



A new book tracing the origins of the town of Reading

A Tale of Two Towns ***Calleva and Reading***

The people of Reading from the earliest times to 1121.

John Mullaney



Have you ever wondered how far back we can trace the history of Reading? Do we really know why it is called Reading? What was it like when King Henry I, son of William the Conqueror, decided to found a monastery, his mausoleum, in Reading? Did you know that the first time the name of Reading is mentioned was only in 871?

Before this date, there is scant evidence about the settlement that today we call Reading. Only a few miles away, Calleva, modern Silchester, had been a thriving town even before the Romans. The three-tailed horse, shown above, was the emblem of the Atrebates, the tribe who ruled the area. Under the Romans this town became a transport hub, a crossroads for a network of roads covering the south of the country. So why did Calleva vanish? When, and why, did Reading replace it?

Using archaeological reports and the earliest written records, my aim, in this book, is to see what we can learn about this part of the Thames and its peoples.

I examine, in some detail, the various excavations and historical records of early Reading. I look at the area in the Bronze and Iron Ages. I then move on to the Roman era and the dominance of Calleva. Following this, I discuss how, and why, with the 'decline and fall' of Rome, and the arrival of the Saxons, Reading replaced the ancient Roman town.

The book also examines the various theories generated by the study of these events. This leads to some controversial points, such as the very origins, and meaning, of the name of Reading.

During my researches, I was struck by the fact that, throughout its history, the area has been home to a continual flow of incomers, many of whom have left their mark: an inheritance which touches our own lives today.

As far as I am aware, this is the first time an attempt has been undertaken to draw together, and critically examine, the various strands of evidence concerning the history of the two towns before 1121 and the founding of the monastery by Henry I. The three scallop shells of St James of Compostela, the crest of the Abbey, shown in the heading of this note, represent the end-point of the book.

Much of the work has been written in collaboration with experts in their fields. I also quote extensively from various primary and secondary sources. These range from authors of antiquity right up to the most recent commentaries. All are referenced in an extensive bibliography and index.

The book has over 140 pages with more than thirty maps and illustrations.

I am grateful to the following who helped in its preparation:

Dr Antionette Manion, Honorary Fellow of the University of Reading; Dr. Kevin Hayward, University of Reading, and Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd; Julia Meen MSc. Oxford Archaeology; Dr Philippa Hardman, the University of Reading; Professor Emerita Françoise Le Saux, University of Reading; Hafiz Ladell MA, Lindsay Mullaney MA, and David Cliffe, retired Local Studies Manager for Reading Borough Council and Chair of the 'History of Reading Society'.

When ordered direct from me, the pre-publication cost will be £12.00. (£14.00 inc. p&p).

Because retail outlets ask for a sizeable commission on sales, the retail price through bookshops, Amazon etc, will be £18.00 (plus any p&p).

To reserve a copy/copies at £12.00 (£14.00 inc. p&p) please email or phone me. This will help me determine the number of copies to print.

No payment will be required at this stage.

I will be back in touch once the book is published, giving details of launch events and how to obtain copies.

Contact John Mullaney. jgmullaney@aol.com or phone 0118 9470 478

YOUTUBE LINK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2C2bDwiTvQ>

Scallop Shell Press



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Proposed cover

