

ART. III – Recent Finds of Roman Coins in Cumbria

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A: Hoards and other collections

1. *Kendal (Helsfell)*: It was reported in an earlier note (*CW2*, xcv, 275) that a hoard of approximately thirty radiate copies had been found in what appears to have been an area of Romano-British settlement. It is now clear that the number of coins found was nearer to seventy, and that these have subsequently been distributed amongst various parties. Seventeen of these have been presented for examination; they are mostly poor copies, and in very poor condition:

Gallienus	1
Claudius II	1
Victorinus	1 (possibly <i>RIC</i> 115)
Tetricus I	5
Tetricus II	2
Unassignable radiate copies	7

2. *Old Carlisle*: Information has previously been published concerning a small collection of third and fourth century coins which appeared to constitute the whole or part of a hoard (Shotter, 1990, 186f; *CW2*, lxxxviii, 240-1). It is now clear that the complete hoard consisted of forty-eight coins; they were recovered from a *vicus*-location, and there was no obvious sign of a container. The coins:

Gallienus	1 (<i>RIC</i> 166)
Claudius II	1
Victorinus	2 (inc. <i>RIC</i> 59)
Tetricus I	3 (inc. <i>RIC</i> 121)
Tetricus II	1
Unassignable radiate copies	4
Carausius	2
Maximian	1 (GENIO POP ROM - type)
Constantine I	1 (<i>RIC</i> VII (London), 154ff)
Constantinian	
i) GLORIA EXERCITVS 2 standards	3 (inc. <i>LRBC</i> I. 48, 64)
ii) GLORIA EXERCITVS 1 standard	1 (<i>LRBC</i> I. 89)
iii) Victory on prow	3 (inc. <i>LRBC</i> I. 52)
iv) She-wolf and twins	6 (<i>LRBC</i> I. 51(4), 184(2))
v) PIETAS ROMANA	1 (<i>LRBC</i> I. 105)
vi) Facing Victories	2 (inc. <i>LRBC</i> I. 138)
vii) FEL TEMP REPARATIO	
Fallen Horseman	7 (inc. <i>LRBC</i> II. 249)
Magnentius	1 (<i>LRBC</i> II. 66)
Valentinianic	
i) GLORIA ROMANORVM	1 (<i>LRBC</i> II. 498)
ii) SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE	7 (inc. <i>LRBC</i> II. 483, 502)

The coins remain in two private collections – of twenty-five and twenty-three.

3. *Burneside*: A large collection of mostly Ptolemaic coins, now in Kendal Museum, was found in Burneside in 1900, during the laying of a water-pipe. The collection contains 225 coins of which twenty-seven are illegible; the bulk of them (195 coins) are issues of Ptolemy V Epiphanes (205-180 B.C.) and Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-145 B.C.):

Ptolemy V	1
Ptolemy VI	30 (One Eagle)
	164 (Two Eagles)

The coins were classified by the late Colin Kraay of the Ashmolean Museum, who regarded them as a hoard which, in view of the condition of the coins, was deposited probably in the early-first century B.C. It is unlikely that such a hoard would have been *genuinely* deposited in Britain during the Roman period without a significant number of later additions. In fact, there are three later coins – a Byzantine issue, and an Alexandrian *tetradrachm* each of Gallienus (*Milne* 4175) and Maximian (*Milne* 5032). It seems likely that the coins found their way to Britain in the nineteenth century, though how they came to be deposited in their findspot will remain a mystery.

A similar origin can probably be proposed for a Parthian coin (of Arsaces VII, of c. 125 B.C.) and two Bactrian issues, also in the Museum's collection, which came from Lambrig in 1876.

