

# Iron Age coin deposition at Harlow Temple

Colin Haselgrove

## Introduction

The Romano-Celtic temple at Harlow in west Essex is well known as the type-site for Wheeler's (1928) now classic study of the distinctive double-square building form associated with indigenous religious practices in Britain and Gaul, and for the Iron Age coins found in the 1962-71 excavations there. The sheer number of finds not only afforded Derek Allen (1964; 1967; 1968) the material for a thorough reappraisal of the later Iron Age coinages of Eastern England, but strongly implied the existence of an earlier, pre-Conquest religious site, as with many Gaulish temples. The recent publication of the final report on the 1962-71 excavations (France and Gobel, 1985) is thus of great importance for this field of study. It includes a further wide-ranging discussion of the Iron Age coins and their use as offerings at temples (Fitzpatrick, 1985).

The interpretation of activity preceding the construction of the cella and ambulatory is not without problems, as recent reviews have noted (Casey, 1987; King, 1987). Published structural and, apart from the Iron Age coins, artifactual evidence for the period c 50 BC-AD 40 is decidedly limited, although the recently resumed excavations have added to our knowledge of the former (Bartlett, 1987). The range of Iron Age fine wares in the ceramic assemblage, with many copies of Gallo-Belgic forms, is appropriate to a late pre-Conquest or a post-Conquest group. Very little earlier Iron Age material was found (Thompson, 1982). The brooches show an emphasis on the later first century AD (cf. France and Gobel, 1985). The Iron Age coins are themselves mostly late types, 62% of them the later, 'developed' types of Cunobelinus (cf. Allen, 1967). This proportion must be assessed against widespread evidence for continuing post-Conquest circulation of Iron Age coins (Fitzpatrick, 1985; Haselgrove, 1987a). Conversely, an occupation gap c AD 40-80 is posited, despite the number of Roman coins dating to this period (King, 1987).

Almost all the pre-stone temple finds were from a ubiquitous brown loam deposit, thought to represent the later Iron Age ground surface covering the small hillock on which Harlow temple stands. The layer was formed from organic materials, the excavators suggesting leaf mould; another possibility is the remains of perishable wrappings in which the offerings were deposited. In the new excavations, this deposit was observed to seal features dated no earlier than the later part of the late Iron Age by associated metalwork finds (Bartlett, 1987). Instead of continuous deposition from the mid first century BC, the offerings - including still circulating Iron Age coins - could therefore date largely or wholly to the early Roman period. If so, the Iron Age coins are of uncertain relevance to the earlier activity, thus undermining the principal argument for a pre-Conquest ritual site, as Casey (1987) notes. The published report does not, however, discuss these issues, and crucially, in this context, also omits detailed information on the specific provenance of the individual Iron Age coins.

A full account of the stratification and artifact associations of the Iron Age coins from the 1962-71 excavations, as far as these can be reconstructed, has now been published (Haselgrove, 1987a) (Note 1). This article aims to examine this material in relation to the above points, particularly when the Iron Age coins were, in fact, deposited and in what manner. A reassessment of these older finds should also assist evaluation of the material from the 1986-7 excavations, bringing us closer to a full understanding of the early history and status of this important site.

The depositional patterns of the Iron Age coins.

*The information points  
but was omitted by ICE  
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*4/1/80*

The total of securely provenanced Iron Age coins from the temple up to the end of 1971 is 236 (12 gold, 3 silver, 6 plated and the remainder bronze) (Note 2). Their non-uniform distribution in space and type was noted in the published report (Fitzpatrick, 1985); the cluster of early gold beneath the stone temple particularly stands out. Per square metre of excavation, the trenches beneath the later west range have high densities of coin finds and there are further clusters underneath the east range, and beside the entrance (Fig 1). The major concentration, however, is the one underneath and beside the west range, around an earlier gully which the new excavations have shown to be circular and probably associated with a building (Barlett, 1987). Up to the end of 1986, a further 274 Iron Age coins had been found in only 200 square metres of courtyard immediately beside the west range. Previously, Fitzpatrick (1985) had suggested that the concentration resulted from coins being deposited around a central object or figurine, as on some Continental sites.

27 1987 total = 555  
in c. 350 m<sup>2</sup>

Although this suggestion now appears less likely, it has a bearing on whether even the enlarged sample of 510 coins is fully representative of those deposited on the hillock. The placing of offerings at temples and ritual sites was almost certainly subject to definite spatial rules (Bruneau, 1986), which could well have changed over time, resulting in chronological differences between clusters of offerings. Only comprehensive area excavation can therefore be relied on for evidence of absence and this excludes coins retrieved or robbed in antiquity, quite apart from the fears expressed by Rodwell (1981). As it is, the excavations have largely followed the lines of the Roman buildings (Fig 1). Further discrete clusters of Iron Age offerings of different date could therefore still await discovery elsewhere on, or around, the hillock and all conclusions as to the probable sequence and the nature of activity at any one period must be viewed in this light.

The stratigraphic circumstances of the identifiable clusters of Iron Age coins may be reviewed using three principal subdivisions: (1) those deposits for which the construction of the flint and mortar temple provides the only effective terminus ante quem, probably in the late Flavian period (though secure dating evidence is lacking; King, 1987); (2) Phases I and II of the temple building itself; and (3) the rubble layers from its collapse or demolition, together with the disturbed upper levels. Table 1 summarises the coin phasing employed here to facilitate quantified analysis of the finds (Note 3). 29% of the 224 excavation coins were stratified in the "brown loam" and other pre-temple deposits, 24% in contexts relating to its use and 47% in post-temple contexts (Fig 2). The dominance of the developed issues of Cunobelinus almost everywhere on the site is especially striking.

