

ASSESSMENT OF ROMAN COINS FROM NO. 1 POULTRY

(1) Period summaries

<u>Period</u>	<u>AR</u>	<u>AR</u>	<u>Total</u>
Pre-Conquest (to c.43 AD)	4	5	9
Claudian (incl. irregular, to c.64 AD)	1	100	101
Neronian (c.64-8)	1	26	27
Flavian (69-96)	7	51	58
Nerva-Commodus (96-192)	3	33	36
Uncertain 1st-2nd C	6	29	35
1st half 3rd C.	6	1	7
Central & Gallic Empires (253-c.285)	-	25	25
Carausius & Allectus (287-296)	-	6	6
Possibly 1st-3rd C. Greek Imperial issues	-	3	3
Tetrarchy (c.295-310)	-	1	1
310-330	-	8	8
Official issues, 330-355	-	12	12
Irregular, 340-50	-	74	74
Irregular, 350-65	-	67	67
Valentinianic (364-78)	-	14	14
Theodosian	-	22	22
Undertain later 3rd-4th C	-	22	22
Uncertain	-	25	25
<u>Totals</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>524</u>	<u>552</u>

(2) Detailed period breakdown

<u>Pre-Conquest</u>	<u>AR</u>	<u>AE</u>	<u>Total</u>
Republic	1		
Mark Antony	2		
Augustus(?)	1		
Agrippa		3	
Tiberius		1	
Germanicus		1	9
<u>Claudian (c.41-c.64)</u>			
Claudius I official	1	10	
" irregular		67	
" prob. irregular		9	
" poss. irregular		7	
Tiberius irregular		1	
Antonia, official		1	
" irregular		2	
Unc., poss. Julio-Claudian		3	101
<u>Neronian (c.64-68)</u>			
Nero		23	
prob. Nero		3	
Nero - irregular		1	
Vitellius	1		28
<u>Flavian (69-96)</u>			
Vespasian	5	26	
prob. "		3	
" " "lightweight" copies		2	
Titus		1	
Domitian	2	13	
Uncertain		6	58
<u>Trajanic-Antonine (96-192)</u>			
Nerva		1	
Trajan	1	5	
prob. Trajan		4	
Trajan, plated copy	1		
Hadrian	1	12	
prob. Hadrian		2	
Antoninus Pius (semis)		1	
Marcus Aurelius		3	
Faustina I		2	
Faustina II		1	
Commodus		1	
Crispina?		1	36
<u>Uncertain 1st-2nd c.</u>			
Illegible 1C (one cut in half)		16	
Illegible later 1st C		2	
Illegible 1-2C	4	6	
Illegible 2C		4	
Illegible, poss. Antonine	1	1	
Unc. plated copy	1		35
<u>Severan-Mid 3rd C</u>			
Severus	1		
Plated copies	2		
Caracalla	1		
Unc. Severan	1	1	
Maximinus I/Philip I (235-249)	1		7

	<u>AR</u>	<u>AE</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>253-c.285</u>			
Gallienus		2	
Salonina		1	
Claudius II		3	
Tetricus I		2	
Unc. Gallic Empire		1	
Unc. antoninianus		2	
Irregular - Claudius II		1	
" - Gallic Empire		9	
" - unc., later 3rd C		1	
poss. irregular		3	25
<u>Unc. poss. 1-3C Greek Imperial</u>		3	3
<u>Carausius & Allectus</u>			
Carausius		4	
Allectus		2	6
<u>Tetrarchy, 285-310</u>		1	1
<u>310-30</u>			
310-320		5	
310-330		1	
320-330		2	8
<u>Constantinian, 330-65, official</u>			
"Two Standards"		2	
Theodora		3	
Unc. 330-41 types		3	
"Two Victories"		2	
Fel Temp Phoenix		1	
Fallen Horseman		1	12
<u>Irregular, c.340-350</u>			
Urbs Roma (4 probable ident.)			10
"Two Standards"			12
Unc. "Two Standards" or "One Standard"			2
"One Standard" (3 probable ident.)			13
Theodora			1
"Two Victories" (3 probable ident.)			9
Uncertain			27
<u>Irregular c.355-365</u>			
Fallen Horseman (10 probable ident.)			41
Magnentius (one cut in half)			8
Uncertain			18
<u>Valentinianic (364-78)</u>			
Official			5
Prob. cast copies			8
Irregular			1
<u>Theodosian</u>			
Valentinian II			1
Magnus Maximus			2
Theodosius I			2
Unc. Theodosian (5 probable ident.)			17
<u>Unc. later 3rd-4th C</u>			
Uncertain c.270-400			16
Uncertain c.330-350			1
Uncertain 4th C. irregular			5
Uncertain ?4th C			9
Uncertain	1	15	16

