THREE ANCIENT BRITISH NOTES

By D. F. ALLEN

A New Coin from Cunetio

A new coin of some interest was picked up at Black Field, Mildenhall, Wilts., on the site of the Roman town of Cunetio, by Peregrine Larington, a student at Marlborough College. He has now kindly deposited it at the Devizes Museum.

This piece is, as will be seen from Fig. 1, obviously a rendering of the Philippus types, so familiar on gold staters of Belgic Gaul and Britain, but it is a rendering with a difference. In the first place it is struck in high relief in copper or bronze; there is no trace of gilding on the surface, nor does it look like the core of a plated forgery which has lost its plating. I think, therefore, that, like the common bronze coins of the Durotriges, it was struck originally in bronze as a bronze coin. Its weight is 49.67 grains (3.219 grams).

This impression is confirmed by the ultra-simplification of the traditional pattern. The kind of coin from which the types are derived is Mack 53, British I, but many of the traditional features on both sides are lacking or simplified. I think, therefore, that we probably have a British bronze coin bearing much the same relationship to Mack 53 as, let us say, Mack 318 does to Mack 28. There are continental parallels; Mack 27, for instance, is regularly found at Théroanne in bronze, in circumstances which clearly indicate that the bronze was not merely the core of a plated forgery.

While the new coin stands alone in Britain, one can do no more than record it. The gold prototypes, such as Mack 53, belong well north of Cunetio, but the Celtic coins hitherto found at Cunetio have, in the main, been of the Dobunni.

A New Uninscribed Silver Type

I have recently concluded that two silver coins which have long been in the Ashmolean and Hunterian Collections as Gaulish coins are probably of British origin. In neither case is the find-spot known, but the weight and the treatment both point to Britain. I am not aware of similar coins in any continental collections.

Both coins have on the obverse a head facing right with a prominent ear and coils of hair behind. In the Ashmolean example (Fig. 2) there are also three, as it were, cones of hair above the forehead, which do not seem to take the same form on the Hunterian coin (Fig. 3).
On the reverse both coins have a maned horse prancing right with a globular ornament below; the most characteristic feature, however, is the prancing beast with bent-back head above the horse’s back, which forms the main subsidiary design. On the Ashmolean example this is set in the same direction as the horse; on the Hunterian coin it is upside down. The two coins, though close, are thus not identical.

The Ashmolean coin weighs 18.83 grains (1.22 grams), while the Hunterian coin weighs 20.4 grains (1.32 grams). This is about the normal weight for a British silver coin.

If I am right in regarding these coins as British, then they presumably belong to the earliest phase of the introduction of silver in the South-East. I have discussed this phase on pp. 135–6 of my paper on the Origins of British Coinage, and have there suggested that it corresponds in general with the gold coinage I have grouped under the heading of British L. There are several other silver types with head and horse which belong to the same phase.

Perhaps the closest parallel is to be found in another coin in Ashmolean Museum which I mentioned in the same paper as being of an unpublished type. Further study has shown this not to be correct; it is of the same type as Mack 438, but the obverse shows the right hand side of the die. It weighs 20.1 grains (1.30 grams). Mack 438 is connected with the gold quarter stater Mack 79, and this in turn may be compared with the new pair of silver coins I am describing.

Time and excavation will no doubt produce a clearer picture of the early silver phase. Meanwhile the more of such material that can be brought together the better.

**A New Minim of Verica**

In a recent number of the *Journal* (BNJ XXXIV (1965), 4–7) I described a silver minim of Tincommius which had been found by Mr. John Collis in 1965 during his excavation of the Romano-British site at Owslebury, near Winchester.* During the 1966 season he has found another silver minim, this time of Verica, stratified in a late pre-Conquest layer.

The new coin is of a type not previously recorded. The obverse has a pattern composed of a ring-and-dot in the centre with four trefoils-of-pellets arranged around to form a cruciform

* Incorrectly spelt as Ouslebury in the earlier note.
pattern within a beaded circle. The reverse has a lion with erect tail prancing right; the position of the tail is characteristic of Celtic lions. Above the lion are the letters VER, though most of the R is off the flan. Below the lion is a trefoil of pellets, flanked by traces of letters. I think these are an R to the left and an x to the right, the E of REX being off the flan below the trefoil. I cannot make the traces into the other legend which might be expected, c.f.

It is plain that the minim is the quarter piece corresponding to the larger silver coin of Verica, Mack 123. This too has a pattern on the obverse round a central ring-and-dot and a lion on the reverse. The legend VERICA COMM F REX may be compared with the probable VER REX of the minim.

The weight is 6·17 grains (0·40 grams), normal for a minim of this character. The silver is flecked with green corrosion, as was the Tincommius minim from the same site, but the coin bears no indication of wear from circulation. It is illustrated, original size, on Plate XIV, 14, and enlarged, in Fig. 4.

Mr. Collis also found, during the same excavations, a ‘tin’ coin of Class II, similar to Mack 24. This is the class of coin on which the obverse head is reduced to a ring-and-dot and the reverse to little more than a square in a circle. There is good evidence that coins of this type were in use in Claudian times in Kent. The new find is the most westerly example yet of Class II. It came from the top fill of a Belgic gulley, mixed with later material; a Hadrianic coin was found only a few inches away. This is not, perhaps, evidence that the coin circulated in Flavian times, but it does confirm the likelihood that Class II ‘tin’ coins remained in circulation into the early Roman occupation.

The coin weighs 14·66 grains (0·95 grams) and is illustrated original size in Plate XIV, 15, and, enlarged, in Fig. 5.

Since this was drafted, during the 1967 season, Mr. Collis has found yet another new silver minim of Verica, but I will reserve this very interesting piece for next year.