A LOCAL IRON AGE COINAGE IN SILVER AND PERHAPS GOLD IN WILTSHIRE

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The purpose of this paper is to examine and discuss the relationship that exists between two Ancient British quarter stater types, Mack 68 (= Evans C 15 and L 6 = Derek Allen's British Rb), at the present day generally ascribed to the Dobunni, and Mack 74 (= Evans L 10 = Allen's British Qc), classed with the Sussex-South Coast quarter stater series, and a small group of silver coins which are to be associated with the area of central and eastern Wiltshire.

In his major study of the coinage of the Dobunni, Derek Allen made the following two statements on the pattern of the late Iron Age coinage in Wiltshire:

It seems possible that a small area on the borders of Wiltshire and Berkshire in which the coins found are not exclusively Dobunnic may have formed some minor cantonal grouping distinct from the main Dobunnic area.

and, in reference to the part of the county directly to the south and south-west of this area:

There is no trace of a regular tribal coinage ... in central Wiltshire.1

In the first sentence he was referring directly to the silver coins which he classed as Irregular Dobunnic L and M (Mack 377 and 384a), then known only from the fairly close sites of Mildenhall in Wiltshire and Uffington Camp (now) in Oxfordshire: a coin of a variant type, SCBI West Country Museums 919 probably comes from Hod Hill in Dorset, a greater distance away and well within the territory of the Durotriges. These coins he felt were 'clearly of Dobunnic stock' and were derived from class A of the regular series of Dobunnic silver coins (Mack 376) but having distinct peculiarities of their own.2 Commander Mack has also included them with the coins of the Dobunni in each edition of The Coinage of Ancient Britain.

Since these statements were written further regular Dobunnic coins in both silver and gold have come to light in Wiltshire, together with examples of the Irregular Dobunnic L and M coins, confirming that these two linked types were almost certainly struck in or very close to the county. Moreover, from two sites in central Wiltshire are now known two stylistically related silver coins of a type not known from elsewhere, although broadly in the style of the early Dobunnic silver coins. These, it may be argued, represent the previously missing 'regular tribal coinage . . . in central Wiltshire'. The coins, which are discussed in greater detail below, are Mack 374b from Bromham, described by Mack (together with its companion piece Mack 374a, which may also be from Bromham) as 'probably the earliest of the Dobunnic silver'; and SCBI West Country Museums 223a from either Rushall Down or the adjacent area of Widdington, described in that sylloge as 'a sub-type of the

2 Ibid., p. 85.
Dobunni'. It is in consequence now possible to re-evaluate both the regular and irregular coinages attributed to the Dobunni in Wiltshire and south Oxfordshire.

What may now be seen clearly from the evidence of the recorded find-spots is that geographically there is only a very slight overlap between the two series. The irregular coins—for convenience here classing both the Irregular Dobunnic L and M coins and the Bromham and Rushall Down/Widdington coins together under this heading—occur over a wide area of central and eastern Wiltshire, an area that includes the very fertile Pewsey Vale, the archaeologically important North Wiltshire Downs and the northern edge of the Salisbury Plain and extends at least marginally into south Oxfordshire. The regular Dobunnic coins, which are listed as an appendix at the end of this paper, in Wiltshire occur only to the north and west of this area. While the opinions of Derek Allen and Commander Mack that these irregular coins should be ascribed to the Dobunni are not to be lightly ignored, it is quite as possible from the evidence of their distribution that they were struck by a separate people but stylistically imitating the regular Dobunnic silver coins struck in and circulating in the adjacent territory of that tribe.

This question is also reflected in a recent discussion by Professor Cunliffe of the political boundaries of the Iron Age peoples whose territories extended into Wiltshire. He has stressed that, while it is possible to establish the northern boundary of the Durotriges at the Wylye Valley, 'the exact tribal affiliations of the rest of Wiltshire are more obscure'. He has proposed that, north of the Wylye, 'the Bristol Avon might tentatively be assumed to form the approximate boundary between the Dobunni to the west and the Atrebates to the east'. This would then place the irregular Dobunnic coins as products of a peripheral mint or mints of the Atrebates.

The reconstructions of the political boundaries of the late Iron Age peoples in Britain are largely based upon the evidence derived from the recorded findspots of Celtic coins, but which must, of course, be used with considerable caution. The known finds of silver and bronze Durotrigian coins in Wiltshire and the adjacent counties do suggest that the northern border of this tribe may have lain at about the line of the Wylye. The chronologically earlier British B (Chute type) staters, now universally accepted as also products of the Durotriges, extend more to the north in eastern Wiltshire and in Hampshire, suggesting that at an earlier date Durotrigian territory may possibly have stretched more to the north-east.

The regular issues of the Dobunni are, as stated above, restricted in Wiltshire to the extreme western and northern parts of the county, avoiding central and eastern Wiltshire. To the west, the Bristol Avon does mark the very approximate limit of their distribution as it is known today, although it should be noted that Dobunnic coins have now been recorded from the parishes of Heywood (Westbury Ironworks) and Keevil, both of which lie east of that river.