The proportion of issues by phase is relatively unchanging in the different areas through these three principal stratigraphic stages. The sole exception is the cella, where the sample is anyway small. The majority of coins in post-first century AD contexts were presumably therefore disturbed and redeposited from earlier pre-temple deposits in the same area (Note 4), although the similarities are such that they could equally have been redeposited from other areas in levelling-up operations. They will not be considered further here.

As already indicated, the gold from beneath the cella and ambulatory stands out as the earliest pre-temple group. The coins, comprising staters and quarter-staters, all date to the period c 55-35 BC and were undoubtedly deposited well before the Conquest. Possible explanations of this concentration of gold coins are a single deposit, which was subsequently scattered, or that the area was reserved for certain types of offering, (cf. Fitzpatrick, 1985) (Note 5). As Fitzpatrick observes, the reasons for depositing could be distinct from that for the bronze coins. If so, to argue from this deposit to a first century BC ritual site would

1985-7 6 x unnumbered AV 1/4 staters + 1 cura BRITISH Q  
1 TASCW M153 AV  
1 CURU M 209 AV + 1 CORE  
1 ADDEDOMAROS M 270 AV

2 x AR M 277 DUBNOVALANNUS  
1 AR M158 TASCW  
2 AR M 277 CURU 1 ADDEDOMAROS AR NEWBY  
1 AR M 275 CURU  
1 AR M 272 ADDEDOMAROS 1 AMMINUS AR M 316g  
1 AR M 280 "

be circular. In fact, two coins were found cupped one into the other as they were originally deposited (Allen, 1964), very much as the coin offerings from the Gaulish temple of Bois L'Abbe, Eure were found deposited in separate heaps and piles (Mangard, 1976, 334; 1978), some of them probably in woven containers. The Harlow gold coins may therefore represent a series of smaller offerings. Their stratification is of little help, as all but one of the coins came from the brown loam. The exception is a British QC quarter stater from the infill of a pit which the loam sealed; however, an adjacent and similar pit contained material that was possibly intrusive (Haselgrove, 1987a, Appendix 5, HA1).

However their presence is explained, the gold coins may well be the remnants of a more extensive deposit which was largely retrieved in antiquity. Reasons why this might have happened include periodic collecting up of the more valuable offerings for storage elsewhere or recycling, as at Roman temples (Stambaugh, 1978); to finance the stone temple building (cf. Nash, in Downey et al, 1980); or as plunder by the victors of an indigenous conflict or following the Roman conquest, particularly if there was a Conquest period military site at Harlow (Fitzpatrick, 1985). However, it seems inconceivable that the odd later coin would not also have been found if gold coins were still being deposited at the same spot into the first century AD. Whatever the phenomenon represented by the gold finds in the cella area, it was probably confined to the later first century BC.

Selective recovery of precious metal types could equally have distorted the composition of the other clusters of coins. However, the number of coins is such that more gold and silver types would surely have been found, if they had originally been present in any number. The principal Iron Age coin offerings on the hillock must therefore have consisted almost entirely of bronze types. The second earliest cluster appears to coincide with the highest density of offerings under the west range. The observation that coins of Tasciovanus were concentrated here (France and Gobel, 1985) must therefore be treated cautiously; their frequency could be merely a function of the overall numbers, 47% of all finds, rising to 76% if the adjacent 1985-6 coins are included (Note 6). However, from their associations and stratification, a few coin losses *\* unclear* uninscribed bronzes of British LX 21-23 types and one of Tasciovanus (Mack 175) may be earlier than anywhere else on the site apart from the cella (Haselgrove, 1987a, HA65, 68-70).

The circular gully, which the new excavations have shown to be some 13 m in diameter, was sealed by the brown loam and its primary silts contained middle pre-Roman Iron Age pottery (Bartlett, 1987). It is interpreted as belonging to a building. A large later Roman pit removed much of its interior, but several pits and postholes, dated to the end of the pre-Roman Iron Age by associated metalwork, were also recorded both inside and outside it. Many coins were found within the upper fill of the circular gully and in the interior, together with pre-Flavian brooches (including Colchester, Nauheim derivative and Hod Hill types) and other votive items such as pins, and iron plough shares, socketed implements and bar fragments (Bartlett, 1987). The quantity of late Iron Age grog-tempered wheelmade pottery was limited, as in 1962-71. This material will evidently be of the utmost importance for establishing when the ritual use of this part of the hilltop for offerings first started and in furnishing a terminus post quem for the ubiquitous loam layer, as well as affording fresh insights into its origins.

Here, comment will be restricted to the contrast between the obvious spatial association between this massive coin concentration and the site of this circular structure, and the equally apparent discrepancy in date between the material associated with its use and the apparently much later offerings. The gully had not obviously been recut and, from Bartlett's (1987) account, had largely silted up before intensive

VERY DIFFICULT TO DIFFERENTIATE ANY RECENT AS SUBSOIL SAND. AT LEAST 3 FILLS NOTICED WITH COINS OF CONOBSEAN + TASCIOVANUS FROM LATEST FILL, AE RINGS + STOPS FROM SECONDARY FILL + AE SCARBARD FROM PRIMARY FILL. FE OBJECTS (KNIVES + STAB FROM MID 1A POT FROM ALL THREE. PLUS BONE (BUTCHERED)

*Comment by later coins found*

deposition started. The offerings therefore, are best viewed as a secondary or more probably post-abandonment use of an earlier circular building. It is therefore premature to claim it as a shrine (or at least that it started life as such), despite the connection implicit in the choice of its site for the deposition of so many offerings. The building itself would not be out of place in a mid-late Iron Age domestic context in Essex (Bartlett, 1987).