4. "*Isel-area*": In 1995, a quantity of objects was recovered from a location in Isel; amongst these were twenty-one coins of the third and fourth centuries, which appeared, from the circumstances of their condition and storage to have constituted a single find. Further, since the condition of most of these coins is poor, it would seem unlikely that they had been taken far from an original findspot, presumably in north-west Cumbria. The coins:

Gallienus	1
Claudius II	1
Victorinus	1 (Very blundered, with an obverse-legend IIVII)
Tetricus I	5 (inc. <i>RIC</i> 121)
Unassignable radiate copy	1 (fragmentary)
Constantinian	
i) to A.D. 330	3 (inc. <i>LRBC</i> I. 172, 479)
ii) A.D. 330-346	6 (inc. <i>LRBC</i> I. 355; the others were "Victory on prow" 1; GLORIA EXERCITVS – 1 standard 2; "Facing Victories" 2)
iii) A.D. 346-350	3 (FEL TEMP REPARATIO – types: Fallen Horseman 2; Hut 1)

There were also five earlier coins:

Republican	1 (AR)
Domitian	1 (<i>RIC</i> 409)
Commodus	1 (<i>RIC</i> 563)
Severus Alexander	1 (<i>RIC</i> 597)

Maximinus	1 (<i>RIC</i> 45)
Curiously, the find included four obvious forgeries:	
Otho	1 (<i>Sestertius</i> ; the coin resembles the <i>denarius</i> -type (<i>RIC</i> I ² . 7-8), although Otho did not issue <i>aes</i>)
Domitian	1 (<i>Sestertius</i> – <i>RIC</i> 358)
Antoninus Pius	1 (<i>Sestertius</i> – <i>RIC</i> 1211 etc)
Nero	1 (<i>Sestertius</i> , which is a “hybrid”, with a blundered Greek legend on the obverse, and the Ostia-reverse of the mint of Rome – <i>RIC</i> I ² . 178 etc)

I am informed by Dr. Andrew Burnett, of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, that such forgeries were not uncommon between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

B. Casual Finds

1. *Arnside*: In 1995, a radiate copy of Claudius II (A.D. 268-70) was found on Arnside Knott; the coin is a moderately-worn copy of *RIC* 50.
2. *Barrow-in-Furness*: An Alexandrian *tetradrachm* of Diocletian (*Milne* 4830 of A.D. 286) is reported to have been found some considerable time ago.
3. *Beckfoot*: In 1995, two coins are reported to have been found close to the site of the fort; they were an unidentifiable *dupondius* and an unassignable radiate copy.
4. *Brougham*: A number of coins were found in 1993 a little to the north of the fort, on the line of the Roman road to Carlisle. They are:

Vespasian	3 (1 <i>Denarius</i> ; 2 <i>Sestertii</i> , inc. <i>RIC</i> 577)
Titus (as Caesar)	1 (<i>RIC</i> (Vesp) 204)
Trajan	1 (<i>RIC</i> 283)
Hadrian	1 (<i>Sestertius</i>)
Septimius Severus	1 (<i>RIC</i> 769)
Caracalla	1 (<i>RIC</i> (Caracalla) 6)
Maximian	1 (GENIO POPVLI ROMANI – type)
Maximin Daia	1 (<i>RIC</i> VI (Ostia), 86a)

5. *Brough-under-Stainmore*: Recent work by Dr. David Woolliscroft on the north side of the fort has revealed a moderately-worn *as* of Faustina II (A.D. 161-76); he has also reported another recent find – a little-worn *denarius* of Faustina I outside the fort’s eastern defences (*RIC* (Antoninus) 351).

In 1994, three coins (incompletely recorded) were found at about one mile to the west of the fort, on the line of the Roman road to Kirkby Thore. These coins appear to have been a republican *denarius* (*Crawford* 345, 1 of 88 B.C.), a *sestertius* of Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138-61), and another unidentified *sestertius*.