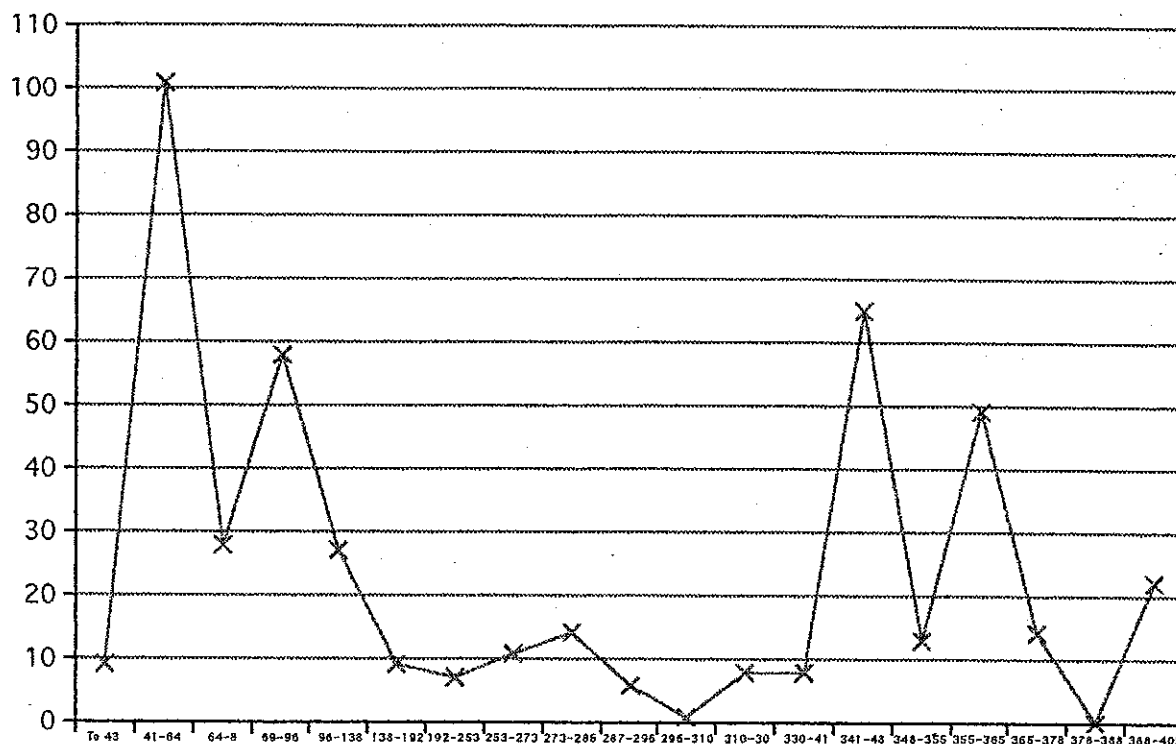


Fig. 1: Histogram showing Roman coins from No. 1 Poultry. (note that this omits a further 58 coins, comprising 35 uncertain 1st-2nd C., 3 poss. Greek Imperial 1st-3rd C., 31 uncertain later 3rd-4th C, and 16 uncertain; these identifications are the result of preliminary spot-dating only and closer study may yield more precise dating for a number of them)

No. 1 Poultry: Assessment Report

The excavation produce some 550 Roman coins. This is a large total - representing, for example, about one half of the total coins excavated in the large and intensively-occupied Roman "suburb" of Southwark. *Prima facie*, this should produce information which could be statistically valid in contributing towards an assessment of the site's history during the Roman period, and stratigraphically by providing information about the intensity, and length, of Roman coin circulation in this area of London, and hence, by inference, in London as a whole. Subject to a proper analysis of the stratigraphic distribution of the coins, it should also provide valuable confirmatory evidence of site phase dating, particularly for those periods represented by substantial coin numbers, and I concur in the view that a spatial study of the coins on the site would be a valuable experiment in analysis of coin use and distribution which I am not aware has been undertaken before.

I presume that the site is of sufficient importance that its study will aim to make a significant contribution to, and presumably a reassessment of, certain aspects of the history of Londinium. Unfortunately, the substantial coin data from this site is at present of limited value in terms of any contribution it might make towards a wider understanding of the history of Roman London. This is because, despite some 30 years' intensive excavation within the City, there has been no synthesis of the Roman coinage of the City of London, either published or in archive form, except for the recent study in *Britannia* by M.Rhodes of the coins in the former Guildhall Museum collection amassed by Charles Roach Smith from

the river bed around London Bridge during the 19th century; this group is almost exclusively of the larger bronze coins of the 1st and 2nd centuries which were most easy to find under the random circumstances of their discovery and, apart from having no stratigraphic usefulness, are an unbalanced sample and therefore of limited statistical value. Indeed, the comparative study of 1st-2nd century coinage in Hammerson 1979¹ was based, for the London histogram used, on these figures, as all that was available for London at the time, and is therefore unsatisfactory as regards London.

