THE HASLEMERE HOARD

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Through the kindness of Messrs. Spink & Son Ltd., and in particular Mr. D. G. Liddell, I am able to publish a hoard of uninscribed Celtic staters, found in Britain, which has a number of exceptional features. As is all too frequent, especially where gold hoards are concerned, the information about the circumstances of the finding is defective. Mr. Liddell has been extremely helpful in trying to get at the facts. The hoard appears to have contained originally about 85 or 90 (or possibly even more) coins and it was found in or about 1944 on a farm about half-way between Guildford and Haslemere in Surrey. The coins have been through three intermediate hands and it seems very unlikely that more precise information will ever turn up. The most likely area is Farley Heath, where many Celtic coins of different types and origins have been found in the past. Representative coins are shown on PL I.

The coins came to the knowledge of Messrs. Spink & Son Ltd. piecemeal. Through them I have seen in all 75 coins, but something in the order of 10 or 15 more must have been found. Between 5 and 8 coins had passed through Messrs. Spink & Son’s hands before it was realized that a hoard was involved and a further 3 have passed separately through the hands of Messrs. B. A. Seaby Ltd. Some 4 or 5 more appear to have been disposed of abroad. Because of the exceptional features of this hoard it is quite possible that some of these missing coins will ultimately be identifiable, but the gross total of the hoard remains an imprecise figure.

The main peculiarity of this hoard is that all the coins in it come from no more than six pairs of dies and there are no cross combinations. The following table will show the contents so far as they are known to me (I have little information about the coins sold abroad).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dies</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gallo-Belgic E, Evans B8, Mack 27</td>
<td>Dies A</td>
<td>2 staters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Dies B</td>
<td>10 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Dies C</td>
<td>13 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallo-Belgic XC1, not in Evans or Mack</td>
<td>Dies D</td>
<td>7* &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British LA, Evans C5-7, Mack 135</td>
<td>Dies E</td>
<td>39† &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British L, new variety, not in Evans or Mack</td>
<td>Dies F</td>
<td>11 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 2 quarter-staters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This figure may originally have been 1 or more higher.
† This figure may originally have been 2, 3, or more higher.

The hoard thus consisted of some thirty-two coins which, so far as type is concerned, would normally be treated as Gallo-Belgic imports from the Continent and fifty-two or more coins of types which were certainly British. Of the continental types, Gallo-Belgic XC1 is scarcely known here at all, although analogous quarter-staters are sometimes found. Of the British types, one is a new variety altogether.

Another peculiarity of the hoard is that all or almost all the coins are struck so as to leave, surrounding the reverse design, a flattened edge which has not been touched by the die. This is nearly as noticeable on the Gallo-Belgic as on the British coins. A number of the coins are double struck and there are other signs of carelessness in manufacture, but none shows any sign of wear.

One is left with the strong impression that the hoard, despite the variety of types it contains, is the work of a single smith or smithy and that the coins have never been scattered in circulation. I have been unable to trace coins from any of the same six pairs of dies elsewhere. This in itself is unusual in the case of a hoard of this size and with types for the most part so well known. It might suggest that we are dealing with a forger’s hoard, but the weights and specific gravities of the coins do not bear this out, nor are any of the coins plated. What we have, apparently, is evidence that a Celtic smith was making coins in a variety of styles, each of the proper weight, but appropriate to more than one area, while the area where the coins were found was truly appropriate to none of them. There are many lessons to be drawn from this.

The coins of Gallo-Belgic E type, with plain obverse and neatly disjointed horse on the reverse, are normally found in relatively large numbers both in north-east France (where they were perhaps the currency of the Nervii) and in south-east Britain.\(^1\) One has been found at Godalming, but Surrey find-spots are comparatively rare. It has long been suspected that they were struck on both sides of the Channel, but no sure criterion has been found to distinguish the Gallo-Belgic from the British examples. The present hoard strongly confirms that these suspicions were right, but it does not provide a clear basis for allocation. What I have called Die A is exceptional by any standards owing to the linear character of the design; Dies B and C probably lack the pseudo-legend of alternating crescents below the exergual line, which seems characteristic of the Gallo-Belgic E coins from Gaul. This may prove to be a British feature; on the other hand the absence could be no more than an incidental consequence of the strong curvature of the reverse dies.