Whether, however, the remainder of the county may be happily seen as subject to the Atrebates is problematical. Towards the end of the pre-Roman period, it would appear from recorded coin finds that the North Wiltshire Downs (with, perhaps, also the Pewsey Vale and the northern edge of the Salisbury Plain) formed the extreme south-eastern tip of the area under the sway of the Catuvellauni, being part of the

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Iron Age Coinage in Silver and Perhaps Gold in Wiltshire

The kingdom established at the time of Cunobelin and ruled firstly by his brother (or purported brother), Epaticcu, and subsequently by Caratacus. This is sometimes described as the North Atrebatic Kingdom, presumably on the assumption that most or all of the area reduced and ruled by Epaticcu had previously come under the authority of the Atrebates. The Irregular Dobunnic coins of central and eastern Wiltshire almost certainly date prior to the time of Epaticcu and at the time when at least the adjacent areas of Berkshire and Hampshire came within the territory of the Atrebates under the rule of the dynasty of Commios. However, only two coins issued by the Atrebates either in the name of Commios or his successors have been recorded from Wiltshire, and the most recently published distribution map of Atrebatic coins, map 10 in R. P. Mack, The Coinage of Ancient Britain (3rd edition, 1975), shows that they are non-existent in the adjacent areas of north-west Hampshire and south-west Berkshire. The proposal that central and eastern Wiltshire, together with these adjacent areas in Hampshire and Berkshire, came within the territory of the Atrebates, does, therefore, seem difficult to accept purely from the numismatic evidence.

Clearly from numismatic evidence alone, it is almost impossible to determine the political status of any particular area in pre-Roman times, and this is particularly so with central and eastern Wiltshire at this period. It may be noted that the name of the Roman town of Durocornovium at Wanborough, towards the northern edge of the North Wiltshire Downs, conceals the tribal name of the Cornovii, suggesting that a minor tribe or a sub-group of one bearing this name had lived in this district before the Roman Conquest. Whether, however, the peoples of central and eastern Wiltshire responsible for striking the Irregular Dobunnic silver coins were politically totally independent, or formed a client tribe (or tribes) politically dependent upon either the Dobunni or the Atrebates, or perhaps formed a more closely linked sub-group of either of these two states, is as yet impossible to determine satisfactorily and quite likely to remain so. Such speculation as this must remain beyond the scope of this paper, which is restricted merely to examining a coin series in silver and possibly also gold, relating to central and eastern Wiltshire, without attempting to assess the possible political affiliations of the issuers.

At this point we may consider the gold and silver coins which appear to relate to this area.

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1 i.e. the stater of Commios from Aldbourne (Origins, p. 208) and that of Tincommius from ‘near Swindon’ (Origins, p. 210). The only evidence that the Mack 97 stater of Tincommius in the Ashmolean Museum from the A. D. Passmore collection, comes from Wiltshire is the fact that Passmore retained the coin at the time when he sold the remainder of his collection. But nowhere in his surviving notes or published articles does he mention the coin, and thus there are no satisfactory grounds for considering it a Wiltshire find. Whether the British Quarters from Avebury, near Melksham and Baydon in central and eastern Wiltshire, can be described as products of the Atrebates is questionable. Cf. Derek Allen’s comments on this subject in Bagendon, p. 77.

6 One might, however, say that the numismatic evidence for a military or political reduction of central and eastern Wiltshire by the Catuvellaunian nominee Epaticcu would suggest that, since it may not have caused a major confrontation between the Dobunni and Catuvellaunii, then the central and eastern Wiltshire area may not then have formed part of the territory or sphere of influence of the Dobunni. This is, however, not a convincing argument. Coins of Epaticcu are known in Wiltshire from the Savernake Forest hoard and from Easton Grey (a plated example of Mack 363, unpublished and found in 1977); at least one coin of Caratacus was in the Savernake Forest hoard. A Catuvellaunian coin of Tasciovanus may have been found at Stratford sub Castle; coins of Cunobelin are recorded from Cricklade, East Kennet, Mildenham, Oxford, Salisbury, and Easton Grey (this last found in 1977, but type not noted). Save when stated above, the coins here mentioned are all listed in VCH Wilts. i i (1953) and in Allen’s listing in The Origins of Coinage in Britain: A Re-appraisal.
Mack 68

Twelve examples of this type are known to the writer and it is doubtful if more than one or two others exist. Five have recorded findspots, but in no instance from a hoard, although the two coins from Selsey may possibly be from one.

