of archaeology, history and landscape studies from prehistory to the present, paying homage to Hoskins. I can't decide which one is better.*

John Wachter, **A Portrait of Roman Britain** (2000)...*emphasizes the geographical setting.*

## HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

### General Accounts:

\*Guy de la Bedoyere, **Roman Britain: A New History** (rev. ed., 2013)...*perhaps the best one-volume survey*

Sheppard Frere, **Britannia: A History of Roman Britain** (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1987)...*very thorough and detailed.*

Birgitta Hoffmann, **The Roman Invasion of Britain: Archaeology vs. History** (2013)

Francis Pryor, **Britain A.D.: A Quest for Arthur, England and the Anglo-Saxons** (2004)

\*Alice Roberts, **Buried: An Alternative History of the First Millennium in Britain** (2022)...*uses the latest scientific techniques to examine burials from Roman, Post-Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Viking eras.*

Peter Salway, **Roman Britain: A Very Short Introduction** (new enlarged and updated edition 2015)...*brief and good.*

Peter Salway, ed., **The Roman Era: the British Isles, 55 BC—AD 410**  
(“Short Oxford History of the British Isles” series, 2002)...*chapters are by expert specialists.*

### Specific Studies:

Christopher Hawkes, **Britain and Julius Caesar** (Proceedings of the British Academy, LXIII (1977))

\*Alan Bowman, **Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier: Vindolanda and its People** (2003)...*examines everyday lives in a garrison town near Hadrian’s Wall, as seen in hundreds of preserved letters and documents.*

A.R. Burn, **Agricola and Roman Britain** (1953)...*a very well-written short biography.*

Stephen Johnson, **Hadrian’s Wall** (English Heritage, 2004)

Graham Webster, “The Roman Conquest of Britain” series:

**The Roman Invasion of Britain** (rev.ed., 1993)

**Rome Against Caratacus** (rev.ed., 1993)

**Boudica** (rev.ed., 1993)

## SHORT BOOKLETS AND BROCHURES

(Shire Archaeology Books)

Julian Bennett, **Towns in Roman Britain** (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2001)

David J. Breeze, **Roman Forts in Britain** (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2002)

Hugh Davies, **Roman Roads in Britain** (2008)

Miranda J. Green, **The Gods of Roman Britain** (2003)

Robin Hanley, **Villages in Roman Britain** (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2000)

David E. Johnston, **Roman Villas** (5<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004)

Tony Rook, **Roman Baths in Britain** (1992)

Paul R. Sealey, **The Boudican Revolt against Rome** (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2004)

(Osprey Books)

Nic Fields, **Boudicca’s Rebellion, AD 60-61** (2011)

Nic Fields, **Britannia AD 43: The Claudian Invasion** (2020)

Nic Fields, **Hadrian’s Wall AD 122—410** (2003)

Nic Fields, **Mons Graupius, AD 83: Rome’s Battle at the Edge of the World** (2010)

Nic Fields, **Rome’s Northern Frontier AD 70-235: Beyond Hadrian’s Wall** (2005)

Nic Fields, **Rome’s Saxon Shore: Coastal Defences of Roman Britain, AD 250—500**

(2006)  
Angus Konstam, **British Forts in the Age of Arthur** (2008)  
David Nicolle, **Arthur and the Anglo-Saxon Wars** (1984)  
Peter Wilcox, **Rome's Enemies (2): Gallic and British Celts** (1985)

## FICTION—HISTORICAL NOVELS AND STORIES

Stephen Baxter, **Emperor** (2006)...”Time’s Tapestry,” Book One (of four)  
*....excellent portrayal of Roman Britain’s decisive moments over four centuries. The novel’s episodes are tied together by a science-fictional element (mysterious prophecies attempting to influence the course of history), but the book can be read as a stand-alone historical novel.*

Ruth Downie, **Medicus** (2008), **Terra Incognita** (2009), **Persona Non Grata** (2010), **Caveat Emptor** (2011), **Semper Fidelis** (2013), **Tabula Rasa** (2014), **Vitas Brevis** (2016). **Memento Mori** (2018)  
*....Roman whodunnits, with murder mysteries solved (and adventures endured) by a Roman doctor assigned to the Twentieth Legion in Britannia, and his British wife.*

Alfred Duggan, **The Little Emperors** (1953)  
*....the end of Roman rule in Britannia c.410 AD, as seen by a government official in a dissolving society.*  
Alfred Duggan, **Conscience of the King** (1951)  
*....the founding of Wessex and the age of Arthur c. 500 AD, as described by a king with no conscience at all.*

Rudyard Kipling, “A Centurion of the Thirtieth”  
“On the Great Wall”  
“The Winged Hats”  
*....three connected stories from **Puck of Pook’s Hill** (1906, many reprints). *Puck*, the “oldest Old Thing in Britain,” calls up characters from English history to tell their stories to two children. *Parnesius*, a Roman soldier, describes the rebellion of Magnus Maximus and the defense of the Great Wall, c. 380 AD.*

Rosemary Sutcliff, The “Roman Britain” Trilogy (combined as a single volume, **Three Legions**):  
**The Eagle of the Ninth** (1954)  
*....classic Young Adult novel. A young Roman journeys beyond the Wall into barbarous Caledonia, to recover the legionary standard (and the honor) of his father’s destroyed Legion.*  
**The Silver Branch** (1957)  
*....two cousins are caught up in the rebellion of Carausius, c. 290 AD.*  
**The Lantern Bearers** (1959)  
*....a young man tries to survive during the turbulent years after Rome’s departure and the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, c. 410-440 AD.*