COINS AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN BRITAIN[1]

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A numismatist is a student of coins, a vague expression which can be interpreted in a number of ways, but it can safely be assumed that quite 75 per cent. of those who glory in such a title are coin-collectors, persons that is, who view coins as a hobby and collect them, partly for the joy of collecting, as philatelists collect stamps, and partly because coins, or at least some coins, are works of art in miniature. This proportion is probably too low. Certainly those who, like the present writer, value coins primarily if not entirely for their historical value form a very small minority. Really they should not be called numismatists at all, but 'numismatic hacks,' persons who identify coins for others and themselves to discover their significance. The purpose of this paper is to give some idea not only of the use of coins as evidence, but also of how they should be treated and recorded when found.

There are two different circumstances under which coins are discovered, — firstly during excavation, secondly as chance finds. In each case, of course, they may be either single specimens or in a hoard, a term which has, probably correctly, been defined as three or more coins found in close association.

1. *Excavation.* A. Single coins. The value of a coin or coins in a stratified deposit is obvious to any scientific excavator. Apart from dated inscriptions, they are the best criteria of date. If no coins occur, the excavator must fall back upon pottery and ornaments, but in any dispute between these types of

[1] Of necessity most of the illustrations in this article are taken from Romano-British studies, but the same principles would apply to those of other periods.

evidence the coins must normally provide the weightier argument.[1] The latest coin serves to give a date at or after which the deposit was laid down or accumulated. The condition of the coin, whether burnt or worn, should be noted, but it is highly dangerous to base important arguments upon the worn state of a single coin. The wearing of a coin may be conditioned by so many different causes, including the variable human factor, that its significance cannot be gauged except within wide limits. On the one hand there is a known instance of a coin of Carausius, minted *c.* A.D. 290, which was in circulation in mint condition quite a century later (perhaps because it had been hoarded, dug up and re-used);[2] and on the other hand base *denarii* of Mark Antony (31 B.C.) are sometimes to be found, although exceedingly worn, in hoards of *c.* A.D. 230.[3] They were obviously then still in circulation and had been used for two and a half centuries.

Examples of the accurate dating of well stratified deposits by means of coins could be given *ad nauseam* from published accounts, and many will occur to individual readers. An excellent recent example of such evidence is provided by the Romano-British building at Bourton-on-the-Water excavated by Miss H. E. Donovan.[4]

In most excavations of any size the number of unstratified coins exceeds those which are stratified. These, of course, are normally of little use for dating, but it is a mistake to consider them as valueless, for they may serve to indicate the prosperity and status of a site at different periods. Great care must, however, be exercised in dealing with lists of such coins and deductions drawn by those unacquainted with the peculiarities of the

[1] It is sometimes argued that the evidence of a large quantity of dateable pottery, if at variance with that of the coins, is the more reliable. In certain cases this may be true, since the probable life of pottery (in use) is less than that of most coins, but in the present state of the knowledge of pottery types, such cases must be rare, except perhaps in the case of early Samian ware.

[2] *Trans. Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, lvi, 106 and *Num. Chron.*, 1935; 276 ff.

[3] e.g. The St. Mary Cray hoard (*Num. Chron.*, 1935, 62 ff.).

[4] *Trans. Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, lvi, 99 ff.

coinage may do more harm than good. The chart below shows the coins recovered in excavations from four Romano-British towns, but it has to be confessed that its value is very limited. It chiefly serves to show the pitfalls waiting for those engaged on deliberations of this kind. The figures are the percentage of coins, which can be attributed to the usual periods of the coinage, barbarous coins and those of uncertain attribution being, of course, excluded.

Actually of these four sets of percentages that of Silchester alone is reliable, since it includes all the coins, as recently published by Mr. J. W. E. Pearce,[1] from the complete excavation of a town. It is true that the greater part of Caerwent has been excavated, but, unfortunately, the coins from hoards, about 10,000, were not kept separate from site finds, and only by intricate mathematics can one arrive at any percentages at all.[2] Wroxeter and Verulamium have been only partially excavated. At the former various important buildings were uncovered.[3] In the case of the latter a complete coin list has not yet been made. The percentages are based upon the coins, mainly from Site A, which have been published in the general report[4] with the addition of those found in and above the filling of the theatre.[5] This is necessary in order to give an idea of the coinage, which can be found in different parts of the town. Those from site A show a much greater preponderance of third-century (radiate) coins, whilst those from the theatre are largely Constantinian. The two together should provide an accurate ratio, and it is unlikely that further work on those at present described as 'unidentified' will materially alter the percentages. Revised percentages will be published in due course in the *Numismatic Chronicle*, when a complete list of the theatre coins will be given.