Over the past twenty-five years opinion of the position of this type within the general Ancient British series has varied, as the thoughts of, chiefly, the late Derek Allen have developed concerning it. In the first edition of Mack in 1953, Mack 68 had been classed with the Sussex-South Coast quarter stater series, Mack 63-75, primarily because two of the three provenanced examples then known came from Selsey in Sussex. Subsequently Allen in *The Origins of Coinage in England: A Re-Appraisal* suggested that some examples of Mack 68 might have been issued by the Dobunni. These he classed as *British Rb*. But he gave only one tentative example of this class in his list, namely the core of a once plated quarter stater from ‘near Marlborough’/Mildenhall in Wiltshire. The two Mack 68 quarter staters from Selsey were still included under *British Qc* (the Sussex-South Coast quarter stater series), although on page 199 this ascription was qualified with the suggestion that ‘Mack 68 might be Dobunnic’. In his detailed study of the coins of the Dobunni, Allen proposed that ‘some of the coins of this type, especially those struck in red gold’ were Dobunnic, citing as evidence the close resemblance of the reverse to Mack 394, the quarter stater inscribed on the obverse COR and equated with the CORIO of the regular Dobunnic gold stater series. In his report on the Mack 68 quarter stater found some time later at Worcester, Derek Allen argued that as the two coins of the same type from Selsey were of the same red gold and distinctive fabric as the regular Dobunnic staters, and as one example of the type was known from Mildenhall, Wiltshire, ‘marginally a Dobunnic site’, with another now from Worcester, ‘a good Dobunnic site’, the type, Mack 68 could now be described as a Dobunnic issue. Although he does not say so explicitly, he did apparently include the quarter staters in plain yellow gold in this. Commander Mack in the final edition of *The Coinage of Ancient Britain* (1975) appears to have appreciated the problem here. He grouped Mack 68 with the coinage of the Dobunni, but qualified it with the statement ‘It is probable that the quarter staters of this type in red gold are Dobunnic’ (pp. 127 and 133). The inference is that he would still classify those examples in plain yellow gold under *British Qc*, although Mack 68 has been omitted from the section covering this type.

In *SCBI 17 Midlands Museums*, the Mack 68 quarter stater from Worcester was classed with the Dobunnic coins, as was the unprovenanced coin of the same type in *SCBI The Mack Collection*. Most recently the quarter stater from Easton Royal, no. 33 in *SCBI 24 West Country Museums*, was classed as *British R* but not included with the Dobunnic series. This may have been merely a matter of convenience, for there is certainly no doubt that the stater of type Mack 374, *British Ra* in Derek Allen’s classification, is a Dobunnic coin. The Easton Royal coin is in plain yellow gold (as, incidentally, is the coin from Worcester) and it is possible that Derek Allen had felt that only the quarter staters in red gold should go with the Dobunnic series of coins.

Although the type as published by Mack is from an example in the British

7 *Bagendon*, pp. 104 and 78n.
8 *BNJ* xxxvi (1968), p. 9.
Museum from a worn obverse die, it could be described as existing in three basic states—

from a normal obverse die not excessively worn
from an obverse die well or extremely worn
apparently uniface coins.

The groups probably merge into each other and clearly the dividing lines, particularly that between the first two, are subjective. It is, of course, this the convex side of the coin that suffers the more wear in circulation. The criterion that has been used below in the catalogue of known examples of the type is whether the central spike on the trifid base of the triangular elements above the wreath, which represent curls of the hair of the Apollo-head, is still visible. On specimens from worn obverse dies, the bases appear flat.

A. OVERSE DIE NOT EXCESSIVELY WORN

1. Bronze core of a presumably once plated coin in the British Museum (BMC 731), ex Sir Arthur Evans, ex Sir John Evans, ex the Revd. Charles Soames (rector of Mildenhall, near Marlborough) collections, and probably from lot 339 in the sale of Soames' collection at Sothebys on 20 July 1903. Wt. 0.99 gms.; diam. 12-13 mm.

The coin is not mentioned in any of Soames' published articles nor among his surviving historical notes. It is ticketed as having been 'found near Marlborough', which possibly means that it comes from the parish of Mildenhall, either from Black Field, the site of the Roman town of Cunetio, or from the Iron Age hill fort above it at Folly Farm (now known as Forest Hill). The coin is illustrated in Bagendon as pl. xxxvii no. 2, but from a plaster cast that does not show the detail of the obverse, which is struck from a relatively fresh die. Derek Allen suggested that the coin has a reverse die link with no. 3 below but I am not absolutely certain that this is so.

2. Example in red (i.e. copper-debased) gold in the British Museum (BMC 727), ex E. H. Willett (1878), found at Selsey, Sussex. Wt. 0.69 gms.; diam. 11 mm.

B. OVERSE DIE WELL OR EXTREMELY WORN

3. Coin in perhaps plain gold in the British Museum (BMC 726), ex E. H. Willett (1878), found at Selsey, Sussex. Wt. 0.86 gms.; diam. 12 mm.

The coin almost qualifies for inclusion in the group above, for a good amount of detail is visible on the obverse and allowance should be made for its immersion in salt water. Nevertheless some wear to the obverse die seems to be visible.

4. Coin in ordinary yellow gold in Devizes Museum (accession number 66.1970), found in 1970 at Easton Royal in Wiltshire at n.g.r. SU 20886093. SCBI 24 West Country Museums no. 43. Wt. 1.17 gms.; diam. 11 x 12 mm. From the same reverse die as no. 8 below.