Further stratigraphic detail is needed to clarify the status of the smaller Iron Age coin concentration under the East range, which comprises an even greater proportion of Cunobelinus' developed issues (Fig 2). This is centred to the south-east of a large oval pre-temple pit, with which it is conceivably associated. The pit itself was backfilled after the Conquest and contained relatively few coins. It may have been open when the coins were deposited, whenever this was, although more coins might have been expected from inside it if so. Alternatively, the pit may have been dug through and removed part of a larger spread of coins, which were not subsequently incorporated in the infill. Either hypothesis is possible. The other bronze finds scattered through the entrance and courtyard areas also have a high proportion of Cunobelinus' later issues. These coins were presumably mostly redeposited at their present location by the extensive levelling operations associated with the construction of the stone temple; a few bronzes from the cella area can reasonably be appended to this courtyard group. The larger clusters of finds inside and to the left of the entrance (Fig 1 above) clearly represents the easterly limits of the main coin concentration adjacent to and under the west range, which was therefore of greater extent than the circular structure which had previously stood there.

Most bronze coins found at Harlow then, were minted in the period c AD 25-40 (70%), and only a tiny fraction go back to before c 5 BC (2%). The coin assemblage is also overwhelmingly local in its make-up. Coins with Tasciovanus legends, especially these issued by Cunobelinus - undoubtedly struck primarily for this region, whether or not they were at a separate western mint (Allen, 1964) - and the latter ruler's Essex series account for all but 7% of the temple finds (Fig 3). Amongst the coins issued c AD 25-40, the three latest types of Cunobelinus' developed series with Tasciovanus legends (Mack, 1975, Nos. 244, 248, 249) constitute 65% of the coins, although this may arise solely from the commonness of these types. To establish a likely depositional date for the bronze coins the enquiry must now be made comparative and extended both to the dateable associations of the stratified finds and to how the overall coin assemblage compares to other sites in the Central district and to the broader pattern of Iron Age coin deposition north of the Thames.

#### The associations of the temple coin finds.

In the 34 pre-temple contexts which contained Iron Age coins (Haselgrove, 1987a), the associations are as follows (Note 7). Eleven of these deposits were without recognisably post-Conquest pre-Flavian material amongst the identifiable dateable objects (32%). A further nine contained recognisably post-Conquest pottery and other finds, including in one case, an *as* of Titus (27%). The remaining fourteen had no recorded associations (41%). In what are, presumably, mostly cumulative deposits to which fresh offerings were continuously added, and where the extent of subsequent redeposition and mixing is unknown, these associations cannot therefore be held to offer a conventional *terminus post quem* for the deposit. Much depends, also, on how the brown loam formed and whether the abraded pottery sherds found in it were already present when this happened or were incorporated subsequently. Nevertheless, the surprisingly high proportion of 'contexts' with recognisably post-Conquest finds clearly cautions against wholesale interpretation of the Iron Age coins as *in situ* pre-Conquest offerings.

In a minority of cases, the coherence of a group of finds (eg Haselgrove, 1987, HA 26, which includes a copper-alloy ear scoop, tweezers and nailcleaner), suggests that the items were deposited together. The whole question of depositional patterning and the structuring of the offerings at Harlow would repay systematic study. The Hayling Island and Bois L'Abbe temples afford clear evidence for the practice (Downey et al, 1980; Mangard, 1978). At Hayling, many objects are clustered round burnt circular patches, which were perhaps offering points.

Roman coins form a very small proportion of those from the pre-temple contexts (8%), as France and Gobel (1985) point out. They comprise two asses of Claudius a semis of Nero, and an as of Vespasian, as well as the coin of Titus mentioned above, rather than earlier issues as might be expected (Note 8). As a proportion of the total first century AD Roman coins from the temple (11%), the contrast with the proportion of Iron Age coins stratified in pre-temple contexts (29%) is less marked. This suggests that while Roman coin offerings began later than the Iron Age coin offerings, the number deposited before the temple was built was higher than now appears the case.

A more satisfactory comparison is between the associations of the coins in deposits other than the disturbed upper levels and the patterns for Iron Age coinage on settlements in eastern England as a whole (Haselgrove, 1987a, Fig 5:8). This assumes that, despite redeposition in later layers, the overall pattern of coin associations is largely resistant to distortion, a conclusion which the general case supports. Coins of different phases can be readily seriated according to their association with other dated artefact types (Haselgrove, 1987a). A similar chronological pattern ought to hold for Harlow (despite the coins being offerings rather than casual losses as at the settlements) since the mint condition of many of the brooches and other items leaves little doubt that they too were votive offerings.

Excluding the disturbed upper levels, a total of eight Roman coins were recovered from the same general deposits as Iron Age coins (which invariably include Cunobelinus' developed types). The Roman coins are one each of Caius and Claudius (regular), two of Nero, three Flavian issues and one of Marcus Aurelius. Although the group is too small for certainty, this pattern of associations appears later than the norm for developed types of Cunobelinus (Haselgrove, 1987a Fig 5:8), for which Claudio-Neronian issues predominate, followed by those of Augustus to Caius. The general case is very much influenced by the Sheepen finds, (Haselgrove, 1987b), but as the latter site has its floruit c AD 10-60, the comparison is not inappropriate.

The picture from the brooch associations is similar, from a slightly larger sample (17 brooches). At Harlow, the Iron Age coins were most often found with Colchester derivative brooch types (Fig 4), whereas elsewhere, the types most commonly found associated are the earlier Langton Down, Thistle and especially Colchester and copper alloy Nauheim derivative types (Haselgrove, 1987a, Fig 5:8). The latter types are reasonably common at Harlow, as can be seen from the overall first century AD brooch assemblage (Fig 4), and the discrepancy could simply be fortuitous. On the other hand, the predominance of the Colchester derivative and Hod Hill types, should also be noted. A Claudio-Neronian dating is generally assumed for these hinged types (France and Gobel, 1985), and the life of the Nauheim derivatives certainly extends into this period as well. Like the Roman coins, the brooch evidence suggests a depositional emphasis in the mid first century AD rather than earlier for the Iron Age coins.

