

## Hoard of Roman Coins in the Reading Museum and Art Gallery

By GEORGE C. BOON

IN addition to the several hoards from Silchester forming part of the Silchester loan collection, eight hoards of Roman coins are preserved in Reading Museum. The main purpose of this note is to supply details of hoards VI-VIII (Woodcote; and the two from Bob's Mount, Reading) but for the sake of completeness the others are also briefly described below.

### HOARD I (READING MUSEUM, 74:52)

*Archaeologia*, LXXI (1921), 264; *V.C.H. Oxon.*, I (1939), 327.

This hoard comprises 34  $\text{Æ}$  coins—1 *sesterius*, 9 *dupondii*, and 24 *asses*—dredged from the Thames at *Whitchurch Weir Pool* in June 1911, when operations were being carried out in 8 feet of water 20 feet from the Berkshire bank. Whitchurch Weir Pool is about 6 miles upstream of Reading. In common with the large and varied collection of antiquities obtained from the river in subsequent years, the hoard has been deposited on loan in the Reading Museum by the Thames Conservancy Board. Most of the coins have been considerably eroded by the action of the water, and their state of wear is extremely difficult to assess with certainty. A recent re-examination of the hoard yielded the following results, which differ slightly from the description given in the *Victoria County History*.

1, 2 :	Claudius I	<i>asses</i> , Minerva type, Grade III copies.
3 :	Antonia	<i>dupondius</i> .
4 :	Galba ?	<i>as</i> .
5 :	Vespasian	<i>as</i> , RIC 746 <sup>1</sup> or similar.
6 :	Vespasian or Titus	<i>dupondius</i> .
7-10 :	Domitian	<i>as</i> , COS V ; <i>as</i> , COS XII ; <i>as</i> , cf. RIC 333 ; <i>dupondius</i> , rather doubtful.
11-16 :	Hadrian	<i>sestertius</i> , <i>dupondius</i> , 4 <i>asses</i> .
17 :	Sabina ?	<i>dupondius</i> .
18-19 :	Antoninus Pius	<i>asses</i> , RIC 934.
20 :	Faustina II	<i>dupondius</i> .
21-22 :	M. Aurelius	<i>as</i> , TR P VIII ; <i>as</i> , COS III.
23-34 :	Illegible	<i>dupondii</i> (3), <i>asses</i> (9), presumably of the same period as the foregoing.

<sup>1</sup> RIC=H. Mattingly, E. A. Sydenham and others, *Roman Imperial Coinage* (London, 1923 ff.).

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### HOARD II (READING MUSEUM, 5:54)

H. J. E. Peake, *Archaeology of Berkshire* (1931), 104; *V.C.H. Oxon.*, I (1939), 326.

Hoard (?) or part of a hoard (?) consisting of 5  $\text{Æ}$  coins (1 *dupondius*, 4 *asses*) dredged from the Thames at *Goring* at an unspecified date probably late in the last century. Accompanying the coins were two Roman brooches and some pottery. A much-corroded halfpenny of George II has long been associated with the Roman coins. Although beyond doubt a river find this halfpenny does not appear to have been part of the original acquisition since an old label survives bearing the words 'Five Roman coins . . .' with 'Five' crossed out and 'Six' substituted in manuscript.

The Roman coins are in a condition parallel with that of the coins in hoard I. Only one is fully legible, an *as* of Vespasian, RIC 746. Another seems (*ex capite*) to be of Domitian. The *dupondius* and the two other *asses* are quite illegible. The brooches are as Collingwood's groups K and R (ii), Flavian and early second-century respectively. The pottery is not available for examination.

In connexion with this group it may be mentioned that a hoard of coins, stated in *V. C. H. Berks.*, I (1906), 214, to have been found in the river at *Goring*, was not in fact found in the river but at some distance from its right bank: on the 1883 edition of the 6-inch O.S. map, the record of the discovery runs, as it were, from the actual find-spot, marked with a cross, right across the river. This misleading detail has been rectified in later editions.

### HOARD III (READING MUSEUM, \$424:45)

Hitherto unpublished.

Part of a hoard dredged from the Thames immediately below *Mapledurham lock* in August 1910. The original quantity recovered was said to have been about a pint in volume. The Museum possesses only four coins from this hoard, forming part of the bequest of the prominent local antiquary, G. W. Smith. Again, the coins are in the characteristically eroded state of specimens from this reach of the Thames. There are *dupondii* of Trajan and Hadrian (?) and two *asses*, one being a copy of Minerva type (Claudius I) and the other of Hadrian, probably RIC 664.

