

NOTES

A ROMAN COIN HOARD FROM MONEYBURY HILL, PITSTONE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

In 1977 Mr. J. Wilson, a National Trust warden, disturbed metal detector users illegally detecting in a hole on a Scheduled Ancient Monument at Moneybury Hill, Ashridge Estate. Mr. Wilson confiscated 30 Roman coins thought to form a hoard and which was reported by Dr. D. Nash in *Coin Hoards*, volume VI in 1981.¹

The findspot is in an area of known Roman occupation. There were no traces of a container associated with the find. Roman brick was present in the hole, which had been dug to a depth of 0.3m to remove the coins. A Roman building, which has been interpreted as a house or temple, has been partially excavated on this site.² The excavation recovered just six coins, which spanned the period from Hadrian to Allectus. Two other hoards have been recovered in the immediate vicinity. In 1870, 116 Roman coins were discovered, together with other metal objects and some Roman pottery, at a location 'a few hundred yards south of

Moneybury Hill'.³ J. Evans interpreted this find as two separate hoards, one comprising large aes and dated to the mid-third century and the second, smaller, deposit comprising antoniniani dating from Gallienus to the Tetrici.⁴

The new hoard comprises 17 regular antoniniani, from Postumus to the Tetrici, and 12 irregular antoniniani, or barbarous radiates, copying coins of the same period. There is also a single dupondius of Nerva which was found with the hoard and may be intrusive, considering the circumstances of the find. In the catalogue, references are provided to B.M.C. and R.I.C numbers, in the case of Central Empire coins, and to numbers from Elmer's scheme, in the case of the Gallic Empire.⁵ The weight, diameter and die-axes of the irregular coins have also been recorded, with the die-axes being expressed in terms of numbers on a clock face.

CATALOGUE

Official coins

<i>Central Empire</i>	<i>B.M.C.</i>	<i>Gallic Empire</i>	<i>Elmer</i>
Nerva (Dupondius)		Postumus	
1 IMP NERVA CAES AVG P M TR P II	<i>B.M.C.</i>	3 IMP C POSTVMVS.P.F.AVG	
COS III PP		MONETA AVG	336
CONCORDIA EXERCITVVM S C	138	4 IMP C POSTVMVS P F AVG	
		Illeg.	
Claudius II		Victorinus	
2 IMP C CLAVDIVS AVG	<i>R.I.C.</i>	5-6 IMP C VICTORINVS P F AVG	
IOVI VICTORI	54f	PAX AVG	682
		7 IMP C VICTORINVS P F AVG	
		SALVS AVG	697
		8 Illeg.	



19



20



21



22



23



24



27



28



30



Tetricus I	
9 IMP C G P ESV TETRICVS AVG VICTORIA AVG	762
10 IMP C TETRICVS.P.F.AVG VICTORIA AVG	768
11 IMP C TETRICVS P F AVG SALVS AVGG	779
12 IMP C TETRICVS P F AVG VIRTVS AVGG	780
13 IMP TETRICVS P F AVG LAETITIA AVG N	786

14 IMP C G P ESV TETRICVS AVG
Illeg. 760/1/2

Tetricus II	
15- C PIV ESV TETRICVS CAES	
16 SPES PVBLICA	769
17 C PIV ESV TETRICVS CAES PRINC IVVENT	781
18 Illeg.	-

Radiate copies

Central Empire

Claudius II		d.	Die- axis
19 IMP - CLAVDIVS AVG VIRTVS -	3.19g		
20 IMP - CLAVDIVS AVG Providentia Aug	2.66g	18mm	6

24 Illeg.
Comes Aug 1.53g 16mm 12
* |

Gallic Empire

Victorinus	
21 IMP C VICTOR- Virtus Aug	2.23g 16mm 2
22 Illeg. Providentia Aug Same obv. die as no. 23	3.29g 18mm 2
23 Illeg. Pax Aug Same obv. die as no. 22	2.73g 19mm 4 v *

