



THE FRECKENHAM HOARD OF ROMAN COINS

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THE FRECKENHAM HOARD OF ROMAN COINS

THIS hoard was discovered in March 1948 in the village of Freckenham, near Mildenhall, in Suffolk. A ploughman, preparing the ground for a crop of sugar-beet, turned up and shattered an earthenware pot. It contained nearly 600 coins and all of these were recovered. The pot is reported to have been about 9 in. in height with diameter of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. at the base and about $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. at the top. It was of red unglazed ware with no ornament beyond a few horizontal lines, which had been in the clay before baking.

The coins were sorted and described by my friend, Mr. P. A. Oldman of Beck Row, soon after they were found. He has most generously placed his own notes—not yet published—at my disposal for this paper.

The hoard consisted of the following coins:¹

CONSTANTINE I. 2. C. 536 (2).

LICINIUS I. 1. C. 88.

CONSTANTIUS II CAESAR. 1. C. 104.

HELENA. 2. C. 6 (2).

CONSTANTINOPOLIS. 2. C. 22 (2).

UNCERTAIN (rev. *Gloria Exercitus*—two standards). 1.

(These few straggling coins clearly lie apart from the main hoard. The mints represented were: Treviri 4, Lugdunum 1, and Cyzicus 2—two uncertain).

CONSTANS. 48. C. 9 (5 and 8 barbarous); C. 10 (1 and 1 barb.); C. 11 (24 and 5 barb.); C. 19 (4).

CONSTANTIUS II. 284. C. 3; C. 32; C. 35 (9 and 16 barb.); C. 36; C. 44 (47 and 7 barb.); C. 45 (85 and 100 barb.); C. 142; C. 176 (13); and the following coins not in Cohen.

(a) *Rev. Fel Temp Reparatio*. Emperor standing l. holding labarum and spear, setting r. foot on seated captive. $\frac{\Gamma | *}{STSA}$ (C. 38 var.).

(b) *Rev. Gloria* . . . Emperor standing l. holding Victory and labarum. Uncertain mint-mark. Barbarous.

¹ The hoard, as I have examined it, consists of 540 coins. Mr. Oldman records 595—the rest having been given by the owner to friends. It is impossible now to place the missing coins, but it is improbable that they could seriously alter the general picture that we have.

References are to Cohen: *Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'Empire romain*, vols. vii, viii, 2nd ed., 1888.

- (c) *Rev.* . . . *Otaev.* Type as No. 2. Uncertain mint-mark. Barbarous.

CONSTANTIUS III GALLUS CAESAR. 12. C. 7 (2); C. 8 (4); C. 10 (3); C. 10 (3) (but MB, not PB).

MAGNENTIUS. 176. C. 5 (22 and 5 barb.); C. 7 (17 and 6 barb.); C. 5 or 7 (barb.); C. 11 (3); C. 20 (52 and 2 barb.); C. 21 (1 and 2 barb.); C. 29 (35 and 5 barb.); C. 57; C. 70 (18 and 2 barb.); C. 71 (2 barb.); and the following coins not in C.

- (a) *Rev. Fel Temp Reipublice.* Emperor standing l. holding labarum. *Obv. Dnmagnen Tius PF Aug.* bust diademed, draped, cuirassed.

- (b) *Rev. Victoriae DD NN Aug. Et Caes.* Two Victories holding wreath, in which is *Vot X Mult XX*.

Obv. Dnmagnen Tius PF Aug. bust draped, cuirassed, head bare, r. C. 71 (var.)

DECENTIUS. 10. C. 12 (4); C. 12 var. (obv. *Nob C* -1); C. 20 (4 and 1 barbarous.)

