

## Abstract

This book is a revised and updated version of my doctoral thesis, carried out at the University of Nottingham between 2013 and 2018.

The Late Iron Age in northern East Anglia ended with the Boudican revolt in 60/61 CE, after which the people known as the Iceni were subsumed by the Roman empire. This study tests the archaeological evidence for the Iceni as a defined group, demonstrated by the distinctive character of material culture in the region. It investigates the theory that they were slow to adopt Roman imports and luxury goods, either as a form of deliberate resistance or due to cultural retardation following the Boudican revolt. It also questions the interpretive narrative of the Iceni as ‘Other’, in both classical and modern sources.

My research expands upon previous studies, which have often been restricted to a single county, time period or artefact class. It includes a broad study of the three counties most closely associated with the Iceni: Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. The chronological range (*circa* 100 BCE-200 CE) incorporates the pre-Roman Iron Age, the invasions of Caesar and Claudius, the Boudican rebellion and its aftermath, and the early part of the Roman occupation of Britain.

A large dataset of over 14,000 object records has been examined, drawn from county Historic Environment Records (HERs) and the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). Object categories studied include brooches and other forms of personal ornament, grooming and cosmetic implements, objects associated with religious practices, such as votive miniatures and figurines, aspects of literacy and sealing, and the many artefacts related to horse harness and vehicles found in the region.

This project reassesses many of the long-held stereotypes about the Iceni in the light of the dramatic increases in metal-detector finds over the past 20 years. It demonstrates that:

- A single unified social entity (‘the Iceni’) is not archaeologically visible across the study area, although there is complex and nuanced intra-regional patterning.
- Iron Age modes of expressing status and identity persisted under Roman rule, through the manufacture, use and display of objects.
- Evidence is lacking for regional impoverishment and depopulation in the aftermath of the Boudican revolt.
- Metal-detected surface finds have a significant impact on the archaeological interpretation of the region, particularly when viewed across a wide area and in conjunction with stratified sites.