

## Feminist Anthems and Iron Age Queens Heavy Metal's Obsession with Boudica

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Amidst her afterlife in various media, Boudica has found a place in heavy metal. From the melodic death metal band that bears her name to a metal opera recreating her story, the Icenian leader and her revolt against the Romans in 60/61 CE continue to strike a chord and resonate with metal artists and audiences. In this paper, a music journalist and classical studies specialist on Boudica come together to analyze the presence of Boudica in heavy metal and discuss the confluence of Iron Age themes and power chords that continue to bring her story to life. We trace Boudica's trajectory in the last decade of metal music, incorporating musician interviews when possible, in order to elucidate the meaning of Boudica and her revolt as perceived by contemporary lyricists and illustrate the continued adaptability of her story to modern concerns.

Boudica has a folk hero quality that appeals to artists of many subgenres. While some center on Boudica's appeal to the goddess Andraste (Ravengrim, "Eye for an Eye"; Dreadeth, "Invocation ov Andraste"; The Conjured, "Vengeance is Mine"), others present the perspective of the anonymous Roman soldiers (Folkodia, "Soldier of Rome"; Martiria, "The Northern Edge"). The Italian power metal band White Skull's concept album "Forever Fight" (2009) draws upon both Tacitus and Cassius Dio for inspiration, while Ngutram's "Boudica" plays upon the Celtic etymology of her name. These artists incorporate various voices into their interpretations of Boudica, recreating the perspectives of the queen and her people as well as her Roman enemies. In "Boudicca (Queen of the Iceni)," Ex Deo juxtaposes male and female voices, ending with a direct quote from Cassius Dio. We close with an analysis of Ex Deo's lyrics video as an illustrative compilation of impressions and images of Boudica in contemporary metal.