#### The Harlow Temple coins in their regional context.

The nearest site to the temple with Iron Age coin finds is the so-called Holbrooks settlement (Conlan, 1973), located 0.5 km to the

in detail on  
map 12

in plan 12

north-east of it. The site runs from the later first century BC to the fourth century, but its status is uncertain. Conlon (1973) interprets the area as a manufacturing centre producing votive items for use at the temple, but a better suggestion may be that this area was another ritual locus (Fitzpatrick, 1985), with the temple forming a part of the kind of extended rural religious complex so common in Gaul. The incidence of first century AD brooches and especially Colchester derivative types (30%) is again high, but the Iron Age coins (Allen, 1973) have a very different emphasis, 56% of the finds being types struck before c AD 10 (Fig 5). Whether casual losses, or offerings as at the temple, there is no doubt that as a group, the Holbrooks coins are much earlier, indicating that deposition was either earlier, or, to accommodate the brooch evidence, involved much smaller numbers of Iron Age coin in the later stages. Either explanation suggests a pattern of first century AD deposition different from the temple.

In fact, the Holbrooks assemblage is very closely comparable to the mean for Iron Age coin losses on major settlements in the Central District as a whole (Fig 5). Sites like Baldock and Braughing have a history of continuous occupation from the mid first century BC to the mid first century AD and should thus present a picture which is representative of the overall coin losses through time brought about by the changing composition of the coin circulation pool (Note 9). Coins with Tasciovanus legends were always apparently more common in the Central District than his successor's issues (Haselgrove, forthcoming), and this is reflected in all the site finds, particularly at the rural settlements. The temple coin assemblage thus stands out for its exceptional emphasis on Cunobelinus' later coinage, alone of all the major sites in the region.

The regional data, of course, very largely reflect coin losses from circulation, whereas the temple coins were intentionally deposited as offerings. This does not, however, affect the overall argument, although it would allow some chronological disparity in the date of deposition. If the temple finds did represent a series of offerings of equal intensity over the period from the later first century BC, the assemblage would be expected to be of comparable composition to the regional mean, but is not. Two possible explanations present themselves. First, coin offerings may have been made in comparatively small quantities over most of the period in question, but were subsequently swamped by the deposition of two or three enormous hoards, comprising mainly late issues of Cunobelinus, at a later stage in the sequence. Second, the offerings were indeed made very late in the history of Iron Age coinage, the earlier coins simply being survivals in circulation alongside the latest issues which were by then current.

Apart from the gold, there are, as we have seen, a few early bronzes stratified beneath the west range in positions which could potentially support the first hypothesis. Against this, a third possibility should be raised: that these coins may be casual losses in an earlier domestic context. The presence of a possible shrine on an otherwise normal settlement is not unknown in Iron Age Essex, as with the central square building in the recently excavated settlement at Stansted, which continued in use alone after most of the settlement had fallen into disrepair (H. Brooks, Pers. Comm.). Such a juxtaposition of the secular and the religious is not impossible of the earlier activity at Harlow.

Directly pertinent to these questions is the condition of the Iron Age coins, which in the case of many bronzes was exceptionally good (Allen, 1964). Some of Cunobelinus' developed types, in particular, were in a magnificent state (Allen, 1966). Overall, the excavators concluded, with some justice, that "a lot of the bronze coins were recovered in mint condition and must have been offered directly to the deities" (France and Gobel, 1985, 137). This certainly allows the Harlow finds an appreciably earlier depositional date than would be likely for a similar group of

*would be  
way of putting too  
much weight on  
the Holbrooks evidence*

coins lost from circulation on a settlement site. The same is true of the brooches. For this reason alone, the observation that developed issues of Cunobelinus are almost invariably found in post-Conquest deposits everywhere else (Haselgrove, 1987a) is not relevant to the date at which the same types were used as offerings at Harlow. If they were offerings fresh from the mint, a pre-Conquest date of deposition cannot be ruled out, even for the very latest of Cunobelinus' types. This does, however, beg the question of whether bronze coinage was always put straight into circulation, or whether it could have been kept, immobilized in someone's treasury, until it was eventually offered at the temple.

Either way, the dominance of late types means that intensive deposition started at earliest in the late pre-Conquest period. The excavators' picture of a significant level of coin deposition stretching back towards the mid first century BC is not born out by the surviving earlier coins. Also, those with Tasciovanus legends, although generally in comparatively good condition, show rather more signs of wear than those of Cunobelinus, suggesting that most were, in fact, survivals in circulation, supporting the second hypothesis. Moreover, the late emphasis of the brooch assemblage is exactly the opposite of what we would expect if the brooch offerings were contemporary with the coins. If anything, the deposition of brooches in mint condition should have generated a pattern of coin associations earlier than that produced through casual loss and the abandonment of older, broken examples in settlement contexts. The only alternative explanation is that brooch deposition largely occurred after the Iron Age coin offerings had ceased.

A final comparison relevant to the date of the pre-temple offerings involves the Roman coins. The relative frequencies of the earlier types, up to and including issues of Hadrian, are shown in Figure 6, using the periodisation by emperors' reigns adopted by Reece (1985). Within this date range, the most frequent types are of Claudius (Period IIa). 19 out of 22 of them (86%) are, however, British copies, which were struck well into the reign of Nero. Most of the Roman coins therefore date to the later first century AD, although as with the Iron Age coins, the significance of this tendency can only be assessed in relation to the mean for the region and type of site. It does, however, suggest that any Roman fort at Harlow is likely to be Neronian, and connected to the events of AD 60-1, rather than of the early Conquest period.