6. Findspot not recorded. SCBI 20 The R. P. Mack Collection no. 248, in plain yellow gold. Wt. 1.08 gms. Same reverse die as the following coin.

7. Findspot not recorded. König collection, ex Carlyon Britton collection. Wt. 1.25 gms. Same reverse die as the previous coin.

8. Findspot not recorded. Coin in plain yellow gold in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow; Coats Collection no. 19. Wt. 1.28 gms. From the same reverse die as no. 4 above.

9. Findspot not recorded. Coin in yellow gold in the British Museum (BMC 729), ex Seltman (1914). Wt. 1.15 gms.; diam. 14-14.5 mm. From the same reverse die as no. 11 below.


11. Findspot not recorded. König collection. Weight, size and surface colour not known to the writer. From the same reverse die as no. 9 above.
C. APPARENTLY UNIFACE COINS

12. Findspot not recorded. Coin in red gold in the British Museum (BMC 730), ex Sir Arthur Evans, ex Sir John Evans collections. Published as plate B no. 15 in John Evans, *Coins of the Ancient Britons* (1864). Wt. 1.18 gms.; diam. 15 mm. There are minor variations to the reverse design—the form of the sun and the position of the motifs beneath the horse’s stomach.

Nine different reverse dies are therefore known. The reverse die employed for Mack 394 may perhaps be considered as providing the tenth. The number of dies employed for striking the obverses may not be determined.

The obverse design of Mack 68 depicts an Apollo head almost completely reduced to an abstract, practically symmetrical geometrical pattern. The hair above the laurel wreath is shown by two pairs of ‘triangular’ motifs with trifid bases. On the dies employed for nos. 1 and 3 above, these motifs are strongly curved; on those used for nos. 4, 6, and 8, the curvature is much less. The two pairs of motifs are separated by a line that runs diagonally across the coin, upon which are set four large pellets in a spaced sequence. The most distinctive characteristic of the design is that the fourth pellet is much larger than the others and has a series of short lines radiating outwards from it. This feature is described below as a ‘radiate boss’. The wreath of the Apollo head is shown by two sets of three parallel lines which are separated by the diagonal line. The upper one of these is formed of thin dots; the central line is thick and solid; the lowest line is plain and more narrow. Below the wreath and to one side of the radiate boss appears a motif which may be described as an annulet with a square cap. It is presumably derived from one of the curls upon the forehead of Apollo. The remainder of the design is not clear and may only be seen upon *SCBI The R. P. Mack Collection* no. 248, which is from a worn obverse die.

On the different reverse dies for the type there are several minor points of difference, principally in the use of filling-ornaments of pellets or dot-in-circle motifs. The design is a triple-tailed horse to the right with a dot-in-circle motif on the shoulder, a line above it across the neck and another behind it across the horse’s back. A second dot in circle is on the horse’s rump. Above the horse appears a sun motif within a beaded circle. On the reverse of no. 12 above, this is simplified to a small cross within a beaded circle. Between the horse’s legs appear a short bar and a motif best described as a small circle attached to the right-hand end of an ~ figure. On the reverse of no. 12 above, the circle is detached from the figure. Hollow crescent-like motifs, where the ends of the pairs of lines do not always meet, appear between the
hooves of the horse, at 8 o’clock and 4 o’clock respectively beneath the triple tail and the horse’s head. They probably appeared also directly in front of the head and above the tail but on no surviving coin is the design sufficiently clear for certainty on this point.

Derek Allen suggested that the prototype of Mack 68 was a coin not in Evans or Mack, but known from a coin in the collection of the Prince du Ligne (Sotheby 26 June 1968, lot 61), now in Mr. H. Mossop’s collection. A further example was found at Cambridge (SCBI Fitzwilliam Museum I no. 52 supplemented by Allen, Origins p. 202), while a further unprovenanced example has more recently been acquired by the Ashmolean Museum. The obverse of this coin, classified by Allen with the British Qc series, is totally unlike that of Mack 68 and is clearly to be associated with that group of quarter staters, where the Apollo head has begun to disintegrate but is yet far from being an almost symmetrical geometric composition. On the reverse appears a naturalistic horse with a long mane and a triple tail and with a cornucopia or frond-like motif, probably derived from the arm of the charioteer, above the animal’s back. Beneath the horse’s body is a prominent ~ motif with an annulet beneath it. Unlike Mack 68 there is a dot-in-circle motif linked by a bar to the horse’s chest.

While the peripheral ring of spaced crescents around the reverse of Mack 68 is not to be seen on the above type, it is found on Mack 71 and on Mack 70. On the former, the crescents are of a simple linear form, while on Mack 70 they are hollow as with Mack 68. Clearly these two types must also be considered as partial prototypes of Mack 68. Mack 71 is certainly a Sussex-South Coast coin; Mack 70 may well be but the number of recorded findspots is insufficient for any certainty of this.