6. *Carlisle*: A very worn *sestertius* of Trajan (A.D. 103-111) was found in 1984 at How Gill; it appears that the coin reached that spot in dumped material which originated on one of the contemporary excavation-sites in the city.
7. *Dacre*: A *sestertius* of Trajan (A.D. 103-111) was found in 1993, close to the churchyard.
8. *Kendal (Helsfell)*: It is clear that in 1992-3 a considerable number of Roman coins were discovered in an area of known Romano-British settlement. An earlier note in these *Transactions* (CW2, xcv, 276) gave information on six coins from this find; some of this information can now be updated:
 - i) The Republican *denarius* is *Crawford* 317, 2 of 104 B.C.
 - ii) The *denarius* of Julia Maesa is *RIC* 268 of A.D. 218-222.
 - iii) The *aes*-issue of the Constantinian period is an VRBS ROMA / She-wolf and twins type (*LRBC* I. 51 of A.D. 330-5).

Information has now come to light on a further eighteen coins:

Hadrian	2 (<i>Dupondius</i> , <i>RIC</i> 605; <i>As</i>)
Antoninus Pius	3 (<i>Sestertius</i> ; 2 <i>Dupondii</i>)
Julia Domna	1 (<i>Denarius</i> , <i>RIC</i> 572)
Julia Sohaemias	1 (<i>Denarius</i> , <i>RIC</i> 241)
Gallienus	3 (inc. <i>RIC</i> 216, 267)
Postumus	1
Tetricus I	1
Tetricus II	1 (<i>RIC</i> 248)
Constantius II	2 (<i>LRBC</i> I. 89, 182)
She-wolf and twins	1 (<i>LRBC</i> I. 51)
Magnentius	2 (inc. <i>LRBC</i> II. 56)

9. *Hutton Roof*: A very worn *denarius* of Marcus Antonius (*Crawford* 544 of 32-1 B.C.) and an *as* of Trajan (A.D. 98-117) were found in 1994 close to an area of known Romano-British settlement.
10. *Kirkby Thore*: A *denarius* of Trajan was found in 1994 in a private garden; it is little-worn (*RIC* 129 of A.D. 103-111).
11. *Old Carlisle (Red Dial)*: It has been possible to examine a number of privately-owned coins, which have been found in recent years in *vicus*-locations to the south and east of the fort. As a result, the list of coins from the site published previously (Shotter, 1990, 88f; CW2, xc, 282f) requires some modification; it should read as follows:

Vespasian	4 (<i>Denarius</i> ; <i>Sestertii</i> (2); <i>As</i>)
Hadrian	1 (<i>Denarius</i> , <i>RIC</i> 71)
Antoninus Pius	3 (<i>Sestertii</i> – 2, inc. <i>Hill(A)</i> 751; <i>Dupondius</i>)
Faustina I	2 (<i>Sestertii</i>)
Marcus Aurelius (as Caesar)	1 (<i>Dupondius</i>)
Marcus Aurelius	2 (<i>Sestertii</i> , inc. <i>RIC</i> 1011)
Faustina II	1 (<i>Sestertius</i>)
Septimius Severus	2 (<i>Denarii</i> , <i>RIC</i> 226, 288)
Gordian III	1 (<i>Antoninianus</i> , <i>RIC</i> 1)
Gallienus	1 (<i>RIC</i> 159)

Tetricus I	2 (<i>RIC</i> 62, 100)
Constans	1 (<i>LRBC</i> I. 138)
Constantinian (FEL TEMP REPARATIO copy)	1

There were also two illegible *asses*.

In addition, some further coins have been recorded from *vicus*-locations:

Domitian	1 (<i>Denarius</i> , <i>RIC</i> 197B)
Trajan	1 (<i>Dupondius</i>)
Antoninus Pius	3 (<i>Denarius</i> , <i>RIC</i> 62; <i>Sestertii</i> (2))
Faustina I	1 (<i>As</i>)
Marcus Aurelius	1 (<i>Sestertius</i>)
Commodus	1 (<i>Denarius</i> , <i>RIC</i> 50)

Altogether, thirty-eight coins, which can be regarded as casual losses, have been recovered from the site with the following chronological distribution:

I	(-A.D. 41)	—
II	(41-54)	—
III	(54-68)	—
IV	(69-96)	7
V	(96-117)	2
VI	(117-138)	1
VII	(138-161)	10
VIII	(161-180)	4
IX	(180-192)	3
X	(192-222)	4
XI	(222-235)	—
XII	(235-259)	1
XIII	(259-275)	3
XIV	(275-294)	1
XV	(294-324)	—
XVI	(324-330)	—
XVII	(330-346)	1
XVIII	(346-364)	1
XIX	(364-378)	—
XX	(378-388)	—
XXI	(388-)	—

Although the sample is small, a few points may be made:

- i) The large number of Flavian coins might be thought to indicate an Agricolan origin for the site; however, most of these exhibited a considerable degree of wear, perhaps pointing to establishment in the last years of the first century.
- ii) Trajanic and Hadrianic coins are poorly represented, which may indicate some complexity in the occupation-pattern in the first half of the second century, perhaps coincident with changing frontier-policies.
- iii) There is considerable strength between the mid-second and the mid-third centuries.
- iv) There are few coins later than the mid-third century, although some coins of the period *may* have been incorrectly attributed to a hoard found in the same

area in 1987 (see above, in A2).

- v) It should be borne in mind that all of these coins derive from *vicus*-locations, and may not, therefore, be taken as reliable indicators of military occupation in the fort itself.
 - 12. *Penrith*: A gold medallion of Constantine I was offered for sale by auction by Messrs. Glendinning in February 1995. It is said to have been found in the Eden valley, south of Penrith. The medallion has IMP CONSTANTINVS P F AVG on the obverse, showing the emperor's head to the left, with a radiate crown, and the bust draped and cuirassed. The reverse was blank, save for a border of dots; the medallion weighed 3.3 gms. Such a piece is very unusual; the only known parallel is listed in the Catalogue of the Museum of the Royal Academy of Ireland (1862) – page 83 (fig. 613; no. 263).
 - 13. *Penrith-area*: Tullie House Museum has recently been given a small collection of Roman and other coins. The Roman coins consist of two *denarii* of Trajan (*RIC* 56 of A.D. 101-2 and *RIC* 115 of A.D. 103-111), and two Constantinian issues (*RIC* VII (London), 158 of A.D. 319-20 and *LRBC* I. 902 of A.D. 330-5). Accompanying the later *denarius* of Trajan was a letter to the finder (a Mr Jackson) from the late Professor Eric Birley (dated 5 November 1947), identifying the coin and indicating that it should be published in these *Transactions*. As far as can be ascertained, this did not happen. Mr Jackson evidently found the coin in his garden, and it could appear likely that he is to be identified with the late Mr John Jackson, who was a schoolteacher in Penrith. Also appended was an acknowledgement from the British Museum (dated 6 May 1957), concerning identification of an unspecified coin. Attached to the paper was a letter to Mr Jackson from the numismatist, Percy Hedley, concerning identification of two radiate copies – one each of Victorinus (*RIC* 55 of A.D. 269-71) and of Tetricus I (*RIC* 67 of A.D. 271-3).
- It is understood from the present donor, Mrs Atkinson, that all of the coins were found by or entrusted to her late husband, Mr W. Atkinson, or to Mr Jackson, and that all came from the Penrith-area.
- 14. *Watercrock*: Two *denarii* were found in 1993 a little to the south of the fort; they are an issue each of Hadrian (*RIC* 59ff) and Geta (*RIC* (Geta) 20). Four other coins have been reported recently from the site – a worn *sestertius* of Vespasian (*RIC* 565 of A.D. 74-5), a little-worn radiate copy of Tetricus I (*RIC* 136 of A.D. 271-3), an unassignable radiate copy (c. A.D. 270), and an illegible *as*.

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In a number of cases, precise details of findspots have been registered with relevant area-Museums.

References

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