### HOARD IV (READING MUSEUM, 23:33)

Hitherto unpublished.

The following five *sestertii* were found in 1926, on the Berkshire side of *Caversham Bridge, Reading*, which was then undergoing reconstruction. The coins were bought by the Museum in 1933. Not improbably they formed part of a hoard. W. A. Seaby, when cataloguing this purchase, recorded a

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doubt as to whether all had come from the same spot ; but the writer can see no reason for doubting the attribution in the absence of any positive indication of different proveniences.

1, 2 :	Tiberius	RIC 42, TR POT XXXVI and XXXIIX. Much worn ; <i>obv.</i> on second specimen defaced.
3 :	Nero	Defaced.
4, 5 :	Hadrian	RIC 631 ff. and RIC 777, the latter slightly worn.

HOARD V (READING MUSEUM, 76:46)

*Berks. Archaeol. Journ.*, XLIII (1939), 133.

A hoard of 16 *antoniniani* (Postumus, with a single Victorinus) from an area about two or three feet square within a Roman-British building at Little Wellington Wood, near *Watchfield, Shrivenham* : found in 1903. This hoard has already been published in full (see above) and it merely remains to be noted that the coins were presented to Reading Museum in July 1946, by H. de S. Shortt, Curator of the Salisbury, S. Wilts. and Blackmore Museum, Salisbury. The coins of Postumus vary from unworn to slightly worn ; that of Victorinus is slightly worn. The coins are rather inferior, as a whole, to those of Postumus in hoard VI.

The other coins mentioned in the paper quoted, found in or near the same building but not associated with the hoard, were also presented to Reading Museum at the same time.

HOARD VI (READING MUSEUM, 53:39)

Hitherto unpublished.

This hoard of 1 *denarius* and 77 *antoniniani* ranging from Julia Soemias to Postumus, was found in June 1939 when the foundations of a bungalow were being dug at *Woodcote* (Oxon.), near Reading. The site of discovery was some 500 feet N.W. of Newbarn Farm. The coins were in a pot lying at a depth of about 2 feet. The pot was smashed, and only seven fragments of it were saved. The hoard was bought by the Museum from the finder and land-owner, Mr. L. A. Smith, of Newbarn Farm, for £5.

At the time of finding, the total number of coins was given in the local newspapers as 76, not 78. All the coins were cleaned at Reading Museum, and were found to exhibit little or no wear ; only one, indeed, could be considered more than slightly worn. Obviously these are picked specimens from the currency, and their excellent condition leads one to suppose that they formed the savings of some years.

1 :	Julia Soemias	<sup><i>denarius</i></sup> RIC 243.
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		<i>antoniniani</i>
2-9 :	Gordian III	RIC 2, 3, 67, 69, 88, 92, 95, 141.
10-14 :	Philip I	RIC 2b, 41, 51, 65, 107 but <i>rev.</i> of 20.
15-17 :	Philip II	RIC 218d, 224, 230.
18-21 :	Otacilia Severa	RIC 123c, 125c, 126, 127.
22-28 :	Traianus Decius	RIC 10b, 12b, 16c, 21b (2), 29c (2).
29 :	Herennius Etruscus	RIC 143.
30 :	Hostilianus	RIC 176a.
31 :	Trebonianus Gallus	RIC 69.
32-34 :	Volusianus	RIC 140, 168, 206.
35-45 :	Valerian	RIC 12 (3), 13, 73 (2), 89 (2), 92, 95 ; also Lyons coin with 6A <i>obv.</i> , <i>rev.</i> VIRTUS AVGG, V. stg. L., hdg. sp. and vict., cf. 137.
46-55 :	Gallienus (J. R.)	RIC 18 (2), do., bust L., 39, 44, 152, 155, 391 ; 394 var., P. hdg. standard.
56-57 :	Valerian II	RIC 8, 9.
58-60 :	Salonina (J. R.)	RIC 5 (2), 7.
61-78 :	Postumus	RIC 54, 59 (2), 64 (3), 65, 67, 73 (2), 74, 78 (2), 80 (2), 89 (2), 93.

No. 61, of Postumus, belongs to A.D. 260, and this is the latest datable coin in the hoard.