Commander Mack described the ~ figure on Mack 68 as ‘a bird-like object with head turned back’ and clearly related it to the bird-like motif beneath the horse on the patterned obverse Mack 69 quarter stater. The star in circle motifs on the obverse of Mack 69 would also seem to echo the radiate boss of Mack 68 (or perhaps more likely the twin radiate bosses on its companion coin, Mack 74, discussed immediately below). The present writer would, however, prefer to see the influence the other way round, with Mack 69 having adopted some elements from Mack 68.

Before considering the possible place or places from where Mack 68 was issued, the related type, Mack 74, should be considered.

**Mack 74**

The obverse design of Mack 68 is so close to that of Mack 74 (= Evans L 10 = British Qc), shown upside down in Mack but correctly in The Origins of Coinage in Britain: A Re-appraisal, that the two types must be considered as issued together.

Fig. 2. Reconstruction of the type of Mack 74
On the obverse, the minor points of difference are the substitution of an annulet for a pellet as the first ornament on the transverse line; the wreath is in a different form, running through this line without a break. To the left of the large radiate boss is a small dot-in-circle motif; to the right of it is another slightly smaller radiate boss with a further dot-in-circle motif. This part of the design of the Apollo head below the wreath is reminiscent of the pattern within the wreath of the patterned obverse, Mack 69 quarter stater, which may be a chronologically later ‘tidied-up’ adaptation of the design. The remainder of the obverse design cannot be seen upon either of the two examples of the coin known at present.

The reverse is also struck from a die considerably larger than the flan employed and consequently cannot be reconstructed in full. It shows a triple-tailed horse facing left with ring-and-dot ornaments on both its shoulders and hindquarters. There are dot-in-circle filling ornaments above the back, beneath the animal’s stomach and in front of the neck. A large sun ornament within a circle appears at the top of the flan while at the bottom, between the hooves of the horse is a second very large radiate boss, representing either a second sun symbol or a chariot wheel. The bar extending from the chest of the horse but with its far terminal off the flan can be paralleled with the bar terminating in a dot-in-circle motif appearing on most of the Apollo head British Qc quarter staters (Mack 63–66 and 71, but not 70) and upon some of the patterned obverse British Qc (Mack 67 and 73, but not 70). It is not found upon Mack 68. While it bears a superficial resemblance to a bridle-ring—compare, for example, Mack 194—it is perhaps to be interpreted merely as the terminal of the chariot pole.

Two examples of Mack 74 are known, both provenanced:

i. BM, ex E. H. Willett (1878). Found at Selsey, Sussex. Wt. 0.78 gms.
ii. H. R. Mossop collection. Found on the beach at East Wittering, near Selsey, Sussex. Wt. 0.71 gms.

The coins are from different dies and, to judge from the distinctive red surface appearance of each, are in base gold with the principal alloy being copper.

As the Mack 68 and Mack 74 quarter staters have a wider distribution than the silver coins discussed below, which are restricted to central Wiltshire and nearby, it is better to consider separately at this point the possible place or places where they may have been struck.

Three arguments have been employed for assigning Mack 68 to the Dobunni. One example has been found at Worcester, well within Dobunnic territory. It is not, however, in red gold and so strictly speaking cannot be described as of the same fabric as the regular Dobunnic gold coins. In contrast to this single provenanced coin, there are four provenanced Mack 68 quarter staters from outside the area in which the regular Dobunnic coins circulated; and in addition the two provenanced examples of the related type, Mack 74, are both known from Sussex, well away from Dobunnic territory. (It should be said at this point that while Marlborough/Mildenhall has been described as ‘marginally a Dobunnic site’,9 as no regular Dobunnic coins have been found either there or in the immediate vicinity, as argued above, this description is questionable.) Secondly it is said that examples of the Mack 68 quarter stater exist of the same fabric as Dobunnic gold coins. While some indeed do, it should be

remembered that the alloying of gold with copper was by no means a practice restricted to the Dobunni but is found for example, with the staters of Addedomaros. There is no reason not to consider it a widespread practice. A further argument that the types may be Dobunnic is that the design of Mack 68 was employed on Mack 394, which there is every reason to accept as a regular Dobunnic coin of Corio. The coins of Corio and Bodvoc are, however, the latest coins of the Dobunni \(^{10}\) and should, therefore, date long after the time when one should prefer to see the Mack 68 and 74 quarter staters struck, i.e. closer in time to the general British Qc quarter stater series. Thus the possible disparity in dating between Mack 68 and 74 on the one hand, and Mack 394 on the other weakens the argument for ascribing the type to the Dobunni. A final and more compelling argument that the types are not Dobunnic is that regular Dobunnic coins in either gold or silver are not yet recorded from Sussex, making it highly unlikely that these rare types, which are well represented in that area, can be so ascribed.