[1] *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1929, 328 ff.

[2] See appendix.

[3] The results of the 1912–14 excavations are alone, of course, available, see *Rep. Res. Ctee. Soc. Ant.*, i, 81; ii, 54; iv, 67/8.

[4] *ibid.*, xi, 229–39.

[5] i.e. those on page 240 of *Archaeologia*, lxxxiv.

PERIOD	SILCHESTER	CAERWENT	WROXETER	VERULAMIUM
First Century (Augustus–Nerva)	3·9	2·2	22·3	3·3
Second Century (Trajan–Commodus)	6 3	2·9	15·3	3·7
Third Century (Severus–Valerian)..	2·3	3·1	3 6	1·5
Third Century (Gallienus–Numerian)	30·9	25·7	20·6	30 6
First Tetrachy (mainly Carausius and Allectus)	6·0	11·2	3·3	6·8
Constantine I	16·9	11·6	10·7	14·0
A.D. 337–364	14·3	22·3	13·0	28·9
A.D. 364–379*	12·8	20 8	10·7	9·5
A.D. 379–395	6·6	—	0·5	1·7

* Includes all the coins of Gratian.

After these warnings the chart may be examined. The issues of the first and second centuries, mainly in bronze, to Commodus are usually well if not abundantly represented. At Wroxeter this is especially so, but at Caerwent the paucity is probably due in reality to the fact that some of the finds have been lost.

All the towns agree in the scarcity of the coins of the first half of the third century. This feature is, of course, a well-known one and occurs on very many Romano-British sites. It cannot indicate that the 'occupation was less intense,' whatever such an expression may mean; it must be due either (1) to the fact that coins of the many ephemeral rulers of that time did not reach this country in any quantity, the people continuing to use still older issues, or (2) to the fact that although they arrived here they were hoarded, because they were of quite good metal, and subsequently reached the melting pot, being driven out under Gresham's Law by the flood of base coins issued by Gallienus and his successors from A.D. 260 onwards. The second explanation is the more likely, for if the former were the case one would expect to find many barbarous imitations of earlier issues, whereas they are in reality quite unusual.

Another feature common to all is the large proportion of radiate issues from A.D. 260 onwards. It is a mistake to state that this marks a more intense occupation or greater prosperity, for it is a most unlikely period for either of such occurrences. In reality it is probably due to the poorness of the coins. They were currency,

quite valueless as metal, apparently very common and probably cheap compared with the preceding issues; moreover, they were small and easily lost. They were fairly soon demonetised and in all probability hoarded against the day when they might again be of service. It seems that in some cases they did indeed again see the light and were put into circulation; hence their occurrence, usually clipped, about a century after their minting.[1]

The proportion of the coins of Carausius etc. varies for reasons which are, as yet, uncertain.

The Constantinian and later issues down to about the time of the Pictish invasion of A.D. 367 are normally quite well and consistently represented. They show the province proceeding on the even tenor of its way, enjoying what was probably its most prosperous era so far, and able to export corn in considerable quantity to the Rhineland in the time of Julian (A.D. 361–3).

The last period is usually poorly represented, the coins being far commoner in hoards than as site finds. This, of course, reflects the unsettled conditions of the time, but one would have expected the towns, many of which must have continued in use at least for a generation or two, to have given better figures. Even Verulamium in the theatre area has been disappointing. The subject is a most complex one and will not admit of a reliable conclusion until all the evidence has been collated and studied in detail. Meanwhile the example of Silchester is instructive. 405 coins of this period were found. Of these 311 are so worn that they cannot be attributed to emperors, but, by the reverse types, can be assigned to the period A.D. 388–95, which saw the latest issues in bronze in the Western provinces of the Empire. This is plainly a case where the wear of the coins can be used as an argument,[2] and the conclusions are that the town of Silchester continued to exist in the fifth century and that coins continued in use there, no doubt in ever diminishing quantities.

