

THE EVIDENCE OF TACITUS: Roman historian writing in the First Century AD.

The capture of Caratacus

... the wife and daughter of Caratacus were captured, and his brothers too ... There is seldom safety for the unfortunate, and Caratacus, seeking the protection of Cartimandua, queen of the Brigantes, was put in chains and delivered up to the conquerors, nine years after the beginning of the war in Britain.

(Tacitus, *Annals* Book XII)

Caratacus' speech before Emperor Claudius in Rome

This is Caratacus' plea to Claudius as reported by the Roman author Tacitus. Caratacus had been a powerful and wealthy king and a brave enemy. His reputation had preceded him to Rome and his demeanour during the enforced triumphal parade through the streets of Rome had impressed the crowds.

'My present situation is as glorious to you as it is degrading to myself. I had men and horses, arms and wealth. What wonder if I parted with them reluctantly? If you Romans choose to lord it over the world, does it follow that the world is to accept slavery? Were I to have been at once handed over as a prisoner, neither my fall nor your triumph would have become famous. My punishment would be soon forgotten, whereas, if you save my life, I shall be an everlasting reminder of your mercy.'

(Adapted from Tacitus *Annals*, Book XII)

Queen Cartimandua and the Brigantes

Cartimandua was ruler over the Brigantes in her own right. After she captured King Caratacus and betrayed him to Claudius Caesar she became even more powerful. Emperor Claudius was pleased with his captive whom he took to Rome to be part of his triumph, and he richly rewarded Cartimandua.

She became reckless and grew to hate her husband Venutius. She took his servant Vellocatus to share the throne with her. Her family clan were shocked by this and the Brigantes chose to side with Venutius who hated the Romans. He called on other tribes to help, and with the Brigantes, led an attack on Cartimandua. She asked the Romans to protect her, and after a number of fights they managed to rescue the Queen from danger.

Venutius became King of the Brigantes, but the war with the Romans carried on.

(Adapted from Tacitus, *The Histories* Book III)

... Petillius Cerialis at once struck terror into their hearts by invading the commonwealth of the Brigantes, which is said to be the most numerous tribe of the whole province [Britain]: many battles were fought, sometimes bloody battles, and by permanent conquest or by forays he annexed a large portion of the Brigantes.

(Tacitus *Agricola* xvii.1)