### HOARD VII (READING MUSEUM, 15:48)

*Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Arch. Journ.*, 1, (1895), 62 ; J. Stephens, *Descriptive Catalogue of Reading Museum* (1896), p. 44 ; *V.C.H. Berks.*, 1 (1906), 212 ; H. J. E. Peake, *Archaeology of Berkshire* (1931), p. 221 ; *Archaeol. Journ.* xc (1933), 298.

Hoard of about 50 *siliquae*, as far as the original number could be ascertained, from a disused gravel-pit between Milman- and Swainstone-road, Whitley, Reading—*Bob's Mount* in old Reading topography, a watershed between the Kennet and the Loddon. The discovery took place in the middle of February 1895 when some boys were playing on the ice in the pit. The pot had been brought down by a fall of gravel at the side of the pit ; one of the boys kicked the unusual looking object, broke it, and so discovered the coins. Only 11 of them, 7 damaged, could be purchased by the Museum ; sixpence each was paid. The fragments of the pot were also acquired (see T. May, *The Pottery Found at Silchester* (1916), pl. lvi, 102). The 11 available coins range from Julian II to Arcadius ; the latest is unworn, the earliest and some of the others slightly worn to worn.

Julian II. 1. *Obv.* D N IVLIAN-VS P F AVG. Bust pearl-diademed R., draped and cuirassed.  
*Rev.* : VOTIS V MVLTVS X in four lines within a wreath with central jewel.  
*Mint* : PCON (Arles).

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2. *Obv.* : D N FL CL IVLI-ANVS P F AVG. Bust as above, but bearded.  
*Rev.* VOT X MVLV XX in wreath as above. The central jewel bears an eagle to R., looking backward.  
*Mint* : TCONST (Arles)
3. As above ; inferior workmanship. ]CONST
- Valentinian I 4 : RIC Rome 11a, RP (fragment).  
 Valens 5, 6 : RIC Trier 27c, TRPS.  
 Gratian 7 : RIC Trier 45c (by bust), TRP[  
 8 : RIC Trier 46b, TRPS  
 Valentinian II 9 : RIC Trier 95a, TRPS (R<sup>2</sup>)  
 Magnus Maximus 10 : RIC Trier 84b TRP[S  
 Arcadius 11 : RIC Trier 106b. This is the latest coin, of A.D. 392-5.

HOARD VIII (READING MUSEUM, 16:48)

J. Stevens, *Descriptive Catalogue of Reading Museum* (1896), p. 44 ; V. C. H. Berks., I (1906), p. 212 ; H. J. E. Peake, *Archaeology of Berkshire* (1931), p. 221 ; *Archaeol. Journ.*, xc (1933), 298.

A second hoard of coins from *Bob's Mount*, found on 11 December 1895. About 120 coins were said to have been present ; of these, one *solidus* and 49 *siliquae* were purchased by Reading Museum for 35s. 6d. on two separate occasions. The coins range from Constantius II to Honorius, and like the contents of hoard VII, vary from unworn or virtually so to slightly worn. The colour-coated, indented beaker which had contained the hoard is also in the Museum (see T. May, *The Pottery found at Silchester* (1916), pl. liii).

The discovery (according to the earliest source, which is the *Journal of Reading Museum*) took place during the digging of house foundations in Milman Road ; a site quite near that of hoard VII. Stevens, *loc. cit.*, appears to have been misled by the eponymic character of the next turning, Swainstone Road, for numerous specimens from the hoard came into the possession of Mr. Swain, the land-owner and builder. Some of Mr. Swain's specimens were acquired for the Museum (see above). There is no authority for the statement that this hoard, like hoard VII, was found in a gravel pit ; the story no doubt owes its origin to the fact that both hoards were found in the same year, obviously not far from each other.

As regards the number of *siliquae* that are not in the Museum the *Journal* is far from clear ; so much so, that it is quite uncertain how the original or postulated total was reached. The minimum number of *siliquae* apparently remaining in the hands of Mr. Swain after having sold some specimens to the Museum is 47 :

Julian	..	..	..	..	6
Valens	..	..	..	..	8
Gratian	..	..	..	..	7

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Theodosius	..	..	..	6
Maximus	..	..	..	15
Arcadius	..	..	..	5

Dr. Stevens evidently examined these coins, but no details of them are recorded. A Mr. Oliver and Mr. Swain, Jr., appear to have had some of the others. There is no indication of there ever having been more than the solitary *solidus*.

It is said that some of the coins in the possession of Mr. Swain eventually were given to the late G. W. Smith in 1924. The Smith collection, now in the Museum, contains no Roman gold or silver of the period concerned, so this tradition must be discounted; G. W. Smith is not known ever to have disposed of any of his local treasures. What is probably a stray from this or the preceding hoard is given at the end of the following list.