One would ordinarily have expected the apparent traces of an underlying face to the right, worn almost smooth, on the obverse of Die C to be a mark of Gaulish origin, or at least of early date (since these uniface coins were preceded by others with a face of sorts on the obverse), but in the circumstances of this hoard there is no real reason to divide Dies A to C chronologically. The same underlying trace of a face occurs on other Gallo-Belgic E coins found in Britain, for instance, the example from Wingham, Kent, in the British Museum. Gallo-Belgic E coins are particularly common from Kent.\(^2\)

The presence of coins of Gallo-Belgic XC1, Die D, comes as a surprise. For some reason these seven or eight coins only came to light after the rest of the hoard and five of them together, but I do not think there can be any reason to doubt that they formed part of it. The type, which differs mainly from Gallo-Belgic E by the presence of an S below the horse, is common in Gaul, but has only hitherto been recorded here at Selsey, Sussex.\(^3\) Properly the type should have a \(V\) on the obverse but no trace of this is visible on the six specimens from the hoard which I have seen. Very oddly, there has come to light simultaneously (via a Northampton collection) possible evidence of another, but unlocated, find in Britain containing this kind of stater, but the coins are not from the

\(^1\) Origins, pp. 114, 162-8.  
\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 163-4.  
\(^3\) Ibid., pp. 113, 171.
same dies and indeed do show the \( \psi \) on the obverse.\(^1\) I have no reason to doubt that they were imports.

The British LA coins, Die E, are nearly normal, but not quite. Although from the Whaddon Chase hoard, the principal source of coins of this type,\(^2\) a large number of dies and die combinations is known, I can find none with identical features. For instance, the obverse die (not the coins) has in parts a double-struck appearance and the usual ornaments to the extreme left (holding the coin as if for a face looking right) are lacking from it. On the reverse the herring-bone pattern usually found below the exergual line is absent. The type belongs essentially north of the Thames, the only example from Surrey having been found at Limpsfield.

The new variety, Die F, employs on both sides many features from the Whaddon Chase patterns. The obverse has moved, in several respects, further away from the original face pattern, and the reverse is distinguished readily by a large wheel below the horse, which incidentally has a triple tail. So far it has no other home than this hoard.

Amongst the coins disposed of on the Continent were two quarter-staters. One of these came into the hands of Messrs. Spink & Son Ltd., who acquired it in Switzerland. It proved to be of exactly the same type as the new variety and actually from the same pair of dies. This is the first time proof has been obtained of what has often been suspected, that occasional quarter-staters were struck from stater dies. I believe the second specimen was also from the same dies as the first. Here is another novel feature of this hoard.

Thus, in some respects all the coins in the hoard are peculiar; and this must be put alongside the fact that the hoard has come from an area in which neither Gallo-Belgic E or British LA (not to mention the Gallo-Belgic XC1 or the new type) is to be expected. Hoards, as is well known, are not necessarily found where the coins actually circulated, but in this case one cannot escape the conclusion that someone was reproducing fairly precisely recognizable and localized coin-types, presumably for use outside their proper locality. This is not at all surprising, given that the whole of Celtic coinage is basically imitative; indeed the real surprise should be that Celtic coin types in general are so closely and identifiably regionalized.

I have already mentioned that, in view of some of the technical features, I believe all the coins probably to have been the product of one smith or smithy. Of their features the most notable is the constant presence of a flattened area of flan around the edge of the pattern on the reverse which has not been touched in the course of striking by the reverse die. The area is not smooth, as it would have been if it had been flattened as a result of wear or friction; nor is it caused by scratching the whole face of the reverse coin on a touch stone. This peculiarity is most noticeable on the British LA coins, but it is present also on the Gallo-Belgic E and XC 1 coins. The phenomenon is clearly the result of some unusual characteristic of the dies and perhaps also of the flans.