[1] *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1935, 276 ff.

[2] It is also an argument against the possibility that these are the remains of hoards distributed in the soil since deposition and so recovered individually.

B. Hoards. These are sometimes found during excavations. If stratified, they may have been either (1) deposited along with a layer, that is, during the time of the accumulation of the latter and subsequently sealed by another layer, or (2) deposited in a hole cut into an earlier layer and then sealed by a later deposit. If not sealed, their value is less, but is still considerable. In helping to date the deposits concerned, whether below or above, they must be treated as entities, that is, the latest coin only must be used for the purpose. This is an obvious point, but what is, perhaps, less obvious is that a hoard ending with one or a few of an emperor is of much greater value for close dating than a single coin ; for, had later coins been available, they would almost certainly have occurred in the hoard. Of course, many hoards cannot be used in this way, and it can only be emphasised again that their interpretation should be entrusted to one who is versed in the coinage.

A good example of the first type of deposit with a hoard placed in it during accumulation is the collection of barbarous radiates found in the summer of 1934 in the theatre at Verulamium.[1] The hoard was thrown away during a levelling process, and the area around it was subsequently sealed by a new stage floor of early fourth-century date.

The second type is well illustrated by the Lydney hoard of so called *minimissimi* of fifth-century date. In this case more than 1,600 most minute coins were deposited against the broken edge of a very dilapidated mosaic floor. Subsequently the floor of the room was repaired roughly with cement and the hoard was sealed. The stratification shows that the hoard must belong to the fifth century, and the fact that the floor was afterwards repaired indicates continued habitation here in the Dark ages.[2]

Even if unstratified a hoard may be of service, as in the case of the Roman villa in Cornwall, excavated in 1931, where a small collection of early third-century

[1] Report forthcoming. Information obtained by the courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Mortimer Wheeler.

[2] *Report of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries*, ix (1932), 116 ff.

denarii served to date the end of the occupation of the site as a *villa*.[1]

2. *Chance finds.* A. Single coins. These are turned up by the plough almost daily and, quite apart from those recovered from known Romano-British sites, new sites have often in the past been first betrayed by the presence of coins. They are readily noticed and sometimes easily read, whereas pottery and even brooches may be passed unnoticed by the unpractised eye. It is probable that careful mapping of finds of particular Roman coins on the lines of the pottery and other distribution maps, now in common use, would be of service, and this matter will be touched upon later. An example may be taken from an earlier period. A now well-known map, prepared by the late Dr. G. C. Brooke, shows the distribution of the coins of the two Belgic princes, Cunobelin and Epaticcus, sons of Tasciovanus.[2] By plotting the recorded finds it is seen that coins of Epaticcus, besides being rare, occur entirely outside his brother's dominion. They have been found in the southern territory of Tincommius and Verica and also on the eastern edge of the area of the Dobuni (of Gloucestershire). Dr. Brooke suggested that perhaps Epaticcus might be regarded as 'a wanderer in search of a kingdom, driven out of his father's land by his more powerful brother, founding a settlement on the border of the Dobuni.' This historical suggestion was based entirely on chance finds of coins, but it receives some independent support from the recent excavations at Salmonsbury Camp, near Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire. Here a somewhat elaborate Belgic culture was imposed on a settlement of the Dobuni within the last generation before the Roman conquest. The markedly exotic character of some of the pottery and brooches, and the wealth of the culture as a whole, suggest the presence of a Belgic aristocracy in close contact with continental trade. In this context the name of Epaticcus at once suggests itself.[3]

[1] *Journ. British Archaeological Association* xxxix, 129.

[2] *Antiquity*, 1933, p. 286 and map xi.

[3] These results have most kindly been communicated by Mr. G. C. Dunning, F.S.A.