- |                 |       |         |  |
|-----------------|-------|---------|--|
| Constantius II. | 1-2 : | Obv. :  | D N CONSTAN-TIVS P F AVG. Bust pearl-diademed R., draped and cuirassed.  |
|                 |       | Rev. :  | VOTIS XXX MVLTTIS XXXX in four lines within a wreath with central jewel.   |
|                 |       | Mints : | PCON SCON (Arles)  |
|                 | 3-4 : |         | As above, but mint : LVG (Lyons)   |
| Julian II.      | 5 :   | Obv.    | D N IVLIAN-VS P F AVG. Bust as (1) above.  |
|                 |       | Rev.    | VOTIS V MVLTTIS X in four lines within a wreath with a central jewel.  |
|                 |       | Mint :  | TCON (Arles). Coarse work.   |
|                 | 6-7 : | Obv.    | FL CL IVLIANVS P P AVG. Bust as above ; the diadem has the usual central jewel partly shown, and on the right of this, another.  |
|                 |       | Rev.    | As above, but a dot inside the central jewel of the wreath.  |
|                 |       | Mint :  | LVG (Lyons).   |
|                 | 8 :   | Obv.    | D N CL IVLI-ANVS AVG. Bust as (1) above.   |
|                 |       | Rev.    | As (5).  |
|                 |       | Mint :  | TR (Trier).  |
|                 | 9 :   | Obv.    | D N FL CL IVLI-ANVS. Bust as (1) but bearded.  |
|                 |       | Rev.    | VOT X MVLTT XX in four lines within a wreath with central jewel bearing an eagle to R., looking backward.  |
|                 |       | Mint :  | PCONST (Arles).  |
|                 | 10 :  |         | As above, but TCONST, and the eagle appears to have both wings stretched out above its head, instead of one along its back, and one indicated by a vertical line in front of the body. |
|                 | 11 :  |         | As above, but IVLIA-NVS. Also TCONST. Dot in jewel instead of an eagle. These signs are no doubt <i>différents monétaires</i> .  |

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Valentinian I	12 : RIC Rome 11a, RP
	13-17 : RIC Trier 27d, TRPS*
Valens	18 : Antioch, cf. RIC 34d. *ANH ( <i>sic</i> ). It appears that the N of the mint-mark has been struck over some pre-existing letter, for there are projections on either side of it.
	19 : RIC Aquileia 15a, $\frac{\text{AQPS}^*}{\text{AQPS}^*}$
	20 : RIC Rome 10c, RB
Gratian	21 : RIC Trier 27b or 45a (latter ?)
	22 : RIC Aquileia 28a
	23 : RIC Rome 35a, R* $\epsilon$
Valentinian II	24-26 : RIC Trier 27c ; 55b (R <sup>5</sup> ) ; 58a, TRPS
	27 : RIC Trier 49c ( <i>solidus</i> )
	28-29 : RIC Aquileia 15d, $\frac{\text{AQPS}^*}{\text{AQPS}^*}$ ; 27a
	30 : RIC Rome 35b but R*T
	31-32 : RIC Trier 43 ; 94a.
Theodosius I	33-34 : RIC Rome 35c, R*P (same <i>obv.</i> dies)
	35 : RIC Siscia 24b
	36-37 : RIC Trier 55a ; 94b
Magnus Maximus	38-41 : RIC Trier 84b, TRPS
Flavius Victor	42 : RIC Trier 84d, TRPS (R <sup>2</sup> )
Arcadius	43-44 : RIC Trier 106b, c
	45 : RIC Milan 32b (R <sup>3</sup> )
Eugenius	46 : RIC Lyons 46 (R)
	47-48 : RIC Trier 106d
Honorius	49 : RIC Milan 26
	50 : cf. RIC Milan 32, but <i>obv.</i> 5A (=Cohen <sup>2</sup> 59) <sup>2</sup>

The latest coins from this hoard are nos. 43, 44, 47, 48, struck A.D. 392-395, shortly after which date hoard VIII, like hoard VII, must have been buried.

NOTE

The following *siliqua* 'found in Reading' is regarded as having come from one or other *Bob's Mount* hoard : Gratian. RIC Trier 27f, TRPS\*

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Miss Anne S. Robertson for providing me with this reference, and for reading through the remarks and descriptions.