To take the dies first, the obverse dies appear to be neither more nor less cup-shaped

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1 Information kindly supplied by Messrs. B. A. Seaby Ltd., who in 1961 acquired from the estate of the late Mr. Frederick Harris of Northampton the six staters mentioned below. They were not connected with the rest of his collection and must be presumed to have formed the whole or part of a hoard, about which no other details are recorded. The coins were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gallo-Belgic E</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallo-Belgic XC1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British BQ</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One Gallo-Belgic E and the Gallo-Belgic X's are illustrated on pl. 32 and mentioned on p. 236 of Seaby's Bulletin for June 1961.

2 Origins, pp. 184-5, 288.
than is normal in Celtic coins. The reverse dies are, however, of distinctly more convex or bulging shape than usual, so that only a small part of the design is actually impressed on the coin. It is mainly this which causes the reverse type to be surrounded with a flattened rim.

I suspect, too, that the flans are somewhat different from normal. They appear to have had a slanting or bevelled edge, as if they were cast in shallow moulds with sloping sides. As a result one face of the flans was narrower than the other. In a few cases there are traces of the point at which the gold entered the mould, or where the casting left protuberances, which were subsequently broken or cut off. The obverse of the coins was generally struck on the broader side of the flan, which is bent into a gentle curve, while the curved reverse die is deeply sunk into the narrower side (see Fig. 1). One coin of Die A was originally struck one way up and then turned over, which accounts for the apparent traces of an undertype on the obverse. The coins show no signs of wear and the exceptionally sharp edge around the obverse, though it catches the eye less easily, is as marked and unusual as is the flat surround of the reverse. It is possible that these techniques, rather than style or weight, may eventually serve to distinguish at least some British from Gaulish made coins.

It is clear, I think, that the coins in the hoard never entered into circulation, but were buried, or at least preserved, precisely as they came from the smith. It is, of course, possible that they were not all made at the same time. This is perhaps to be deduced from the specific gravities of the coins, for which I am indebted to the London University Institute of Archaeology, but the impression is left that the interval may have been quite short.

Had the coins all been made at one time it might have been expected that the composition of each coin would have been the same, since the coins would have come from a single mix. In fact the specific gravity of the coins, even when all from the same dies, varies fairly widely. So too do the weights. It is, however, likely that the actual process of making the flans involved almost no two coins being identical in these metrological respects; this is a natural consequence of the technique of preparing individual flans in separate moulds from fragments of metal. The table opposite, prepared from the staters in the hoard which I have seen, may help.

It will be noticed from this that the Gallo-Belgic E coins, Dies A–C, are a fraction heavier than the British LA, Dies E–F; on the other hand, the specific gravities of the latter are higher, implying that the gold content, or true worth of both, is just about the same. Similarly the Gallo-Belgic XC1 coins, Die D, are both lighter and of better quality.

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1 A full account of this technique is to be found in my contribution to Mrs. E. M. Clifford, Bagendon, a Belgic Oppidum, 1961, app. viii, pp. 144–7; this is partly based on Dr. K. Castelin, 'Ke keltské mincovní technice', Numismatiké Listy, xiii (1958), pp. 126–38; 'Keltische Münzformen aus Böhmen', Germania, xxxviii (1960), pp. 32–42. Further research has since been carried out in connexion with the moulds found in 1961 at Old Sleaford, Lincolnshire, by Mr. R. F. Tylecote of King's College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which will shortly be published in the Numismatic Chronicle, 1962, pp. 101–9.
metal than the bulk of the Gallo-Belgic E. So far as desirability goes, therefore, there was nothing much to choose between any of the coins in the hoard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean weight</th>
<th>Extremes</th>
<th>No. of examples</th>
<th>Mean S.G.</th>
<th>Extremes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>5.79–6.10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.55</td>
<td>11.51–11.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>5.93–6.08</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.30</td>
<td>11.0–12.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>5.94–6.19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.13</td>
<td>10.9–11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>5.43–5.53</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.49</td>
<td>11.32–11.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>5.74–6.08</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11.38</td>
<td>10.9–12.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>5.76–6.13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>10.95–11.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>5.43–6.19</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11.34</td>
<td>10.9–12.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE OF MEAN WEIGHTS AND SPECIFIC GRAVITIES
(Weights in grams; figures in brackets in grains.)