A warning must, however, be given regarding chance finds of rare or unusual coins. There is always the danger, unless the source is definitely known or can be established with certainty, that the coins are really from a dispersed collection. In cases of doubt condition and rarity are the best, probably the only, *criteria*. First brass coins in fine condition and valuable specimens or coins from the east should always arouse suspicions, unless their provenance can be ascertained. In this connection it is often said that all Alexandrian coins, particularly of the second and third centuries A.D., found in this country must be of modern importation, as for instance brought home during the Great War and since lost. It is true that they have seldom, perhaps never, been found in a stratified deposit in this country, but there is considerable cumulative evidence to show that they did come to this country by trade in ancient times. Sir George Hill published not long ago a list of forty-two such finds,[1] and the writer has more recently seen a number from Burnham Overy in Norfolk and one from a hoard of Roman coins found on Breiddin Hill, Montgomeryshire.

B. Hoards of coins, especially Roman coins, are quite commonly found by chance in England and Wales. Normally those of gold and/or silver are Treasure Trove and belong to the King, unless the right has been granted to some other person. Quite recently a find of Roman *denarii*, originally deposited in the middle of the third century A.D., was found at St. Mary Cray in Kent.[2] By a coincidence there is a record of an earlier find in the same locality, which a kind friend, Mr. B. F. Davis, has brought to the writer's notice. At the end of an *Inquisitio Post Mortem* of one of the Squerry's, lords of the manor of West Wickham in Kent in the fifteenth century, it is recounted by the jurors that a 'certain John Peret of St. Mary Cray found at St. Paul's Cray an earthenware jar called an erthencrokke with gold and silver in it, but how much they know not ; the gold and silver has come into the

[1] *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1930, 335 ff.

[2] *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1935, 62 ff. and 66/7.

possession of Thomas Knooyle of St. Mary Cray, who is responsible for it to the King.'

This brings one at once to the provisions of the law of Treasure Trove. Whatever may have been its provisions in the past, the following words of the circular, now familiar to many, explain the existing position :—

' Objects of *gold or silver* which have been *hidden* in the soil or in buildings, and of which the original owner *cannot be traced* are Treasure-Trove, and by law the property of the Crown—(unless the franchise has been granted to a subject for a particular locality). If, however, the finder of such objects reports the finds promptly, and it is decided that it is Treasure-Trove and therefore the property of the Crown he will receive its *full market-value* if it is retained for the Crown or a museum. If it is not retained, he will receive back the objects themselves, with full liberty to do what he likes with them ; or, if he wishes it, the British Museum will sell them for him at the best price obtainable.'

It is highly desirable that these provisions should be as widely known as possible. A vast quantity of useful information has been lost in the past on account of the harshness of the law, which may be said to have encouraged dishonesty and the concealment of any valuable finds. Now the finder has every inducement to disgorge his booty and the sooner this is universal knowledge the better it will be for archaeology.

Apart from the provisions of the law the disgorging and subsequent publication of hoards and of the circumstances attending their discovery is a duty to science, which all interested persons should assist in performing, when occasion arises. Such remarks apply, of course, not only to hoards of gold and silver, but also to those of base metal, to which the law does not apply. Once again one may refer to the circular already quoted, which states that coins and other ancient objects of base metal are *not* Treasure-Trove, but that ' the British Museum is glad to hear of such finds and, if finds are reported to the Director, will, in suitable cases, arrange for purchase or sale.' In the

British Isles outside England recourse should be had to the appropriate National Museum. It is important to secure as much information regarding the site of such a find and any associated objects and to search the immediate vicinity for fragments of the pot, which is the usual receptacle and which is almost always smashed at the time of finding and thrown away or quickly lost.

The subject of the hoards of Roman coins found in Britain has been dealt with not only by Prof. R. G. Collingwood in his *Archaeology of Roman Britain*,[1] but also more recently by Mr. H. Mattingly in the *Journal of Roman Studies* for 1932.[2] Full information is obtainable in those articles.

