

NOTE ON A HOARD OF ANCIENT BRITISH COINS FOUND AT
SANTON DOWNHAM, SUFFOLK.¹

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A FEW months ago, some labourers engaged in digging gravel in the parish of Santon Downham, near Brandon, and a little to the south of the Little Ouse, which forms the boundary between the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, came upon a small hoard of coins, which passed into the possession of the Rev. W. Weller Poley, the incumbent of the parish, who has kindly placed them in my hands for examination.

They are, with but two exceptions, coins of the class usually attributed to the ancient British tribe of the Iceni; and, as is usually the case, composed of silver, to a considerable extent alloyed with copper, as is testified by the green coating with which the greater part of the surface of most of them is covered.

Within a few yards of the coins were found some fragments of pottery, which, though probably belonging to the same period, were not immediately connected with the hoard. These fragments are not sufficiently large to show with certainty the form of the vessels of which they were component parts. There seems, however, to be portions of two circular vessels of different sizes, with flat bottoms and nearly upright sides, hand-made, and not turned on a potter's wheel. The larger may possibly have been as much as 8 or 10 inches in diameter, and the smaller probably 5 or 6 inches. The surface of the former appears to have been in part ornamented by rows formed of short straight indentations, arranged in pairs, placed at a slight angle to each other, like the pairs of leaves in a laurel wreath. The smaller vessel has had

¹ This memoir was communicated to the Section of Antiquities, at the Annual Meeting of the Institute at Bury St. Edmund's, in July last, as stated in the Report of the Proceedings, Arch. Journ., vol. xxvi. p. 399. It was a cause of

regret that want of time, in the author's absence, prevented the full reading of a paper of so much interest. It has subsequently appeared in the Journal of the Numismatic Society, and is here reproduced by the author's kind permission.

towards its top five parallel circles, deeply incised into the clay, at intervals of about a quarter of an inch, so as to form, as it were, a series of hoops round the vessel, the first and third of which, below the rounded rim, have been decorated by a dotted series of depressions dug into the clay with a pointed instrument. The clay itself is comparatively free from stony particles, and has been but imperfectly burnt.

The coins are 109 in number, and may be classed as follows, the references being to my "Coins of the Ancient Britons :"—

COINS READING ECEN :—

| | |
|--|-----|
| As Pl. XV., No. 1 | 8 |
| With three pellets on shoulder of horse, as Pl. XV., No. 2 | 4 |
| | —12 |

COINS READING ECE :—

| | |
|--|-----|
| With full-faced horse, as Pl. XV., No. 3 | 11 |
| Many of these are imperfectly struck, one in fair state appears not to have the trefoil on the shoulder. | |
| With the bifurcated legs to horse, as Pl. XV., No. 4 | 3 |
| With six pellets on the shoulder, as Pl. XV., No. 5 | 5 |
| | —19 |

COINS READING AESV :—

| | |
|--|---|
| As Pl. XV., No. 8 (two doubtful as to reading) | 4 |
|--|---|

COINS READING ANTED, IN MONOGRAM :—

| | |
|---|-----|
| As Pl. XV., No. 11 | 10 |
| As Pl. XV., No. 12 | 2 |
| As Pl. XV., No. 13 | 1 |
| Small unpublished coin | 1 |
| | —14 |
| Coins of the type Pl. XV., No. 1 to 13, but not showing their legends | 29 |

UNINSCRIBED COINS :—

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Pl. XVI., No. 7 and 8 | 26 |
| " No. 9 | 2 |
| " No. 10 | 1 |
| | —29 |

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| ROMAN COINS | 2 |
|-----------------------|---|

109

These latter are second-brass coins (*dupondii*) of the Emperor Claudius—one with the reverse of LIBERTAS AVGVSTA, the other with that of Pallas standing (Cohen, No. 79 and 87), and both probably struck in A.D. 41.

The general similarity in the character of this hoard to that

of the larger deposit found at Weston, near Attlebridge, Norfolk, and described by Mr. C. Roach Smith in the *Numismatic Chronicle*, vol. xv. p. 98, is at once apparent. There are, however, wanting two or three of the Weston types, both inscribed and uninscribed, in the Santon Downham find; but, on the other hand, the latter presents us with at least one unpublished variety, which I will proceed to describe before entering into any farther considerations as to the date to be assigned to the deposit.

This coin, like the small specimen in the Hunter Collection, reading² ECEN, and like a few uninscribed coins, appears to have been intended to pass current for half the value of the larger pieces, its weight being only $7\frac{1}{2}$ grs., the average weight of the others comprised in the hoard being 19.2 grs. The regularity in the weight of these coins is worthy of notice. Without weighing each coin separately, I have taken the aggregate weights of the coins of each variety, so as to obtain the average weights of the coins of each kind, and the greatest variation is only from $18\frac{1}{4}$ to $19\frac{1}{2}$ grs., with the exception of the three uninscribed coins last described, which weigh but $17\frac{1}{2}$ grs. each. It is possible that these may have been longer in circulation than the others, but there is little either in the weight or the degree of wear to justify me in attempting any chronological arrangement of the types. It appears probable that among the Iceni, as well as in the western part of Britain, there was a contemporary issue of inscribed and uninscribed coins.

The type of the small coin which has led to this digression, and of which a woodcut accompanies this notice, may be thus described :—



Obv.—Lozenge-shaped ornament with incurved sides, formed of a sort of cable moulding; within it, in the centre, two hollow crescents, back to back; above and below them a small annulet; in front of each a small pellet within the lozenge, and one on either side beyond it in front of the horns of the crescents.