The following diagram shows the distribution over mints:

	<i>Tre- veri</i>	<i>Lug- dunum</i>	<i>Are- late</i>	<i>Ambi- anum</i>	<i>Rome</i>	<i>Siscia</i>	<i>Thessa- lonica</i>
Constans . . .	25	2	..	..	4	1	..
Constantius II . . .	36	69	19	10	3	2	1
Constantius III . . .	2	3	..	..	4	3	..
Magnentius . . .	74	27	11	25	1	..	..
Decentius . . .	2	5	..	1	..	..	..
	139	106	30	36	12	6	1

BARBAROUS

	<i>Tre- veri</i>	<i>Lug- dunum</i>	<i>Are- late</i>	<i>Ambi- anum</i>	<i>Aqui- leia</i>	<i>Rome</i>
Constans . . .	5	4	..	..	1	2
Constantius II . . .	20	14	..	3	..	6
Magnentius . . .	8	6	..	..	..	..
	33	24	..	3	1	8

The coins not accounted for in these diagrams were of uncertain mints: Constans 2 and 2 barb., Constantius II 18 and 83 barb., Magnentius 14 and 11 barb., Decentius 1 and 1 barb.

The picture of the types that were represented in some numbers is as follows:

FEL TEMP REPARATIO. "Achilles." Constantius II. 53 and 6 barb. of 2 Æ size, 85 and 91 barb. of 3 Æ. Constantius III. 9 of 2 Æ, 3 of 3 Æ.

FEL TEMP REPARATIO. "Galley." Constans. 29 and 13 barb. of 2 Æ size, 1 and 1 barb. of 3 Æ. Constantius II. 27 and 16 barbarous of 2 Æ, 1 of 3 Æ. Magnentius 3 of 2 Æ.

FEL TEMP REPARATIO. "Hut." Constans. 4 of 2 Æ size. (This is quoted here for the sake of comparison with the other two reverses of the same legend.)

FELICITAS REIPVBLICE. "Emperor standing." Magnentius. 39 and 4 barb. of 2 Æ size, 8 barb. of 3 Æ.

GLORIA ROMANORVM. "Emperor riding." Magnentius. 54 and 2 barb. of 2 Æ. 2 barb. of 3 Æ.

SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES. The "Chi-Rho." Magnentius. 35 and 5 barb. of large 2 Æ size. Decentius 5 of the same.

VICTORIAE DD NN AVG ET CAES (or **CAE**). "Two Victories." Magnentius. 19 and 2 barb. of 2 Æ size, 1 and 2 barb. of 3 Æ. Decentius. 4 of 2 Æ, 1 barb. of 3 Æ.

SALVS AVG NOSTRI. "The Chi-Rho." Constantius II. 13 of 2 Æ size.

If we neglect, as we must, the few odd stragglers before A.D. 340, we see that the hoard consists of issues between A.D. 348 and 355. The initial date is given by the *Fel Temp Reparatio* issues of the 1,100th year of Rome, the final date by the absence of coins of Julian II as Caesar. As Constans is not strongly represented, we should guess that the hoard only began to be assembled quite a short time before his death in A.D. 350. But there is something odd and not readily explicable in its compilation. The fewness of the coins of Decentius would incline us to think that he had not long been Caesar when the hoard was buried. On the other hand, some time is needed to enable Constantius so far to outnumber his brother at the Gallic mints; and those mints were in the hands of Magnentius until A.D. 353.

The hoard also suggests some thoughts about the sequence of the *Fel Temp Reparatio* issues. The "phoenix" type (3 Æ) does not appear at all, the "hut" type (2 Æ) very scantily and only for Constans. These two types, thus, are early: A.D. 348-50. The "galley" type (mainly 2 Æ) occurs in moderate, almost equal, numbers for Constans and Constantius II and is just continued by Magnentius. It was, it seems, the main type in issue in A.D. 350. The "Achilles" does not occur for Constans, but is present in mass for Constantius II, with an excess of 3 Æ over 2 Æ. It seems to fall mainly in A.D. 353. But we are puzzled by the large numbers of Constantius II of 2 Æ size and the fewness of Constantius III in both sizes, 2 Æ and 3 Æ. Of the types of Magnentius, *Felicitas Reipublice* and *Gloria Romanorum*, not shared by Decentius, must be early, A.D. 350-1; *Salus DD NN Aug et Caes* and *Victoriae DD NN Aug et Caes* (*Cae*)—shared by him—

later, A.D. 351–3. The *Salus Aug Nostri* of Constantius II must be late, A.D. 353; it is derived from the *Salus DD NN Aug et Caes* of Magnentius.