It would seem more likely, to judge from the recorded findspots of the types, Mack 68 and 74, although they are still relatively few in number, that the type should be associated with the area of central southern England rather than with the Dobunni. The pattern of their distribution, however, as it appears at present would suggest that Mack 68, and presumably Mack 74 also were not struck in the Sussex area. Had it been so, the coins would almost certainly have had a more general distribution throughout southern England. Localizing the place of striking in the area of north Hampshire, south Oxfordshire, west Berkshire, and central eastern Wiltshire would to some extent fit this distribution pattern. It would help to explain what is, in effect a high proportion of findspots of the type, Mack 68, in eastern Wiltshire and it would mean that when the type was adopted by the Dobunni for the issuing of Mack 394, they were imitating or adopting a type employed by an immediate neighbour rather than by a more distant one. Further evidence to support the hypothesis that Mack 68 and 74 were struck away from the Sussex area and perhaps in the region of Silchester–Mildenhall may be seen in some minor points of similarity between these coins and the Irregular Dobunnic L and M coins, which can now be ascribed with some certainty to a mint in or near central and eastern Wiltshire.

*Mack 377 and 384a (Irregular Dobunnic, classes L and M)*

Reconstructed drawings of these two types were given as figure 25 in Bagendon, but these may now be corrected and extended with the aid of other examples. The points of similarity between these and the Mack 68 and 74 quarter staters are firstly

\(^{10}\) Bagendon, p. 87.
that between the legs of the horse of Mack 384a appears an annulet or, upon some examples, a dot in circle and beneath it a motif in the form of $\sim\sim$. These may be seen as a counterpart of the $\sim\sim$ motif that appears on Mack 68. Secondly, upon the obverses of both Mack 377 and 384a there are prominent radiate bosses forming parts of the schematized head, presumably representing Apollo. These are clearly counterparts of the radiate bosses on the obverses of Mack 68 and 74. It is plausible to see in the design of Mack 377 and 384a a remodelling of the head of Apollo based upon the obverse type of Mack 68 when in a worn state, and with the reverses to be seen as very loosely imitating that of Mack 68 also.

The recorded findspots of the coins of these two types are unfortunately few in number. Five are now known from central and eastern Wiltshire, from the sites of Easton Grey and Mildenhall, and one from Uffington Camp in Oxfordshire. A related type is recorded from Hod Hill in Dorset while one type M coin lacks a known findspot. In view of the concentration of recorded examples from mid Wiltshire, it is reasonable to suppose that the types were struck there. The two surviving type L coins are from different obverse and reverse dies: the five known type M coins are from at least four different obverse and three different reverse dies. The series may then have originally been far larger than the number of surviving examples might initially suggest. The known examples are as follows:

**IRREGULAR DOBUNNIC L (MACK 377)**


**IRREGULAR DOBUNNIC M (MACK 384a)**

1. BM, ex Evans, ex Revd. Charles Soames. Found with the following coin and no. 1 above, probably at Mildenhall. Illustrated Evans, p. 468; Bagendon pl. xxxvii, 16. Wt. 14-5 grains.
2. BM, ex Evans, ex Revd. Charles Soames. Found at Mildenhall (see previous coin). Wt. 16-5 grains.

**RELATED OR VARIANT TYPE**

1. Salisbury Museum, ex Pitt Rivers Museum at Farnham, probably ex Durden collection and found at Hod Hill, Dorset. Illustrated Hod Hill II pl. 15, no. 26; SCBI West Country Museums, no. 919. Wt. 11-1 grains. This coin with no. 4 above may represent a half denomination to the other coins of this series.11

Derek Allen suggested that the designs upon these coins were derived from that of the regular Dobunnic class A coins. The similarity between them is shown by the radiate boss that appears on the chin of the Apollo head on these coins. This feature is absent on the reconstructed drawing of the type in Bagendon fig. 24, which is perhaps based upon worn coins, but it may be seen clearly on the class A coins, SCBI West Country Museums nos. 188–90. On later silver coins of this series, a plain boss is substituted for a radiate boss. But apart from this detail, the types are quite

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alien to each other. While it is difficult to determine with satisfaction which one is the prototype and which the copy, it is perhaps more likely that class A was copied from the Irregular L and M coins. This would explain how a radiate boss appears on the type A coins, where a tolerably realistic head of Apollo occurs but on which this feature is an incongruous part of the design. In contrast, the radiate boss is quite at home on the exotic obverse designs of the coins of classes L and M.

SCBI 24: West Country Museums no. 233a; Mack 374a and b and possibly related coins

SCBI West Country Museums no. 233a is a coin of plated silver struck on a dumpy flan in the collection of Devizes Museum. It has a ticket in the hand of Joshua W. Brooke, the Marlborough antiquary, reading 'Widdington'. This is the name of a farm in the parish of Upavon on the northern edge of the Salisbury Plain. In one of Brooke’s notebooks preserved in the library of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society at Devizes appears on p. 41 a reference to an Ancient British coin from the collection of Mr. Arthur Stratton of Lockeridge, which was presented to Brooke in 1909. In the previous sentence there is a reference to a collection of 200 Roman coins, ranging in date from Claudius to Honorius in Mr. Stratton’s collection which had been found ‘near Widdington’. On the following page it is expressly stated that these coins came from Rushall, and the site in question may be identified as the settlement site on Rushall Down, occupied in the Iron Age and Romano-British periods. Rushall is the adjacent parish to Upavon and the Rushall Down settlement site lies only a very short distance away from Widdington. The presumption is that the Ancient British coin came also from Rushall Down, but that Brooke retained with the coin a ticket reading ‘Widdington’ suggests that this may possibly be incorrect and it may be a stray find from the adjacent area of Widdington Farm, Upavon. No other Iron Age coins are recorded from Rushall Down. The site was excavated between 1897 and 1899 but the results not properly published. The coins, together with the other finds then made were presented to the British Museum and cannot now be identified. They are said to have been only of late Roman date. Other surface finds, including coins made at various other times on the site are in Devizes Museum and in private collections, but to the writer’s knowledge they include no further Ancient British coins.