Rev.—ANTEÐ in monogram, linked to the hind leg of a horse with

² British Coins, 385.

long ears, curvetting to the right; above, a V-shaped figure like a stag's head caboshed, with a pellet on either side of the head and between the horns; a pellet beneath the tail and below the body of the horse, which has a sort of bridle formed by an arc of pellets. *AR* 7½ grs.

To those unacquainted with the ancient British series of coins, the derivation of the type of the obverse from the laureate head of Apollo on the gold staters of Philip II. of Macedon would appear not a little problematical. But on the larger inscribed Icenian coins it will be observed that there are wreath-like ornaments extending from the fronts of the two crescents placed back to back in the centre, as far as to the edge of the coins, and their connection with the wreath on the earlier coins is beyond all doubt. The two crescents in the centre are also derived from some of the earlier modifications of the Philippus, and are, in fact, the features which became most permanent on the coins of the Icenii. To those accustomed to the singular alterations in character which the type, as originally imported, underwent at the hands of successive generations of British moneyers, the two crescents in the centre of the lozenge afford ample evidence of the type being merely one of the degenerate derivatives from the laureate head. It is, moreover, allied in character to that of some of the gold coins of the same district, such as Evans, Pl. XIV., 10 to 14. A somewhat similar lozenge-shaped device occurs on some of the small copper coins of Verulam; but in that case the central crescents are absent, and its relation to the Macedonian prototype extremely doubtful.

The type of the reverse is much the same as that of the larger coins, with the same legend; but the horse is more spirited, and in better drawing, though by no means a fine work of art. The object above its back has much the appearance of having been intended to represent the head of a stag, which in that case is now for the first time found upon a British coin. It will be remembered that heads of oxen are frequently represented in the same position as this relatively to the horse, on the gold coins of Tasciovanus, Andocomius, and other princes. The monogram *ANTED*, though not visible in its entirety, appears to be of precisely the same character as on the larger coins.

I have already elsewhere suggested the probability of this

being an abbreviated form of ANTEDRIGVS, and that the prince who bore this name, and who ruled in the eastern part of Britain, may have been the same who, subsequently to the defeat of the Iceni by Ostorius in A.D. 50, became a chieftain in the western district, and of whom numerous coins, both in gold and silver, occurred in the hoard discovered some years ago at Nunney, near Frome, and described by me in the Numismatic Chronicle.³

Since writing this paragraph, I have met with a gold coin of Antedrigus, slightly differing in character from any before known, which seems to afford some additional evidence of the original connection of this prince with the Iceni. The obverse presents the ordinary type of his gold coins, the branch-like ornament, but rather larger and broader than usual. The reverse has also much the same general appearance as usual, but the horse approximates in character more closely to that on the coins inscribed BODVOC than to that on the ordinary coins of Antedrigus; the wheel below is larger; in front of the horse is a ring ornament, and behind him another, but formed with a beaded circle. There are no traces whatever of the letters RIGV which usually occur below and around the horse, and the letters NTE of the ANTED inscribed above it are linked into a monogram in a similar manner to that employed on the Icenian silver coins, the monogram on which, however, also includes the A. When we remember that on no other coin of the western district are there any letters linked together, nor any attempt at a monogram, the fact of the letters on a gold coin of Antedrigus being thus linked together, becomes highly significant.

It is worthy of remark that with the Nunney hoard also there occurred several Roman coins, and among them a second-brass coin of Claudius; and, as in that instance, as well as in the case of the Santon Downham hoard, these coins have evidently been a considerable time in circulation, the date of both deposits must be fixed some years later than A.D. 41, the year in which the coins of Claudius were probably struck.

I have elsewhere suggested the period of the wars with the Romans A.D. 50 to 55, when Ostorius Scapula was Pro-prætor in Briton, as being probably that of the deposit of the Nunney hoard, and it seems as if that of Santon Down-

³ New Series, vol. i. p. 1.

ham might with propriety be assigned to much the same date. There can be little doubt that all the silver coins comprised in it, though varying in type, were struck for circulation among the powerful tribe of the Iceni, who at some time between A.D. 43 and 50 had entered into alliance with the Romans. In the latter year, however, they came into collision with the invaders, and were defeated by Ostorius, after which time, though they retained the kingly form of government, it would seem to have been only on sufferance by the Romans, and I was formerly inclined to think that with their defeat the native coinage ceased. The occurrence of these worn coins of Claudius in association with Icenian coins is by no means inconsistent with such a cessation of the native mints in A.D. 50, as the amount of wear they exhibit is not more than might be the result of constant circulation for eight or ten years.

Still, it is impossible to say with certainty that the Icenian coinage ceased before the final subjugation of the tribe by the Romans in A.D. 61, though for the last ten years of their existence their chief, or *regulus*, was probably a mere creature of the Romans.

For how long a period Prasutagus, the husband of Boadicea, was king of the Iceni, we have no means of knowing, but at present no coins have been found which can with any show of reason be assigned to him, and this circumstance alone affords some grounds of presumption that the native coinage had ceased at the time of his accession.

Were there any room for supposing that his name is incorrectly given by Tacitus, and that the initial P and R are in excess, the coins reading AESV might well be assigned to Asutagus, and certainly, from the condition of two of the specimens, they would seem to have been among the latest struck of the whole. A coin of the same type occurred in the Weston find, where the Roman coins were of silver, and none of them imperial. They were, however, so much worn that possibly the date of the deposit may have been much the same as in this case. A notice of two other hoards of the same character found at March in Cambridgeshire, and at Battle in Sussex, will be found in the Numismatic Chronicle,⁴ and other details respecting the Icenian coinage will be found in the book already cited.

⁴ Vol. i. p. 89.