The chronological emphasis of the group falls somewhere between Sheepen, where activity affectively terminated in the 60s AD, with its much higher proportion of pre-Flavian issues, where activity affectively terminated in the 60s AD, and the public town of Verulamium. There, the Flavian peak (Period III) effectively masks the short-lived Conquest period military, occupation (Reece, 1985). As already observed, pre-temple Roman coin offerings at Harlow were probably more frequent than now appears to be the case, particularly from the Neronian period. As, for example, at Champlieu, Oise (Huysecom and Woimant, 1983), the decline in intensive deposition of Iron Age coinage may therefore correlate directly with the increasing availability of Roman coinage at Harlow two or three decades after the Conquest. If so, this must strengthen the case for a significant post-Conquest Iron Age coinage deposition on the site. For the present, the matter is, however, beyond proof. A final argument favouring a post-conquest depositional date could be the absence of weaponry. This, with horse harness and vehicle equipment, forms one of the principal categories of later Iron Age offerings at the Hayling Island temple (Downey et al, 1980) and at Gaulish sanctuary sites such as Gournay-sur-Aronde, Oise or Ribemont-sur-Ancre, Somme (Bruneau, 1986).

Discussion and Conclusions

In conclusion, we can look more generally at Iron Age coin offerings at Romano-Celtic temples and at the other possible factors behind the

Agree  
 John McNeill  
 Evelyn Khan  
 Helen of Beavers  
 Hall  
 mainly pre-50AD

\*  
 ① Scabbard -  
 Galley Terminal.  
 ② distributed  
 coins.  
 ③ Spearheads

ritual use of the hilltop. In all, 211 Continental Romano-Celtic temples have recorded offerings (a minimum figure owing to poor records) and of these 31% include Iron Age coin finds, 26% of them alongside other artefacts or animal bones, the other 5% with coins only (Haselgrove, 1987a). *plenty of bone - Belgic levels* Later Iron Age offerings of weaponry, usually deliberately damaged, and animal bone are attested at the sanctuaries already mentioned in Picardy and others (Bruneau, 1986), but most dated temple deposits in Gaul begin only in the early Roman period. Gruel and Clement (1988), indeed, have recently suggested that while animals, brooches, pottery and especially the weaponry were well established pre-Conquest offerings, monetary offering at temples was an early Roman introduction, an expression of the changing values of post-Conquest Gaulish society. The custom, they hint, may even have its origins in the Roman world, where it is attested at an early date. Coin offerings at river sources and fords were also probably a largely post-Conquest phenomenon, since the majority are Roman and the Gaulish types found with them are generally late issues (Blanchet, 1905). They do not, however, consider the possibility that single and multiple finds of gold coins may sometimes be offerings rather than casual losses or abandoned hoards.

Romano-Celtic temples with Iron Age coins are far fewer in south-east England than in Belgic Gaul, although probable religious sites such as Springhead in Kent and Gosbeck's, outside Colchester, also yield finds. The temples of central southern England form the only coherent group, with a possible outlier at Woodeaton in the Upper Thames basin. At Hayling Island, some coins were undoubtedly later first century BC offerings, but the temple's Continental affinities are so strong that the whole complex must be regarded virtually as an extension of contemporary Romanised practice in Gaul (cf. Downey, et al, 1980). At the other sites, which include Farley Heath, Waltham St Lawrence, and the newly discovered Wanborough temple (Frere, 1986), the deposits look later, and may even be entirely post-Conquest. They are comprised very largely of Southern precious metal coinage and have the appearance of treasure. Deposition at Hayling Island may have restarted afresh after the Conquest (Haselgrove, 1987a).

In the counties surrounding the Thames estuary, the only temple prolific on the scale of the southern sites is Harlow itself. The other sites have either very few Iron Age coins, eg Kit's Coty in Kent, or even just a single specimen, eg Mutlow Hills in Cambridgeshire, in coin lists which span the entire Roman period. None of them are certainly temples. Along with several other supposed Romano-Celtic temples (cf. Black, 1986), they have a far better claim to be regarded as mausolea, sometimes like another well known member of the central southern series at Lancing Down, Sussex, with Iron Age timber structures preceding the later stone buildings.

A possible clue to the ritual significance of the Harlow hilltop is provided by two features shared by this group of probable mausolea. The first is the frequent reuse of Bronze Age tumuli, eg at Kit's Coty, Lancing Down and Mutlow Hills. Remains of at least two Bronze Age cremation urns imply the funerary use of the hilltop at an earlier date (cf. France and Gobel, 1985). Many other instances of natural knolls or mounds being used as 'barrows' are known, the burials simply being inserted in the ground. Iron Age coins, too, are known from several comparable natural mounds in south-east England (Haselgrove, 1987a).

Second, there is the potential link with pre-Roman mortuary practices which these mausolea encapsulate, the Roman buildings effectively formalising a pre-existing focus. Both the objects and the groups of offerings which were apparently deposited together at Harlow, such as the brooches and the toilet sets, are similar to those contained in later Iron Age graves in the King Harry Lane cemetery outside St Albans (Stead,



1969). There were also finds of cremated human bone (though this may be Bronze Age). Pre-temple usage of the hilltop could then have been connected in some way with mortuary ritual. The well-known accompanied 'Aylesford' cremations almost certainly constitute a minority rite and most individuals must have been disposed of in ways which did not leave archaeologically recoverable burials. Iron Age coins, in fact, occur at several south-eastern cemeteries, in areas discrete from the burials, eg at Aylesford itself, and could therefore be offerings made when the dead were cremated, rather like the costly Gallic funerals which Caesar mentions (De Bello Gallico VI, 19). Conversely, Iron Age mortuary or ritual use of the Harlow hilltop quite possibly predated the custom of making any form of visible offering there.