In the absence of organised banking facilities the practice of hoarding savings must have been well nigh universal in Romano-British times. Doubtless such hoards were usually recovered by their owners or their heirs and those which remain to this day and are from time to time recovered from the soil are but a few of the many which were never recovered in ancient times for some special reason. There would appear to be two main special reasons, (1) danger or fear of danger from internal dissension or foreign invasion, and (2) coinage reform with resultant demonetisation of the issues in hand, which were superseded. The latter reason probably explains the many hoards found in this country of the base *antoniniani* of the period A.D. 260–73 with at most a few of the coins of a later period. It seems that the coinage reform of Aurelian rendered these earlier issues practically worthless as currency ; as metal they were then without value in any case. The former is a more common cause and is illustrated by finds of several periods, notably those of hoards of coins of Carausius and Allectus, and presumably of many of the late fourth-century hoards, although in this connection Mr. Mattingly has suggested recently that ' the rapacity of the tax-collector may have been as much feared as the fury of the barbarian invader.' Both the special reasons may have

[1] 190 ff. [2] 88 ff.

operated at one time to the same end, and coins of Carausius, for example, may have been similarly demonetised upon the advent of the Constantinian dynasty.

Mr. Mattingly has treated in the article already mentioned of the types of hoards which occur in Britain, and short of an exhaustive survey, which would be a long undertaking, it is doubtful if the subject could be more definitely discussed. For an indication of what such a survey might be expected to reveal reference may be made to the distribution map of the latest type of hoards found in this country, which was included in a recent article in this Journal.[1] The total of these hoards is now nearly seventy, a remarkable figure when it is considered that they have sometimes in the past been described as rare. Such a number serves also to illustrate the point that it is dangerous to draw conclusions and to theorise until as much as possible of the available material has been collected, at very least by searching the *Victoria County History,* the national journals and those of all the county archaeological societies.

Then there is the question of fifth-century coinage. There is evidence that in the earlier centuries, when coinage from the central authority was scarce or unobtainable, Britain made up the deficiency with local issues. Now at this later period it seems that town life had dwindled and doubtless trade and the necessity for coinage with it, but it is impossible to believe that a province, which had been accustomed for three and a half centuries at least to use such a medium, was able at once to slip back into an age of barter and did not attempt to make good the deficiency by issues even of a most barbarous character. No fresh coinage was likely to come from the continent, and a great impediment was the scarcity of bronze,

[1] *Archaeological Journal,* xc, 282 ff. Since that publication five more hoards, or records of hoards, have come to light—two from Suffolk of bronze (one from Butley [inf. Mr. G. A. Sherwin, F.S.A.] and one from Woodbridge [*Num. Chron.*, 1935, 49 ff.]), one from Norfolk (Fincham [*Num. Chron.*, 1935, 67–8]), the small gold hoard—4 coins and a ring—found in August, 1934, at the Maiden Castle (Dorset) excavations, and a large bronze hoard from Ditchley, Oxfordshire (to be published in *Oxoniensia*).

the same cause which led to the continual diminution in size of fourth-century common coins. Thus the only proved fifth-century coinage is exceedingly, even incredibly, small—the so-called *minimissimi* which were recognised first at Lydney in 1929. A similar small collection of the same type of coin was found during last century near Bourton-on-the-Water,[1] and another hoard of this kind has been found at Richborough. These very small coins, whenever decipherable, almost always show part of the fourth-century type of legionary spearing fallen horseman. It is possible that certain larger barbarous coins of this type were also minted in the fifth century, but at least in one case, Lydney, they can be proved to be practically contemporary with their legitimate prototypes.[2] The same seems to be true of specimens from the Verulamium theatre.

Recently Mr. C. H. V. Sutherland, after an examination of an unstratified hoard of very small barbarous radiate coins, suggested on stylistic grounds that they could hardly be earlier than A.D. 450.[3] Soon afterwards, what is, apparently, an almost identical hoard of tiny radiate coins was found at Verulamium well stratified in a late third-century layer. It is therefore clear that such small coins, barbarous, albeit of careful workmanship, were being made soon after the issue of their larger legitimate prototypes. Doubtless their size is due to scarcity of metal. On the other hand, if the coin of Carausius and other radiate issues found at Bourton-on-the-Water in a late fourth-century deposit are any *criteria*, radiate coins were still in use or rather were being re-used in the late fourth century and later, and were therefore available for native copyists.[4] The belief that they *were* copied and that, in consequence, some of the barbarous radiates, so common in this country, must be of post-Roman date is supported by the appearance of the same radiate crown on the subsequent issue of so-called *sceattas*. The same belief

[1] *Trans. Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, lvi, 133 ff.