The coin is a new type and prior to its inclusion in SCBI West Country Museums had not been mentioned in print. The obverse shows an Apollo head facing right, the hair formed chiefly by a series of crescents as on the regular Dobunnic coins of

12 Most were presented by Mr. Arthur Stratton.
classes A–C. On the Rushall Down coin three crescents may be seen; they are plain in shape and solid. The remainder of the design of the hair is largely off the flan. The eye is a small annulet while the nose is formed by an oblique line running from the top of the head, terminating in a pellet and then returning in the direction of the eye before finishing. The chin is formed of a large boss. Two small parallel lines running upwards from the boss towards the eye may possibly represent the mouth, turned 90 degrees at the whim of the die engraver. On the irregular Dobunnic type L coins, the mouth is also shown by two short parallel lines and if those on the Rushall Down coin do represent a mouth, this may be seen as a possible link between the two coins.

The reverse is from a die much larger than the flan employed. It is far from clear and difficult to interpret. It may be a representation of a horse but an alternative interpretation of what is visible as a geometric design, based upon a cross with various elements such as annulets, pellets, a crescent, and various lines filling the angles is also possible.

In *SCBI West Country Museums* it was suggested that the coin ‘belonged to the Dobunnic area’ and that it ‘could be a special Wiltshire sub-type of the Dobunni since one of two similar specimens in the Mack collection [SCBI The R. P. Mack Collection nos. 248a and 248b = Mack 374a and 374b] was found near [SCBI Mack says ‘at’] Bromham, Wiltshire’. In a personal letter to the writer, Derek Allen said that he felt that both coins may very well have been found together as they appeared on the market in London at the same time, in 1971.

Commander Mack ascribed the two coins to the Dobunni and suggested that they were probably the earliest Dobunnic silver coins, with an ‘easily recognisable face’, struck before the design of the regular Dobunnic coins became formalized. The two coins do not, however, relate directly to the Dobunnic series either with their obverse or reverse designs, although the jewelled borders of the hair-crescents of the obverse of Mack 374b are clearly reminiscent of those on the regular Dobunnic class A coins. The obverse of Mack 374a is very close to that of the Rushall Down coin and the three coins may be regarded as forming a small independent group, almost certainly to be associated with the central Wiltshire area, even though, admittedly, there are as yet only two recorded findspots for the series. As they occur in the same general area as that in which the Irregular Dobunnic group L and M coins occur, it is possible that they were struck by the same authority, but at a different, later date. But that they were found slightly to the south of the area in which those coins have been recorded, leaves open the possibility that they may have been struck at a different location and by a different authority.

The type Mack 375 was originally considered a Dobunnic coin. Derek Allen argued against this ascription and related it to coins from Southern England. In the third edition of *The Coinage of Ancient Britain* and in *SCBI Norweb* no. 35, Commander Mack proposed that the type should be ascribed to the East Midlands, but more recently placed his own example of the coin, *SCBI The R. P. Mack Collection* no. 82 under the heading ‘miscellaneous’. At the time of writing there are no recorded findspots for the type.

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14 Bagendon, p. 79 n. 1; Origins, p. 135.
A variant of Mack 375, weighing 17-3 grains and thus slightly lighter in weight than the other examples of the type, is in the collection of Mr. H. R. Mossop. It is, again, unprovenanced and is illustrated directly below. Apart from the inferior style, the chief point of difference is that this coin clearly has a horse with a triple tail on the reverse, while the Mack 375 coins show a horse with a double tail only. On its own the triple tail to the horse suggests strongly that this is a coin from south-west England. The form of the head on the obverse and the entire reverse are close to those of the Bromham-Rushall Down series and it is likely that this coin is a further member of the group. The true Mack 375 coins may perhaps also in consequence be assigned to the same group; the double tail to the horse is paralleled on Mack 374a and 374b as well as upon the Irregular Dobunnic L and M coins, but is not found upon the coins with which it was compared by Derek Allen in his study of the Dobunnic coinage. It is also possible that Mack 375 may represent a prototype of both Mr. Mossop's coin and the other coins of the small Bromham-Rushall Down series but that it was struck in a different, perhaps adjacent area. Clearly one must wait for provenanced coins to appear.