The earliest Iron Age activity was apparently associated with the circular building, whether this served a ritual purpose or not. This structure could still have been in use when the first gold coin deposits were made in the cella area during the later first century BC, but even if not, the site where it had stood exercised a powerful influence on the later offerings. Later Iron Age gold coins are often found at the coast, and at river sources and other natural settings which most probably had a ritual significance. By coincidence, the later name of 'Stanegrove' or 'Standing Groves' (France and Gobel, 1985) evokes just such a natural setting, and in addition the hill was once partly surrounded by a meander of the river Stort which subsequently became an oxbow lake. This certainly seems the most likely explanation of the early gold deposits. Even single gold coins recovered as chance finds in the countryside were often probably offerings rather than casual losses (Haselgrove, 1987a).

The bulk of the bronze coinage was not, however, deposited until the late pre-Conquest period at the very earliest. This might even represent an unrelated reuse of the same location; the earliest bronze coins from the west range would not be out of place in a domestic context. Such evidence as there is points to the decades immediately following the Roman Conquest as the period of most intensive deposition. As in Gaul, the practice could therefore be a Roman introduction, employing the bronze coinage available locally at the time. British coinage in any case soon became increasingly irrelevant to its original purpose, since taxes and official payments needed to be transacted in Roman coin, resulting in the Roman monetary system rapidly gaining ground in the province. But even if deposition did start earlier, monetary offering at formal temples seems to have been primarily a Roman custom, and the Harlow deposits would therefore be best regarded as yet one more facet of the high level of Romanisation in the South East in the decades preceding the invasion (Haselgrove, 1987a). A link to the earlier indigenous practice of gold coin offerings at natural foci is also probable, both in Britain and Gaul.

The possibility of an earlier timber structure beneath the cella (as at Hayling Island; Downey et al., 1980) having been standing while the main concentrations of bronze coins formed at adjacent offering points, is not to be overlooked, although no obvious traces were observed during the 1962-71 excavations. A possible parallel is Region 1 at Sheepen, where the Iron Age coins in the disturbed upper levels adjacent to the late first century AD temple complex have a much later chronological emphasis than those stratified in the earlier settlement deposits. Assuming that the most intensive Iron Age coin deposition at Harlow was post-Conquest, its decline probably coincides with the increasing availability of Roman coinage, as at Gaulish sites. With the building of the stone temple, massive coin offerings on the hilltop ceased as suddenly as they had started, though they may have carried on in another form or at a new location adjacent to the buildings. These are questions which it is hoped further work in the surrounding area will eventually resolve.

skating observations

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Department of Archaeology,  
46 Saddler Street,  
Durham DH1 3NU.

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### Footnotes

1. I am indebted to Andrew Fitzpatrick for a list of the recorded provenances of the Iron Age coins found between 1962-71.
2. The total of 232 securely provenanced to the temple omits the coins from the 1819 exploration of the site, a minimum of 4 of which can be identified to type. <sup>182?</sup>
3. The phasing is set out in detail in Haselgrove (1987a).
4. This contrasts with Hayling Island temple (Downey et al, 1980), where the coins show a marked change in composition between pre-temple and temple contexts (Haselgrove, 1987a). The latest Iron Age issues are little in evidence in the former group. The earlier construction date of the stone temple here, which was possibly erected when Iron Age coin offerings were still being made, could be a relevant factor.
5. 7 gold quarter-staters, of similar date to those in the cella area, were found between 1985-6, implying a second cluster in the western part of the courtyard. A quarter-stater Tasciovanus' earlier series was also recovered. If this coin formed part of the same deposit, it would suggest a later date for this second group reinforcing the earlier warning about possible temporal and spatial variation and the danger of relying on the negative evidence of partial excavation. I am indebted to Andrew Fitzpatrick for details of the 1985-6 coin finds in advance of publication.
6. The composition of the 1985-6 coin finds resembles the group from the West range; if anything, their overall emphasis (apart from the gold) is even later, 69% of them being developed issues of Cunobelinus and only 13% with Tasciovanus legends.
7. 'Association' is to be understood as coins and artefacts recovered from the same general deposit in a particular trench.
8. An as of Nerva, the only coin of that emperor listed in the report, is variously assigned to a pre-temple context (p134), Phase 1b of the temple (p35) and to the disturbed upper layers (p68) (cf. King, 1987); <sup>perhaps error, should be ①</sup>  
Dunspunt - ignore. not part of building phase. <sup>nothing to do with</sup> <sup>passage.</sup>  
From F9 pit A. sealed by gravelly loam dug into natural  
has water gully 110/170 exc. 1986.

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### Figure Captions

- Fig 1. The Romano-British temple at Harlow, showing the extent of the excavations, 1962-71 and the areas with above average numbers of Iron Age coins recovered per sq. metre excavated, with additions after Bartlett (1987).
- Fig 2. Coin finds from different parts of the temple by period of deposition (%).
- Fig 3. Derivation of the Iron Age coins found at Harlow Temple (%).
- Fig 4. First century AD brooches from Harlow Temple (i) associated with Iron Age coins; (ii) totals recovered in the 1927 and 1962-71 excavations.
- Fig 5. Histogram of Iron Age coin finds from Harlow Temple, Harlow-Holbrooks and the mean for the major settlements in the area; by phase (%).
- Fig 6. Histogram of Roman coin finds from Harlow Temple, Colchester, Sheepen and St.Albans up to Hadrian, by phase (1%).

