

## BOOK REVIEW

*Julius Caesar's Battle for Gaul: New Archaeological Perspectives*. Edited by ANDREW P. FITZPATRICK and COLIN HASELGROVE. Oxford, UK and Philadelphia, PA: Oxbow Books, 2019. Pp. xxvi + 309. Paperback, \$55.00. ISBN: 978-1-78925-050-3.

This volume is the result of a 2017 conference in Oxford and a product of the *In the Footsteps of Caesar* project based at the University of Leicester. According to the editors, the conference aimed “to bring together researchers from different countries to present papers that through a mixture of geographically based or thematic approaches provided a balanced overview of recent archaeological and numismatic research across all the regions” in which the Gallic wars were fought (xiv). Although the title somewhat obscures this objective, the volume as a whole is stronger for the geographical and methodological diversity of its fifteen chapters. The volume provides a valuable and reasonably accessible overview of recent archaeological, numismatic and material-cultural research on the Late Iron Age and the Roman conquest period in western Europe, much of which has not previously been published in English.

The first two short chapters by Krebs and Woolf supply historiographical context to the archaeological study of Caesar’s Gallic campaigns, while Ralston’s third chapter surveys recent developments in the archaeology of Late Iron Age Gaul. The close but fraught relationship between Julius Caesar’s *commentarii* and the interpretation of the archaeological record of the Late Iron Age in western Europe looms large over these introductory chapters, as it does over many of the subsequent contributions. The difficulty that scholars have long faced in matching the events and places recorded by Caesar to the observed archaeological record are noted throughout the volume, as is the tension between historical and archaeological approaches to establishing chronologies for coins and other items of Gallic material culture. Several chapters address the mixed legacy of the large-scale excavations sponsored by Napoléon III in the 1860s at Alesia and other sites associated with the Gallic War: most explicitly, Kaenel’s overview of the archaeology of the migration and settlement of the Helvetii in France and Switzerland (Chapter 5); Redde’s summary of research on the handful of battle sites that

can be identified with confidence (namely, the camp at Mauchamp associated with the battle of the Aisne and the besieged settlements of Gergovia, Alesia and Uxellodunum) (Chapter 6); Haselgrove's contribution on the chronology of Gaulish coins (Chapter 13); and Olivier's critical history of 19th-century efforts to identify and establish chronologies for finds associated with pre-Roman Gallic peoples, focusing on the weapons recovered from Alesia (Chapter 15).

The volume's most successful chapters highlight recent research on specific sites or features associated with the Gallic wars: Fitzpatrick's report on the identification and excavation of a defensive enclosure at Ebbsfleet on the Isle of Thanet that may be associated with the landing site of Caesar's fleet for the British campaigns of 55 and 54 BC (Chapter 8); Krausz's analysis of Gallic defense works, based in large part on her excavations at the *oppidum* of the Bituriges at Châteaumeillant (Chapter 9); and especially Hornung's summary of recent research on the late Republican military camp at Hermeskeil near Trier, a site that the author tentatively but plausibly links to the campaigns of Labienus against the Treveri in 51 BC, in part based on the provenance of the stone querns found in the compound (Chapter 11). Though they raise interesting methodological questions, the ambitious scope of Roymans' contribution on the archaeology of mass violence and demographic upheaval in the Germanic frontier zone (Chapter 7) and Pernet's study of grave goods potentially associated with Gallic auxiliaries (Chapter 10) runs up against the space constraints of an edited volume. Readers may be better served by consulting the more extended studies by these authors listed in the chapter bibliographies.

Although their link to the volume's stated topic may be tenuous, the chapters that address the broader context of Roman warfare in western Europe in the first century BC are among the most interesting and effective. Morillo and Sala-Sellés (Chapter 4) and Pujol et al. (Chapter 12) summarize recent research on sites potentially associated with the Sertorian wars and the Ilerda campaign (49 BC) respectively. These chapters reflect the considerable advances made in recent decades in the archaeology of the Roman Republican military presence in Hispania, even as researchers continue to grapple with the legacy of Schulten's foundational but problematic early 20<sup>th</sup>-century excavations of the Roman camps at Numantia. De Jersey's preliminary report on the massive Le Câtillon II hoard of "Coriosolite" coins from Jersey hints at this recent discovery's potential for understanding the impact of Caesar's Gallic campaigns far from the battlefields, on communities possibly displaced by or seeking refuge from Roman conquest (Chapter 14).

While much of the material in the individual chapters may already be familiar to specialists, as a whole, the volume largely achieves the editors' aim of making a wide range of research originally presented in specialist archaeological publications in multiple languages "readily available to scholars working in other disciplines, and in a single language" (xv). A few gaps and inconsistencies may perplex readers who are new to the writings of Julius Caesar or to Late Iron Age archaeology: a basic knowledge of the chronology and the key sites and battles of Caesar's campaigns is assumed throughout the volume, a few extended quotes from French are left untranslated and numismatic terminology is largely undefined. The volume is generously illustrated with maps and site plans, and typos and editorial errors are rare.

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*Queen's University Belfast*, [lpfuntner@qub.ac.uk](mailto:lpfuntner@qub.ac.uk)