[2] Lydney Report, p. 115.

[3] *Num. Chron.*, 1934, 92 ff.

[4] *Trans. Brist. and Glouc. Arch. Soc.*, lvi, 106, and *Num. Chron.*, 1935; 276 ff. See also *Num. Chron.*, 1934, 255 ff. for barbarous radiates in late fourth-century hoards.

is moreover confirmed by a certain barbarous radiate hoard found at Richborough, which Mr. W. P. D. Stebbing mentioned in a paper read at the 1932 International Congress of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences.[1] For various reasons, which need not be stated here, this hoard must be dated to A.D. 400 or later, and the coin, which may be called its culminating point, suggests that it may be placed well into the Dark Ages. It is a very fine coin, barbarous of course, but with an individuality all its own and quite different from the usual type of barbarous radiate. It might easily be called a medallion of Vortigern or of Arthur. Not its least interesting feature is the reverse design of a cross with pellets, which occurs on the best of the Bourton *minimissimi*.[2] It occurs also as a subsidiary design on fourth-century Roman coins and has been found as a stamped decoration on potsherds from Silchester and again from Bourton;[3] in both these cases it is dateable to the fifth century. On the other hand students of English coins will at once recognise it as the design on many silver pennies and other coins. It is indeed a missing link.

It remains now to state briefly what should be done with coins when found, and the remarks apply equally to coins found in excavations and by chance.

The site and circumstances and any associated remains should be carefully noted. The former should be plotted on as large a scale map as possible or on a plan or section, as the case may be, and the circumstances committed to writing for eventual publication or deposit in a suitable place, such as a museum or record room. It is worse than useless for a coin-collector merely to buy up all of a fresh find on which he can lay his hands without ascertaining the circumstances as far as possible. Even if he publishes the coins, he merely whets the scientific appetite without satisfying it. On the other hand, it is just as bad for an archaeologist to publish a find or an excavation using

[1] *Report of the Congress*, p. 293, para. 2. Full publication is pending; meanwhile the writer is indebted to Mr. Stebbing and Mr. J. P. Bushe-Fox for permission to mention the hoard.

[2] *Trans. Bristol and Glouc. Arch. Soc.*, lvi, 137.

[3] *ibid.*, 113.

only the coins which he wants and describing them vaguely as so many coins of such and such an emperor, without troubling to record them or have them recorded with sufficient description to enable the exact coin to be located at any future time.

With the site etc. ascertained, the next step is the interpretation of the coins. Some will probably need cleaning and unless the owner or finder is himself versed in matters appertaining to coins he should have them examined by a competent authority. Excavators have in the past frequently been too easy going, and have classed a large number of their coins as illegible simply because they would not take the trouble to clean them or have them cleaned. With proper treatment one might almost say that illegible coins do not exist. Certainly the proportion that need be left as quite impossible in every way is exceedingly small.

On the other hand drastic experiments at cleaning coins on the part of the inexperienced are to be deprecated. Normally, of course, the cleaning and the interpretation of coins is done by the same person, and, unless a reliable student is available, the archaeologist will do well to apply to the Department of Coins at the British Museum. The officers are there to render help and willingly give it, either by attending to the coins themselves or by suggesting some other competent person who will do them.

Next as to the publication of coins. This, of course, applies more particularly to coins from excavations, but the same remarks apply only slightly less to chance finds. Given an adequate and detailed list, made out by the numismatist, it is incumbent upon the archaeologist to see that the coins are completely published. It is quite useless just to give a list of emperors whose coins have occurred. This was the method of a century ago and is the curse of all who search periodicals for records of finds. At the very least the number of the coins of each emperor should be given. Actually it is possible to give a complete publication of a coin list by dint of reference to established works, such as Mattingly and Sydenham's

Roman Imperial Coinage, and Cohen, *Monnaies frappées sous l'empire Romain*, in a very small space. This is exemplified in the report of the Verulamium excavations.[1] Whilst useless itself as a work of reference in the way that the first Richborough report can be used, such a list does ensure that all essentials are recorded. It will be known for all time exactly which coins were recovered during the excavations. Editors have naturally frowned upon a lengthy coin list with legends etc. in full; the system just described would seem to give the numismatist all that he wants, whilst he still remains the editor's friend.

