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Notes

A Possible Late Roman Silver 'Hoard' from Bath. James Gerrard writes: Gold and silver hoards datable to the closing decades of the fourth century A.D., of which Hoxne is the most famous example,[1] are one of the most evocative phenomena associated with the end of the Roman administration in Britain. Traditionally these hoards have been interpreted as evidence for the insecurity of late Roman Britain.[2] However, over the last ten years, this traditional interpretation has co-existed alongside an alternative view, which sees treasure hoards as the archaeological residue of votive or ritual activities.[3] This paper suggests that a published group of coins from the temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath has significant implications for this debate.

The excavation of the temple dedicated to Sulis Minerva by Cunliffe and Davenport in the late 1970s and early 1980s[4] examined one of the central foci of the temple complex: the spring reservoir. The accumulated sediments within the reservoir contained what is without doubt one of the richest finds assemblages recovered from Roman Britain. This assemblage included over twelve thousand coins, pewter objects, and other items.[5] Walker studied the enormous group of coins in great detail and the results of his analysis stretched beyond elucidating the nature of votive activity at the spring to tackle wider issues such as Roman coin circulation in Britain.[6] However, the significance of a small but nonetheless unusual group of late fourth-century A.D. coins has not yet been discussed.

In the original discussion of the coins from the spring reservoir it was assumed that each coin could be equated with an individual ritual act. The problems inherent in this approach, namely that an individual might deposit more than one coin at a time, were acknowledged, but the one coin/one votive act hypothesis was used to structure the interpretation of these finds.[7] This, given the dispersed nature of the finds within what must have been a turbulent springhead, was the only logical means of understanding and interpreting this group of artefacts. However, one exception was made to this rule: two gold *aurei* of Allectus, extremely unusual finds, were seen as a single depositional event.[8] It can be argued that the late Roman silver issues and copies listed below were also a single group, or 'hoard' deposited in the waters together.[9]

Of the 307 coins dated to between A.D. 294 and 402, only ten were minted in silver. All are dated to after A.D. 353 and their details, taken from Walker's list,[10] are given below:

1. Light *miliarensis*. Mint of Arles, *RIC* 250. A.D. 353–360.
2. *Siliqua*. Valentinian I *RIC* Rome 11 (a). A.D. 364–378.
3. *Siliqua*. Valens *RIC* Trier 27(b)/45(a). A.D. 364–378.
4. *Siliqua*. Gratian *RIC* Trier 46(b)/64(a). A.D. 364–378.
5. *Siliqua*. Valens *RIC* Thessalonica 25. Silver-plated on copper core. A.D. 364–378.
6. *Siliqua*. Mint of Trier *RIC* 55(a). A.D. 378–383.
7. *Siliqua*. Mint of Trier *RIC* 84(a). Clipped. A.D. 383–388.

1 Bland and Johns 1993.
2 Martin 1997, 58, 64–5.
3 Millett 1994 and more recently Petts 2003.
4 Cunliffe and Davenport 1985.
5 Cunliffe 1988.
6 Walker 1988.
7 Walker 1988, 282.
8 Walker 1988, 284.
9 Walker 1988, 282 may have considered this possibility: 'in theory … all the Theodosian coins … could have been thrown in at the same time.'
10 Walker 1988, 333–5.

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8. *Siliqua*. Eugenius. Uncertain mint. A.D. 392–394.
9. *Siliqua*. Copy of Eugenius *RIC* Lyon 46. Seemingly cast and plated. A.D. 392–394.
10. *Siliqua*. Clipped. Probably A.D. 388–395.

The fact that these ten coins are the *only* fourth-century silver issues from the spring may suggest that they were deposited as a group. This suggestion is strengthened by the fact that the ten silver coins are of mainly Valentinianic date, with an absence of Arcadian and Honorian issues. A group of coins with these characteristics could be described using Guest's terminology[11] as a Group 1 hoard. Such hoards are predominantly distributed in South-West England.