The barbarous coins,² marked by divergent styles and blundered legends, must be dated very near their originals. There is no reason to suggest that they are noticeably later. Beyond the mere fact that they are not regular issues they tell us very little about themselves; but we can already suspect that they are not merely a congeries of sporadic irregularities, but that there were more or less well defined mints of issue, of which we may some day gain knowledge. On one little class of barbarous, which has already attracted a good deal of attention, the so-called “Second Carausius” class, our hoard throws a little welcome light. It contained three coins of the class, all 3 Æ:

- (a) *Obv.* . . . AVSIVS CES. *Rev.* type of FEL TEMP REPARATIO, “Achilles:” C NE (?—) to l. in field: TRBVEŠ in ex.
- (b) *Obv.* . . . IDIS (!) AVSIVSC. *Rev.* type of (a): • TRIS in ex.
- (c) *Obv.* . . . AVSIVS. *Rev.* type of (a). No mint-mark legible.

(b) and (c) seem to be from the same reverse die. For the first time we have positive evidence from a hoard that this strange class of coins belongs to the troubled years of the revolt of Magnentius. Dr. Sutherland’s brilliant suggestion is strikingly vindicated.³ There is also the possibility to be considered that the coins were actually struck in East Anglia—perhaps not far from Freckenham itself. The burial of the hoard itself—and its subsequent loss by the owner—may well be connected with the disordered times and the little local “tyrants”, who, as Dr. Sutherland so persuasively argues, may have risen in them to their ephemeral power.

There are a few overstrikes of barbarous *Fel Temp Reparatio* “Achilles” on earlier coins: three on *Gloria Exercitus*, with the two standards, one on *Urbs Roma*—she-wolf and twins, one on *Victoriae DD Auggg NN*. More unusual is the overstrike on *Divo Claudio*—*Consecratio*, Altar.

² It has not appeared feasible, in view of the paper shortage and costs of printing, to attempt to describe the barbarous coins in full. Some details are recorded in the rough MS. notes on which this paper is based: they are being kept in the Coin Room of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Among barbarous mint-marks the most interesting is the PRT of three coins of Magnentius, 2Æ, of the FELICITAS REIPVBLICE reverse: it looks like TRP reversed—but there was no corresponding reversal of the type.

³ *Num. Chron.* 1945, pp. 125 ff.

A word must be said on the thorny question of the modules and weights of these bronze coins, which, following Cohen, we describe vaguely as GB, MB, PB or Æ 1, 2, 3, with some gradations between them.

The largest piece (GB or large MB) is the *SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES* of Magnentius and Decentius. Its module is 1.1 in. (27.5 mm.), its weight c. 116 gr. (7.53 gm.). Ten coins in the hoard gave an average of 125.6 gr.

The second piece (MB 2 Æ) is the same rev. on a reduced scale. The module is 0.95 in. (24 mm.), the weight 90 gr. (5.8 gm.). Two lots of ten gave an average of 94.6 gr.

The third piece⁴ (MB or small MB, 2-3 Æ) is the *Fel Temp Reparatio* "Achilles" of Constantius II and Constans (2-3 Æ) and the *Felicitas Reipublice*, *Gloria Romanorum* and *Victoriae DD NN Aug et Caes* of Magnentius. The module is 0.85 in. (22 mm.) the weight 72 gr. (4.66 gm.). Three lots of *Felicitas Reipublice* gave an average of 78.5 gm., four lots of *Gloria Romanorum*, an average of 76.2 gr.

The fourth piece (PB, 3 Æ) is the *Fel Temp Reparatio*, "Achilles" (rare with other rev.). Its module is 0.75 in. (18 mm.), its weight 38.0 gr. (2.47 gm.). Three lots of ten gave an average of 35.8.

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⁴ *Num. Chron.*, 1933, pp. 182 ff., esp. pp. 187-9, 194.