Lastly, a few words are desirable in favour of Mr. Mattingly's proposed coin survey of Roman Britain, for which he pleaded in the *Journal of Roman Studies* for 1932. France and Germany already possess summaries of their numismatic history in this period; Britain lags behind.[2]

The value of such a survey is self-evident. An enquiry into the frequency of occurrence, whether as chance finds, in hoards, or in excavations, of certain types of coins of particular periods and of particular emperors, if completely done, is certain to shed a flood of light, not only on numismatic problems, but also on the history of Roman rule in Britain. Moreover, an archaeologist, having found certain coins, whether accidentally or by excavation, would be able to refer at once for comparison to similar discoveries elsewhere instead of, as now, being faced with a lengthy line of research or, as more frequently happens, of barely recording the facts without being able to draw the full conclusions.

The proposed survey would be arranged firstly according to the circumstances of discovery, secondly in geographical order by countries and counties, and finally in chronological order. The value of such a work, whether published in full or merely deposited in a suitable place for reference, is doubted by none. The

[1] *Report of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries*, xi, 229–39.

[2] Such a survey will indeed be actively called for if Britain is to contribute her share to the survey of coin finds, now being promoted by the International Commission of Numismatists.

real trouble is the dearth of workers. Here then is a two-fold appeal. In the first place the writer would ask any who have in their possession information about coin-finds, which is either unpublished or not easily accessible, to place it at the disposal of Mr. H. Mattingly (at the British Museum), who has already collected much material and would act as a sort of clearing-house, or to send it to Miss M. V. Taylor, F.S.A., at the Haverfield Library, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. In the second place he would ask any who have knowledge of Roman coins, or even only a desire to study them, to assist in the work by starting research either in a particular area or for a particular period of the coinage. Either of those persons mentioned above, or the present writer, will be pleased to discuss the matter privately at any future time.

APPENDIX

THE PROPORTIONS OF THE CAERWENT COINS

Mr. V. E. Nash-Williams and the present writer have published lists of 11,015 coins from Caerwent.[1] It is recorded that during the excavations of 1899–1912 no less than six hoards, mainly of Theodosian issues, were recovered. Unfortunately the identity of these hoards has been lost. It is, however, possible to state that together they totalled not less than 10,330 coins. Mr. Nash-Williams was able to isolate 4,006 out of the seven or eight thousand of Hoard 1, and this enables suggested rough proportions of the contents of all the hoards to be arrived at. Of this 4,006, 0.8 per cent. were of Period IV, 1.1 per cent. of Period VI, 4.8 per cent. of Period VII, 2.6 per cent. of Period VIII, and 77.5 per cent. of Period IX, the remainder being partly or entirely illegible. Such proportions are quite usual in Theodosian hoards. If, then, they are applied to the total number of recorded hoard coins, 10,330, it would seem that about 83 are likely to have been of Period IV, 114 of Period VI, 496 of Period VII, 269 of Period VIII and 8,006 of Period IX, the remainder being illegible or uncertain.[2] There still exist only 7,296 coins of Period IX from Caerwent, and, in view of the fact that more than this number are likely to have been in hoards, it is legitimate to suggest that such late issues were not found at all, or at least in any quantity,

[1] *Bull. Board Celt. Stud.*, ii, 92 ff.; iv, 99 f.; vii, 198 ff.

[2] Hoard No. vii (Carausius and Allectus) is too small (10 coins) to be taken into account.

at Caerwent except in hoards. Their absence from a collection of undoubted site finds has previously been noted and commented upon by the present writer.[1]

The proportions of the 10,330, given above, have been deducted from their respective periods.[2] This leaves 2757 as probable site finds; the percentages given are of this figure.

Admittedly this proceeding is somewhat arbitrary, but it is felt that it may enable the unsatisfactory evidence to be viewed in a more correct light than would be possible by utilising all the existing coins.

[1] *Bull. Board Celt. Stud.*, vii, 208–9.

[2] The 8,006 and 7,296 have been taken as cancelling out.