

## V: Notes

### 1: The Acton Hoard

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A hoard of five *denarii* of the Roman emperor Septimius Severus, dated AD 194–8, was found at Acton, near Nantwich, in December 2014. Its concealment in a conical lead container apparently made especially for the purpose suggests that it was a ritual deposit rather than a savings hoard that it was intended to recover.

A small Roman hoard was discovered on the 14 December 2014 in the parish of Acton, near Nantwich, in the course of a local metal-detecting club rally. The hoard consists of five silver *denarii* deposited within a cone-shaped container with a disc stopper, both of lead (Ill V.1.1–4). The find was reported first to the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) Finds Liaison Officer and subsequently to the coroner as treasure under the 1996 Treasure Act. Under the Act, treasure consists of any metallic object, other than a coin, provided that at least 10% by weight of metal is precious metal (that is, gold or silver) and that it is at least 300 years old when found; any group of two or more metallic objects of any composition of prehistoric date that come from the same find; two or more coins from the same find provided they are at least 300 years old when found and contain 10% gold or silver, and any object, whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or had previously been together with, another object that is treasure. The hoard is Treasure Case 2014 T966 and is recorded on the PAS website as Oakden, V 2014 LVPL-15E376: Roman hoard. <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/656729>. It is summarised in Part 2 of Cheshire Past 2014 *below* but was thought worthy of more detailed publication here for the benefit of future numismatists and because of the unusual manner of its concealment.

The lead alloy container is conical with a sub-circular cross-section and leans slightly to one side; its weight is 50.5g. Its mouth measures 45.18 x 40.15mm externally and 26.53 x 26.55mm internally. The wide, uneven, downturned rim or lip appears to have been formed by the metal being folded or pushed back on itself and has a maximum width of 9.67mm. The cone tapers to a circular flattened terminal measuring 4.98mm in diameter; it is dark

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grey in colour and appears to have been cut off or broken, possibly in recent times. The internal depth is 33.22mm. There is a sub-circular perforation 9.94mm below the mouth of the cone measuring 4.07mm at its widest part. The perforation may have held a fixing peg or nail to keep the lead disc in place, closing the vessel. It has jagged sharp edges, around which the lead is dark grey. However, at the base of the perforation, away from the mouth of the object, the perforation is a shiny dark silver colour on both the internal and external faces, with the lead pushed or dragged down slightly on the outer face. This damage of the patina on the internal edge of the perforation may have been caused by abrasion within the ploughsoil. The exterior of the cone has a mottled mid-grey and brown patina, while the patina of the internal face is dark white.

A lead alloy disc was also found. It measures 25.28mm in diameter, is 5.32mm thick and weighs 19.9g. The disc varies slightly in thickness and is undecorated on both faces but has small nicks and pits where it has been worn and has a light white patina. The disc acted as a stopper within the mouth of the conical container, keeping the coins in place. On one edge of the disc is a square indentation covered in patination. This may be the result of the possible fixing peg resting on the disc, which is smaller than the opening of the vessel. Lead discs such as this are often described as weights and are dated from the Roman through to the post-medieval period because of their undiagnostic nature.

Within the container were five silver *denarii* of Septimius Severus, who reigned from AD 193 to 211. The coins themselves were issued between AD 194 and 198.

- 1 L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP IIII / P M TR P II COS II P P: *RIC* 4 (1) (Severus), 49 of AD 194–5; Minerva standing left with spear and shield. Wt 3.21g.
- 2 L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP VIII / P M TR P IIII COS II P P: *RIC* 4 (1) (Severus), 85 of AD 196–7; *Pax* seated left with branch and sceptre. Wt 3.55g.
- 3 L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP VIII / SECVRITAS PVBLICA: *RIC* 4 (1) (Severus), 93 of AD 196–7; *Securitas* seated left. Wt 2.52g.
- 4 L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP VIII / P M TR P V COS II P P: *RIC* 4 (1) (Severus), 104 of AD 197; *Fortuna* left with rudder on globe. Wt 3.47g.
- 5 L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP X / MARTI PACIFERO: *RIC* 4 (1) (Severus), 113 of AD 197–8; Mars standing left, with spear reversed. Wt 2.68g.

The unusual method of concealment, in a vessel apparently fashioned especially for the purpose, suggests that the hoard was deposited ritually rather than as a small pot of money that it was intended to recover.

## Bibliography

- RIC* 4 (1) Mattingly, H & Sydenham, E A 1936. *The Roman imperial coinage* 4 (1): *Pertinax to Geta*. London: Spink



III V.1.1 Side views of the lead container. © National Museums Liverpool



III V.1.2 Top views of the lead container with and without stopper. © National Museums Liverpool



III V.1.3 The lead stopper. The patinated square indentation is clearly visible in the right-hand view. © National Museums Liverpool



III V.1.4 Example of one of the silver *denarii*. © National Museums Liverpool

