

Year 4 Knowledge Organiser: Boudicca's Rebellion

Overview and Map

Who Was Boudicca?

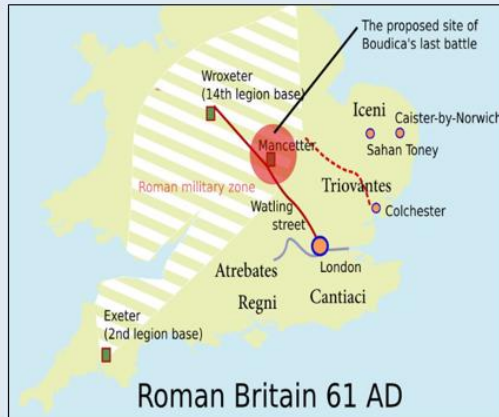
Boudicca was the queen of the British Celtic Icenii tribe.

Under her rule, the tribe led a revolt against the forces of the Roman Empire in Britain, between 60-61CE.

The Romans had ignored the will of her deceased husband, Prasutagus, and had treated the tribe badly.

The revolt eventually failed, but led to several other uprisings. Boudicca is therefore considered as a folk hero in the United Kingdom.

Boudicca died shortly after the revolt – she is thought to have poisoned herself.



Roman Britain 61 AD

Important People

Boudicca

Boudicca was the leader of the resistance against the Romans. It is likely that she was tall, with long reddish hair, and was of royal descent. Cassius Dio (a Roman statesman) also described her as having a harsh voice and a piercing glare. The wife of the former King of Icenii, Prasutagus, Boudicca rebelled against the Romans after they ignored the terms her late husband's will. Boudicca and her daughters were assaulted by several Roman occupiers, who also tried to increase their power over her kingdom of Icenii. Uniting with other tribes (including the Trinovantes) Boudicca was successful in destroying St. Albans, Colchester and London, killing many thousands of Romans (often by torture), before being defeated in the Midlands. Boudicca and her daughters poisoned themselves, rather than being taken alive.



Gaius Suetonius Paulinus

Gaius Suetonius Paulinus was a Roman general best known for stopping the rebellion of Boudicca. He was appointed the title of the Roman Governor of Britain in around 58CE. He aggressively tried to subdue any rebel tribes. Boudicca's rebellion took advantage of his absence on one of these missions (he was in Anglesey at the time the rebellion started). After hearing of the trouble, he marched to London (called Londinium at the time) but realised that he did not have the numbers to defend it, and so withdrew. He eventually regrouped and met Boudicca's army at an unknown location in the West Midlands. Even though the Romans were heavily outnumbered, Roman tactics and skill helped them to win the battle.



Prasutagus

Prasutagus was the King of Icenii, an ancient Celtic tribe who used to occupy the area of what is now Norfolk. He is best-known as the husband of Boudicca. As an ally of Rome, his tribe was allowed to remain mostly independent, but it meant that as well as naming his two daughters as his successors, he also had to place the Roman Emperor on his will. The Romans ignored his will and took over, leading to Boudicca's rebellion.



Catus Decianus

Catus Decianus was the Roman procurator (the person in charge of money) of Britain at the time of the rebellion. It is thought that his greed partially caused Boudicca to rise up against the Romans – upon the death of Prasutagus, Catus had demanded that he demanded that Icenii loans were repaid, and he confiscated some of their other income. When called for, he only sent 200 men to Colchester, and fled himself!



Important Places, Events and Information

Camulodunum (Colchester)	Camulodunum was the ancient Roman name of the town that is now Colchester in Essex. It was mostly a Roman Legionary base when Boudicca and her forces attacked. After being destroyed in the rebellion, it was rebuilt, becoming a major centre in the 2 nd /3 rd centuries
Londinium (London)	Londinium was a settlement built on the current site of the City of London around 43CE. It was a port and commercial area throughout the time of the Romans. It was only a modest town, with a small garrison, which was abandoned as Boudicca's forces approached.
Verulamium (St. Albans)	Verulamium was a town in Roman Britain, situated in the southwest corner of what is now St. Albans. After the Roman invasion, it grew into a large town, which meant that it caught the attention of Boudicca. On her orders, the town was sacked and burnt in 61CE.
Roman Invasion	In 43CE, the Romans invaded Britain and gradually took over power from local tribes. Eleven British King surrendered without any losses, meaning they were free to be largely independent allies of the Romans. The Icenii tribe were one of these 11 allies.
Prasutagus' Death	Prasutagus enjoyed a long and mostly trouble-free reign. It is unknown exactly how he died in 61CE, but it is thought to have been a worrying time for the Icenii – he had been a strong and successful King.
Battle of Watling Street	The final battle at the end of the Boudican revolt is thought to have taken place on the Roman trade road now known as Watling Street. The alliance of tribes, led by Boudicca, were finally brought to a halt by Suetonius' Roman army. Although the Romans were heavily outnumbered, their greater military understanding and use of local terrain allowed them to beat the tribes. The exact site of the battle along the road is unknown.
Boudicca's Death	Defeated by the Romans, Boudicca knew that both she and her daughters would be in for a rough time. The Romans were well-known for thinking up horrible means of torture for those who rebelled against them (in order to prevent anyone else from getting ideas!) At some time in the battle (or not long after) Boudicca and her daughters killed themselves with poison.
Boudicca's Appearance	Boudicca has been shown in lots of different ways over the years. However, she is thought to have had long red hair, to have been tall, and to have always worn a large golden necklace and colourful tunics.
The Boudican Layer	If you dig deep around Colchester then you come to a layer of ash, broken pottery, and other debris, known as the 'Boudican Layer.' It is the remnants of the destruction caused when Boudicca attacked the town.
Comparisons with other female rulers	Boudicca's story has been linked with the lives of two of Britain's other strong female rulers – Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria. There are obvious comparisons to Elizabeth – her mental toughness and physical appearance being two. Apparently, Queen Victoria often compared herself to the Icenii Queen.

Boudicca Timeline

- 43CE – A large Roman army invade Britain. Some tribes (like the Icenii) form Allies with the Romans.
- 49-60CE – Boudicca marries Prasutagus, King of Icenii. They have two daughters.
- 60CE – Prasutagus dies. The Romans ignore his will, and take all of his wealth. Boudicca and her daughters are flogged.
- 60CE – Boudicca calls together an army, including the Trinovantes, and other local tribes.
- 60CE – Boudicca's army destroys Colchester, St. Albans and London, killing 80,000 people.
- 61CE – The Romans respond by beating Boudicca's army in the Midlands.
- 61CE – Boudicca and her daughters take poison so that they are not captured alive.