The coin histogram for Roman London is therefore not at present available, and comparison of London's overall coin pattern with other major Roman towns, as well as those in the more immediate area for which histograms are available - Southwark, Staines, Brentford, Enfield and Old Ford - is not therefore possible.

Neither, however, are the coin histograms for any other site in the City, although the spot-dating identifications carried out by the writer for sites excavated since c.1992, many of which have also yielded substantial numbers of coins, is computerised and retrievable; I am not aware whether coin data for sites excavated previously is available in this way. The importance of this aspect of coin study is detailed in Hammerson 1996², which showed that it may well be unsafe to use the coin pattern from any individual site within a town to make assumptions about occupation elsewhere within it; here, histograms from nine individual sites within the Roman settlement of Southwark were studied to show that most of them resembled neither each other nor the overall coin pattern. Since there is currently no other site data with which to compare No. 1 Poultry, the value of its coins is at present mainly stratigraphic or, historically, internal to the site itself. Indeed, examination of the histogram for No. 1 Poultry (Fig.1) shows a highly eccentric and, to some extent, unexpected pattern, especially:

- (1) a concentration and predominance of irregular Claudian coins hitherto a feature of Roman Southwark and of sites elsewhere conventionally described as Roman conquest period supply bases;
- (2) a relatively small number of coins from the Antonine period to the mid-3rd century;
- (3) a surprisingly small number of coins from the Gallic Empire and "barbarous radiate" period and, indeed, from the Carausian and early-mid Constantinian periods;
- (3) a "recovery" in coin numbers from the 330s, though in absolute terms the numbers are still very low.

The No.1 Poultry coin pattern therefore presents a number of interesting aspects, the more so as they come from a site within a settlement generally accepted as being the administrative capital of a province and the largest Roman city north of the Alps. If the coin pattern from the site did actually reflect that from Londinium as a whole, some re-examination of the City's history and function might be considered necessary. If, therefore, it is envisaged that the purpose of the overall report on No. 1 Poultry is to look at the site in its London significance and context, and to examine what the findings tell us about the history, function and development of Londinium as a whole, then it is the writer's view that the opportunity should be taken to include a summary assessment of all excavated coins from London as a part of the project. Only in this way will it be

¹ M.Hammerson, Coin Report, in J.Bird et al., SOUTHWARK EXCAVATIONS, 1972-4, LAMAS & SAS Joint Pub. No.1, 1979, 587-600.

² M.Hammerson, PROBLEMS OF ROMAN COIN INTERPRETATION IN GREATER LONDON, in INTERPRETING ROMAN LONDON: PAPERS IN MEMORY OF HUGH CHAPMAN, ed.J.Bird et al., Oxford, 1996, 153-164

possible to make any meaningful study of the coins other than as regards their stratigraphic significance for the site itself.

Studying the coins from Roman Southwark in this way (Hammerson 1979, 1989 and 1992)³ enabled the debate about the origins and function of that settlement to be set more clearly in context than if the coins had not been carefully studied. The writer therefore considers that the opportunity to carry out such a study for London will enable similar results to be obtained.

Further work on the No.1, Poultry coins will therefore depend on the scope and requirements of the overall excavation analysis, and two alternatives are available:

(1) A basic study of the coins in their stratigraphic context, and a commentary on their contribution to a study of the site's history and on any comparative published evidence available which will enable the coin histogram to be placed in a wider context - 3-4 days' work.

(2) Study as in (1), but with a detailed comparative commentary and analysis of the site's coin histogram together with those from other excavated sites in the City of London; a spatial study of the stratigraphic distribution of the coins across the site; and assessment of its value and significance for study of the site and for future coin work; and a preliminary analysis of the overall significance of the information obtained for future study of Roman London

8-10 days' work.

Michael Hammerson
30.6.1997

³ See footnote 1; M.Hammerson, THE ROMAN COINS FROM SOUTHWARK, in P.Hinton (ed.), EXCAVATIONS IN SOUTHWARK 1973-6 AND LAMBETH 1973-9, LAMAS/SAS Joint Pub. No.3, 1989, 417-46; M.Hammerson, The Coins, in C.Cowan, A POSSIBLE MANSIO IN ROMAN SOUTHWARK, TLAMAS.43, 1992, 137-144.