# HARLOW TEMPLE

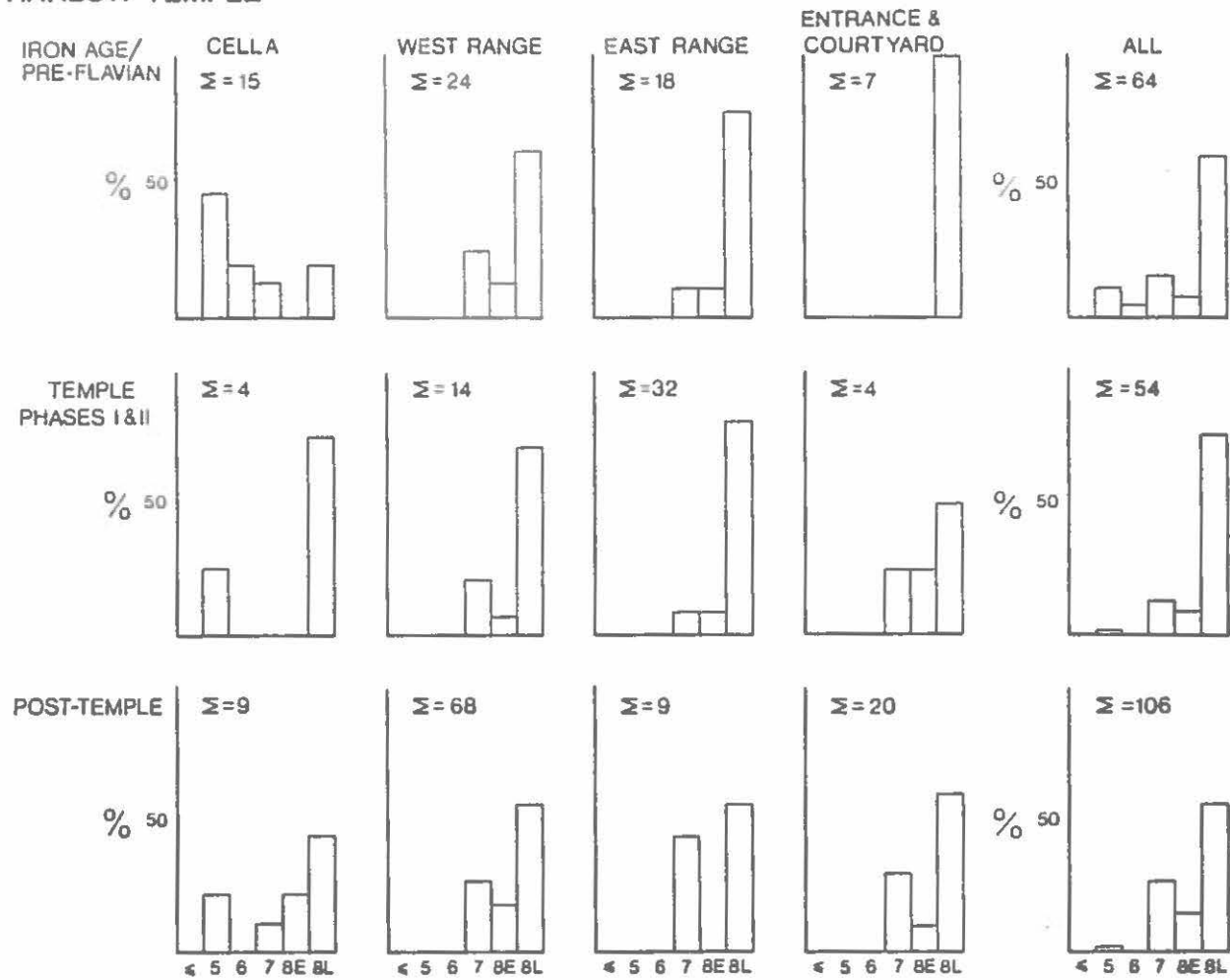
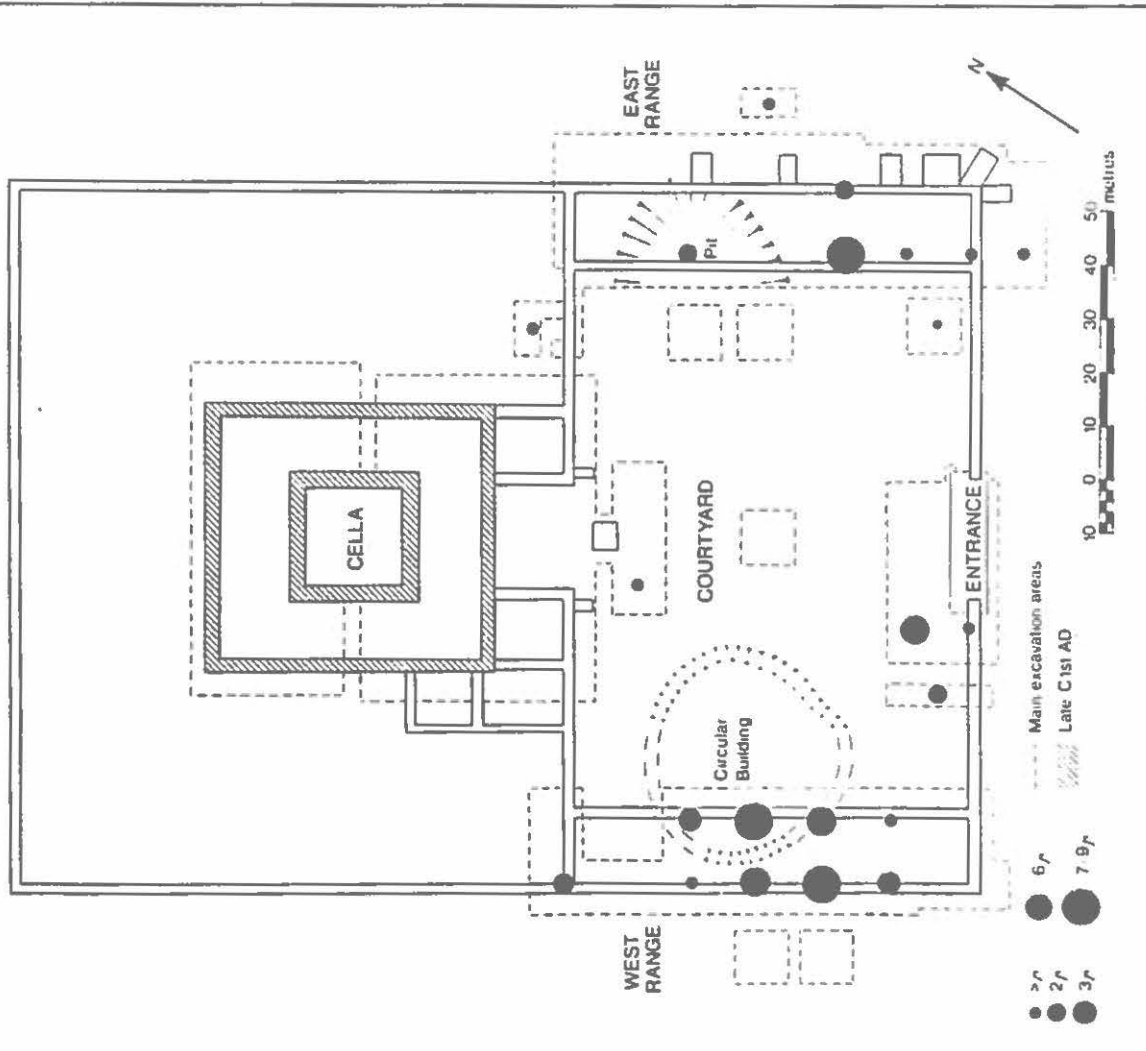