Tetricus I	
25 Illeg. Spes Publica	1.79g 20mm 6
26 - P F AVG Pax Aug	1.56g 17mm 11
27 IMP TETRICVS - Salus Augg	1.77g 16mm 5

Tetricus II	
28 C P E TETRICVS CAES Pietas Augg	1.33g 17mm 6
29 - RICVS CAES Pietas Augg	2.37g 17mm 6
30 C PIV ESV TOICS - Victoria Aug	2.04g 17mm 11

Summary


Regular


<i>Central Empire</i>	
Nerva	1
Claudius II	1
<i>Gallic Empire</i>	
Postumus	2
Victorinus	4
Tetricus I	6
Tetricus II	4
	18

Irregular

<i>Central Empire</i>	
Claudius II	2
<i>Gallic Empire</i>	
Victorinus	4
Tetricus I	3
Tetricus II	3
	12

If the dupondius, which appears to be of dubious association, is omitted the rest of the coins comprise a typical antoninianus hoard of the late third century. The most important aspect of the hoard is the irregular component, which warrants further discussion. Nearly 100 hoards have been recorded in Britain containing barbarous radiates and being buried between A.D. 270 and 300. The bulk of these irregular coins tend to be derivatives of official issues of the Tetrici but the hoard in question contains some interesting examples copied from the coinage of Victorinus.

The two most noteworthy Victorinus copies were struck from the same obverse die, which is an unusual occurrence in such a small hoard (see pl. 0, 22 and 23). The obverse and reverse legends are totally illegible, comprising the symbols V and A, and a pronounced milled border is present on each face of the coins. The portrait is an unusual and distinctive copy of Victorinus, accentuating his hooked nose and pointed beard. The reverses can also be seen to copy specific issues of this emperor. The reverse of number 23 copies the mint-mark of a Cologne issue precisely, including a small branch low in the field thus:  (from

Elmer 682). Number 24 also bears a copied mint-mark, correctly coupled with the COMES AVG reverse of Cologne, from issue 2 (a type not listed by Elmer): .⁶ The exact re-

production of complicated mint-marks is unusual in this coinage, with the trend more usually being towards simplification and omission of detail.

Numbers 19 and 20 appear to be products of a common mint. Both are Claudius II types, which were copied much less frequently than issues of the Gallic Empire. They share similar obverse legends, lettering and facial shape. This latter feature is not dissimilar to the shape of the faces seen in numbers 22 and 23. All four of these coins also share the distinctive obverse and reverse borders. The proportions and gentle engravings of the reverse figures seen on numbers 19, 20 and 23 are also similar. It appears likely that all four coins were products of the same irregular mint. Finally, it is noted that numbers 24 and 27 possess similar portrait engravings.

The latest regular issues present are datable to A.D. 274. The module of the copies approaches that of the official issues and shows no sign of the progressive reduction which could occur from about A.D. 275.⁷ The evidence points towards a burial date of between A.D. 274 and about 276. The low proportion of Tetrican copies, which so commonly dominate hoards, to those of Claudius II and Victorinus, assists towards this conclusion.

J.A. Davies

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr. D. Nash, who initially identified these coins at Oxford, and to thank the staff of Buckinghamshire County Museum, Aylesbury,

for assistance in the preparation of this report. I would also like to thank Julie Gardiner for useful comments.

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3. *Victoria County History, Hertfordshire* Vol. IV, 147-8.
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R.I.C.: Mattingly, H. and Sydenham, E.A. (eds.), *The Roman Imperial Coinage* Vol. V, Part I, by P.H. Webb, London (1927).
6. Elmer: Elmer, G., 'Die münzprägung der Gallischen Kaiser in Köln, Trier und Mailand', *Bonner Jahrbucher* 146 (1941), 1-106.
7. For fuller details of these issues and their sequence, see Elmer, G., *ibid.*, and Bland, R.F., 'The 1973 Beachy Head treasure trove of third-century antoniniani', *Num. Chron.* 7th series, 19 (1979), 61-107, especially p. 67.
7. Boon, G.C., 'The counterfeiter's deposit', in G. Wainwright, *Coygan Camp*, Cardiff (1967).