If these weights and specific gravities are compared with those normal for Gallo-Belgic E and British LA coins, it will at once be seen that although the weights are normal for both (some Gallo-Belgic E coins are a few grains higher, but there are as many found here at the lower weight level), the specific gravities are markedly lower than the average for the types. This is particularly so in the case of Gallo-Belgic E, where the right figure should be between 13.5 and 14.5. Even in the case of British LA 12.5–13.0 would be expected.

What we seem to have in this hoard, therefore, is the imitation of more than one contemporary coinage then in circulation at a fineness distinctly below that which the coins should have had; the imitation has fractionally but unmistakably debased the currency. This is what went on throughout the history of Celtic coinage, but we do not often find so splendid an example of the process actually at work. The hoard also illustrates the pitfalls into which the interpretation of imitative coins can fall, since, but for the technical peculiarities, one would with little hesitation have ascribed the coins to different areas of origin, and indeed to somewhat different dates. Gallo-Belgic E, as a type, undoubtedly preceded British LA, but it lasted a long time; this hoard is not the only context in which the two have been found in association. Perhaps the most interesting parallel to quote is the Birling, Eastbourne, hoard of plated forgeries which contained one each of Gallo-Belgic E and British MA, a type in many respects analogous to British LA though a little later. It looks as if the Birling hoard again is the work of a single smith, this time actually indulging in forgery.

In all these circumstances one cannot pretend to locate precisely where or when the coins were made. Presumably they belong to the same period as the Whaddon Chase hoard itself, which Stevens has convincingly dated to 34 B.C., when Augustus contemplated invasion of the country. It could well be that an extraordinary mint was set up in the Haslemere area specially to create coins of two acceptable types in anticipation

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2 Ibid., p. 291.
of the same emergency as that which led to the accumulation of the Whaddon Chase hoard. The Godalming area, in particular Farley Heath, the site of a Romano-Celtic temple, is a not unlikely site for a mint; but until coins actually from the same six pairs of dies turn up on other sites and in other contexts we shall have little means of taking these possibilities out of the realm of speculation.

**LIST OF COIN WEIGHTS AND KEY TO PLATE 1**

(Weights in grams; 15.4323 grains = 1 gram)

**STATERS**

A. Plain

_Dies A_  
Wt. 6.10, 5.79.  
Pl. I, 1-2  
S.G. 11.51, 11.58.  
Total 2

B. Plain

_Dies B_  
Wt. 5.93, 5.93, 5.95, 5.96, 5.99, 6.02, 6.03, 6.05, 6.07, 6.08  
Pl. I, 3-7  
Total 10

C

_Dies C_  
Wt. 5.94, 5.95, 5.96, 5.96, 5.99, 5.99, 6.00, 6.05, 6.09, 6.09, 6.09, 6.19, 6.10, 6.19  
Pl. I, 8-14  
S.G. 11.4, 11.4, 11.25, 11.26, 11.1, 11.2, 11.1, 11.0, 10.9, 10.9, 11.1, 11.1, 11.05  
Total 13

D. Plain

_Dies D_  
Wt. 5.43, 5.44, 5.48, 5.48, 5.50, 5.53, 5.51  
Pl. I, 15-18  
S.G. 11.55, 11.32, 11.41, 11.42, 11.70, 11.52  
Total 6
The above are the staters and quarter-staters actually seen by me. They total 76 coins. In addition it is known that at least one more example of Dies D was found and at least 6 and probably a good many more of Dies E. A second quarter-stater of Dies F was also found. Consequently the grand total cannot have been less than 84 coins and may have been 90 or more.

The coins illustrated are indicated in bold type in the above list in the order in which they appear on the plate.

The blocks, so far as possible, record the whole pattern on each die, built up collectively from the specimens available.

Postscript. In June 1963 I learned that a further parcel from the hoard had turned up in the United States via Istanbul and was in course of sale through the dealers. The only coin I have seen was an excellent specimen from Dies F, showing more on the right-hand side of the reverse than any of the coins illustrated. I have no information of the further numbers involved but clearly the hoard was larger than originally thought. There may yet be more surprises in store.