Fig 2

# Harlow Roman Temple



F41

HARLOW TEMPLE  
 PROPORTIONS OF COINS FROM  
 DIFFERENT REGIONS

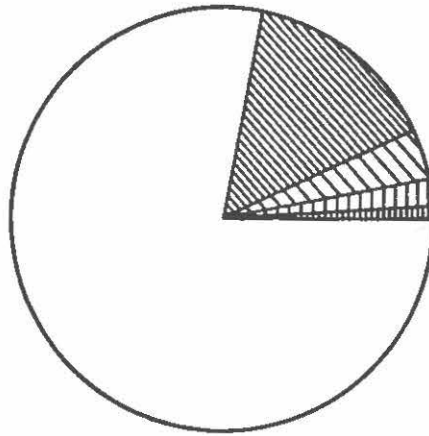
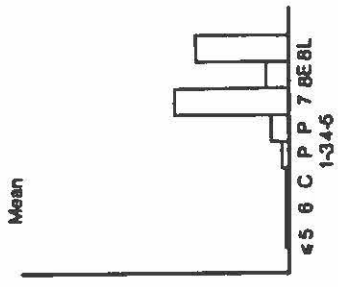


Fig 3

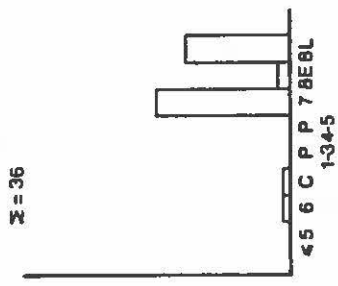
	Associated with Iron Age coins	Total recovered (Inc. 1927)
Nauheim Derivative (iron)	II	IIII
Colchester	I	IIII III
Nauheim Derivative		IIII IIIII I
Langton Down		I
Thistle		II
Hod Hill	II	IIII IIIII IIII I
Colchester Derivative	IIII II	IIII IIIII IIIII IIIII II
Penannular	I	I
Aucina	II	IIII
Plate	II	IIII IIII
Bagendon		III



CENTRAL DISTRICT  
MAJOR SETTLEMENTS



HARLOW-HOLBROOKS



HARLOW TEMPLE

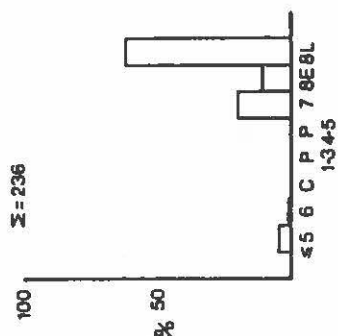
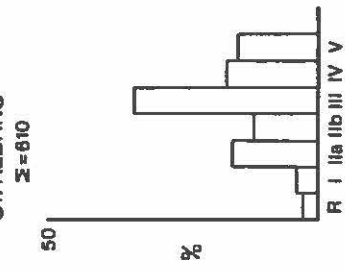
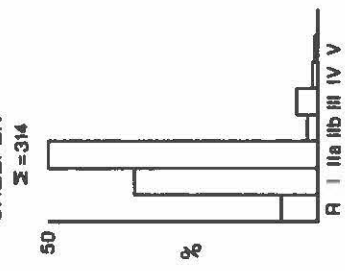


Fig 5

ST. ALBANS



SHEEPEN



HARLOW TEMPLE

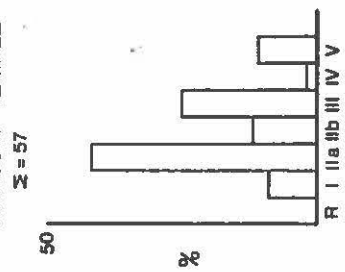


Fig 6

PHASE

DURATION

COMMENT

5	c. 60 - 90 B.C.	Gallic war coinages and their immediate derivatives
6	c. 50 - 20 B.C.	Virtually no bronze; silver relatively limited
7	c. 20 B.C. - A.D. 10	Includes TASCIOVANVS, ADDEDOMAROS and DUBNOVELLAVNOS legends
8	c. A.D. 10 - 40	Includes CVNOBELINVS, subdivided into Early (E) and Late (L) issues, and EPPILIVS

Table 1

Phasing of British Iron Age coinage used in this study; all dates approximate to nearest  $\pm$  10 years.