A LATE MEDIEVAL BRONZE PURSE MOUNT FROM DENHAM, BUCKS.

Late in November 1981 the illustrated object (Fig. 1) was brought to the Verulamium Museum, St. Albans for identification. It was found by Mr. C. Morris at Denham, south Buckinghamshire and is now in the possession of the County Museum, Aylesbury.

The object is a bronze purse-frame, 170mm long with a maximum height at the suspension loop of 58mm. It is constructed in several parts, the loop being allowed to rotate freely

about the main bar. Both ends of the bar and the lower part of the loop terminal have separate 'beads'. Such objects are well-known in the late medieval period but the Denham find is particularly interesting, either face of the arms containing an inscription picked out in green enamel, traces of which survive in a number of the letters (indicated by cross-hatching in the illustration). The obverse reads O DOMINE CRISSTA, the N and E of the second word being ligatured; the first S of the last word is retrograde.



Fig. 1. Bronze purse-frame from Denham (2:3).

The central boss contains the initials IHS. This is normally taken as an abbreviation from the Greek IHS (for Jesus). Other interpretations are Jesus Hominum Salvator (saviour of men); In Hoc Signo [vinces] (in this sign [thou shall conquer]); In Hac [cruce] Salus (in this [cross] is salvation).

The reverse reads ST. MARIA ST. LARBAR (Barbara)* with a pattern of three lys (?) on the central boss. The name Barbara is rather poorly inscribed, the first three and the last two letters being joined. Such simple religious

* The upstroke at the end of the horizontal arm of the 'L' represents the loop of a 'b' (Ed.).

dedications are often found on inscribed frames, the Museum of London Medieval Catalogue noting that AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA and DOMINVS TECVM are especially common.¹

The date of the Denham find is difficult. No

other associated objects were reported, and few similar pieces have been found in securely stratified contexts. A date in the late medieval period, the fifteenth or sixteenth century, would seem best.

Stephen Greep
Verulamium Museum.

REFERENCE

1. London Museum (1940), *Medieval Catalogue*, 165.

THE MURDER OF THOMAS OF AMERSHAM

In the small hours of Friday, 10 June, 1385¹, a bloody deed was done on the hill south of Amersham, where Thomas de Agmondesham had his manor house of Tomlins (where Quarrendon Farm now stands). Three men who had been lying in wait for Thomas sprang out from hiding and attacked him with quarter-staffs, the terrible iron-shod weapon of the peasantry. Thomas was evidently able to defend himself for a time: there was enough noise to bring people out from the house, and his wife, Alice, saw what happened. One of the men struck him on the head, another drove the spike of a quarter-staff upwards under his chin so that it pierced the brain. All three then belaboured his body as it lay on the ground².

Thomas was not the first of his family to die violently. His grandfather, Walter de Agmondesham, the Chancellor of England, as a very old man in 1331, had been set on and killed by a crowd of townspeople in St. Albans — a crime for which no one was ever brought to justice³. But this was different.

The killing — and especially the weapons used — had the marks of an attack by footpads, the sort of crime that had brought the justices of trailbaston out on their grim circuits. But the murderers were seen and recognised by Alice; and they were not footpads. They were Roger Colyn and his brother John, and Thomas de Wodingfield, all of them local gentry. Roger Colyn, indeed, was locally prominent. He had been one of those charged

with the arrest of men implicated in the rising of 1381⁴; in 1384 he had had a commission to enquire into waste on the royal manor of King's Langley⁵; and he was a commissioner of array for Buckinghamshire⁶. When, after the murder, he temporarily fled the county and his goods became forfeit, they were valued at £40⁷. De Wodingfield was of the same class, though less prosperous⁸. The plea roll that records this also gives an idea of the usual values of the goods of fugitive felons: 1¼d, 2d, 6d.