If the Bath coins were deposited as a group in a single event, then it is reasonable to suppose that other objects may have been deposited with them. These objects could have included further coins, as a great deal of the sediments within the spring were either removed largely unrecorded in early excavations, or remain *in situ*. By analogy with other hoards of similar date, such as those recovered during peat-cutting at Shapwick in Somerset, we might further speculate that some of the pewter objects from the spring could have accompanied the coins. Each of the three hoards from Shapwick was associated with, or contained in, pewter vessels.[12]

The coins are perhaps more significant in what they may reveal about the chronology of the 'end' of the temple complex. At the earliest these coins must have been assembled after A.D. 392. If they were deposited soon after this date then it would be tempting to associate them with the pagan revival of Eugenius' reign.[13] However, it is possible that the ten coins may not represent the complete hoard and the clipping of two examples could point to a later date for the deposition of these coins.[14] The presence of clipped issues in the Patching hoard of *c*. A.D. 465 suggests that clipped silver coins were still available, though not functioning as 'money', in the late fifth century A.D.[15] This sits comfortably with Cunliffe and Davenport's arguments for extended activity in the Inner Precinct into the fifth if not the sixth centuries.[16] However, the importance of these coins may not be confined to our understanding of the temple complex.

At the beginning of this paper it was noted that interpretations of late Roman treasure hoards have become polarised around two viewpoints, which see such hoards either as the product of insecurity or as ritual acts.[17] The Bath 'hoard', if such it was, was clearly deposited in a religious context. Similar finds of gold and silver objects have been recorded elsewhere within the Western Empire associated with watery places and temple complexes, suggesting that the Bath 'hoard' is part of a wider phenomenon.[18] If this is the case, then many other British hoards dating from the last decades of the fourth century A.D., such as the Shapwick finds mentioned above, could also be seen as representing ritual acts.

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11 Guest 1993, figs 2a and 4a.
12 Robinson 2000, 358, 364, and 390; nos 1424, 1475, and 1584.
13 Bloch 1963, 199–203. I am grateful to Dr Richard Reece for this reference.
14 Burnett 1984; on clipped *siliquae* see Guest 2004, ch. 7; on 'imitation' *siliquae* and 'cliché forgeries' see Guest 2004, ch. 6.
15 White *et al.* 1999.
16 Cunliffe and Davenport 1985, 74–5. The presence of an enamelled penannular brooch dated A.D. 450–550 by Youngs (1995, 129) from the springhead should also be noted here.
17 For this debate see Millett 1994 and Johns 1994 and 1996. See Reece 1988 for a discussion of the difficulties underlying interpretations of *why* hoards were buried.
18 Künzl 1997.

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The Varian Disaster and the Boudiccan Revolt: Fabled Victories? Giles Standing writes: The purpose of this brief Note is to offer support to the thesis proposed by C.J. Simpson concerning the statue of Victory at Colchester.[19] The Victory has previously been taken as evidence for the establishment of the provincial cult *Romae et Augusto* at Colchester by analogy with the architectonic arrangement of Lyon, in Gaul.[20] Simpson has illustrated, however, that reference to statues of Victory in Roman literature was made not on the basis of concrete historical fact but rather as a literary device (*topos*) to herald a forthcoming Roman defeat or triumph against a foreign foe.[21] A further literary example, not cited by Simpson, strengthens this argument.

Tacitus, writing in the early second century A.D., is the sole source for the statue of Victory at Colchester. The statue is recorded in the *Annales* at the head of a series of prophetic omens made manifest prior to the sacking of the *colonia* by Boudicca's forces in A.D. 60/1 — the Victory falling from its pedestal, 'its back turned as if in retreat from the enemy'.[22] The Boudiccan attack on Colchester is also recorded by Cassius Dio in the early third century A.D., though, in a similar but reduced list of portents, Dio makes no

[19] Simpson 1996, 386–7.
[20] Simpson 1996, 386 note 282. See most recently Fishwick 1995, 23–5; 1997, 43–5.
[21] Simpson 1996, 386. See also Dio 50.8.3 for a comparable Victory *topos* prior to battle between Caesar and Mark Antony.
[22] Tacitus, *Annales* 14.32.1; Black 2001, 416; Simpson 1996, 386.

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