Alice appealed her husband's killers (that is, she brought an action against them) as she was entitled to do if he had died in her arms — a provision that was never very strictly applied. They came to court and declared that they were in no way guilty, and put themselves on the country, 'and Alice likewise'; and a day was appointed for a jury to try the case in the next law term (Hilary 1386). Meanwhile Roger, John and Thomas were committed to the Marshalsea.

But on the day appointed Alice failed to appear. She and her pledges were declared in mercy, and the defendants were *sine die* at her suit. A fresh trial was ordered for Easter at the suit of the Crown. But this seems to have been merely a preliminary to the grant of a royal pardon. The defendants had only to produce mainpernors to stand security for their appearance, and were otherwise free to come and go as they pleased. For Roger Colyn pardon may have come too late: he is heard of no more and

had probably died. If he had been hanged, this very full account would have said so. His brother and Thomas de Wodingfield had to wait a year or so for their pardons. Their case was respited to Michaelmas 1387, when they duly produced the letters patent, and went free⁹.

It is striking that just as Roger Colyn stood well with the King before the murder, Thomas de Wodingfield was advanced after it. His pardon was said to be at the instance of the Duke of Ireland — Richard de Vere, the King's favourite¹⁰. And as soon as Richard II had re-established his personal rule, Thomas was found congenial employment. In 1391 he was appointed a sergeant-at-arms, with a salary of 12d a day¹¹, and in this office was given a number of jobs of the kind for which governments find a strong arm and a weak conscience useful: enforcing a legally dubious judgement on a Bordeaux merchant¹²; enquiring into customs evasions¹³; seizing the forfeited property of the lords appellant, Gloucester, Arundel and Warwick¹⁴; impressing ships for the King's expedition to Ireland¹⁵.

second trial, Sir John Fallesley, also enjoyed the King's favour, being allowed to take livery of his wife's land in spite of having married her without the King's consent¹⁶.

No personal motive for Thomas of Amérsham's murder can be deduced from the known facts. The killers could not have profited by it, as his daughter and heiress, Joan, was already married to Roger Deyrell¹⁷, with whom none of them had any ascertainable connection. There may of course have been a personal grudge to which the record gives no clue, but the fact that it was not only the Colyn family that was involved suggests a wider interest and a political motive. Alice's failure to appear in court the second time, even though all the defendants were then safely in custody, points to intimidation by others, which in turn suggests an influential 'party' in the county. Viewed thus, the episode sheds a lurid light on the behaviour of the King's adherents during his first period of personal rule, and illuminates the reasons for the support enjoyed by Gloucester when he forced Richard to surrender power in 1388.

John Chenevix Trench

One of the defendants' mainpernors for the

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| 3. PRO KB 27/286/Rex 38, 20d. | 12. <i>ibid. 1396-1399</i> , 22. |
| 4. <i>Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1381-1385</i> , 87. | 13. <i>ibid.</i> , 157. |
| 5. <i>ibid.</i> , 420. | 14. <i>ibid.</i> , 310. |
| 6. <i>ibid.</i> , 589. | 15. <i>ibid.</i> , 511. |
| 7. <i>ibid.</i> , 579. | 16. <i>Calendar of Close Rolls, 1381-1385</i> , 234. |
| 8. PRO KB 27/518/Fines 3d. | 17. <i>Calendar of Fine Rolls X</i> , 105. |
| 9. PRO KB 27/498/25. | |

ROYAL ARMS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CHURCHES

The surviving Royal Arms were listed in *Records XX*, 4, p. 553. In 1982 the writer of that article found another set lying against a wall in the recently restored church of Holy Trinity, Old Wolverton. Painted on canvas, they have a wooden frame, lozenge-shaped, as

if it had previously been used for a hatchment. The paint has flaked badly, but they appear to be the arms used 1816-37; as the church was entirely rebuilt in 1815 this is very likely.

E.V.