**Mack 396a and Mack –, a new type from Easton Grey, Wilts.**

A further coin that should be considered in conjunction with the above coins is Mack 396a, a curious, double-struck coin now in the Ashmolean Museum. It came from the collection of A. D. Passmore and is said to have been found near Wanborough, Wiltshire before 1937. Five or more coins 'of the Nunney type' i.e. regular Dobunnic silver coins, are said to have been found with it, and a photograph of one of these is in the British Museum. Derek Allen has, however, cast doubts on the association of Mack 396a with the other Dobunnic coins. 15 While Commander Mack has classified it under the heading of 'Other coins of the Dobunni', Derek Allen has described it as 'probably not Dobunnic' and he has suggested that it 'may have been a local product of the Swindon-Marlborough area'. 16

In style it relates neither with the regular Dobunnic series of silver coins nor with those discussed immediately above. While it remains unique one must be cautious in necessarily accepting it as a coin struck in the general area where it was found. As, however, there seems likely to have been in that area at least one authority striking coins in silver, it may very well be that Mack 396a represents a coinage struck by the same authority in a totally different style.

A further silver coin, weighing 11-5 grains was found in 1977 in Easton Grey and

15 Bagendon, p. 130.  16 Ibid., p. 111.
is now in the collection of Mr. H. R. Mossop. It is of a previously unknown type and, like Mack 396a, may perhaps have been struck locally. It is, unfortunately, very worn and in consequence the design, which is reproduced below, is far from clear, particularly upon the obverse.

The obverse may possibly show a head facing right, with the mouth and lips formed by two small parallel lines as with the Irregular Dobunnic L coins. On the reverse appears a horse facing left, with perhaps a double tail; above the animal’s rump appears a wheel and between its legs a small boar, also facing left. The coin may be a variant of Mack 87, known only to date from Richborough. But its style is closer to that of Mack 374a and Mack 374b than to this coin. Stylistically it is not similar to the probably Gaulish coin, Mack 87a (SCBI The R. P. Mack Collection no. 83), which also shows a boar beneath the horse on the reverse. Again one must wait for the discovery of further examples of the type or for a more positive indication that the type is related to the coins attributable to the Wiltshire area before accepting this coin conclusively as also a Wiltshire issue.

In conclusion there are satisfactory grounds for seeing the Irregular Dobunnic L and M coins and the small group of coins from Bromham and Rushall Down as struck either in central and eastern Wiltshire or very close to that county. The known pre-Roman mint at Silchester is probably too far away to be considered a likely place of their issue. While these coins share stylistic detail with the coins of the Dobunni, they occur in an area where regular Dobunnic are in general not found. The only location where both the regular and the Irregular Dobunnic coins occur is at Easton Grey on the Bristol Avon, a river which Cunliffe sees as the possible boundary of the tribe of the Dobunni. It is, however, impossible to say merely from numismatic evidence whether or not the issuers were an independent tribe or if they were either dependent upon or indeed a part of either the Dobunni or the Atrebates. The coins borrow some detail from Mack 68 and 74 and it is possible but not certain that these quarter stater types which are related may have been issued either in the same area or perhaps nearby, as at Silchester. The recent discovery of a second findspot for the base gold stater, Mack 62 in Wiltshire at Mildenhall, the other recorded findspots being Savernake Forest, Wiltshire and Marks Tey in Essex, is a tantalizing suggestion that there may be a full stater series attributable to this same area. It also shows the need for further recorded finds of Celtic coins both from Wiltshire but particularly from the adjacent areas of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Hampshire.

17 Now acquired by Devizes Museum.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX

LIST OF RECORDED REGULAR DOBUNNIC COINS FROM WILTSHIRE

6, 7. Chiseldon in c. 1971. Two AU staters of COMUX (Mack 392), one of them now in Mr. H. R. Mossop's collection. Not published.
15-21. Colerne, Northwood Barn (ST 81257326), from c. 1950 onwards. Scattered hoard (?) of perhaps seven coins:
1 Mack 378 = Allen class B in Devizes Museum. SCBI West Country Museums no. 196.
2 Mack 382 = Allen class B in Bristol Museum.
3 Mack 378 = Allen class B. Present location unknown. Photograph at the Institute of Archaeology, Oxford.
4 Mack 382 = Allen class F in Devizes Museum. SCBI West Country Museums no. 209.
5 Mack 387 = Allen class G in Devizes Museum. SCBI West Country Museums no. 216.
6 Mack 389 = Allen class H in Devizes Museum. SCBI West Country Museums no. 222.
7 Type not recorded. See W.A.M. 63 (1968), p. 102, where the other coin mentioned may be no. 3 above.
23. Wanborough area, before 1927. Uninscribed AR coin (Mack 382 = Allen class F). *Origins*, p. 249 but see *Bagendon*, p. 130 where doubts are expressed as to the correctness of the record.

24. Perhaps from the area of Cricklade. Uninscribed AR coin (Mack 382 = Allen class F) in Cricklade Museum. *SCBI West Country Museums* no. 214, but there is no proof that this coin was a local find.


27. ? Latton, in or before 1973. AU stater of BODVOC. Supplement to Allen, *Origins* (1978), p. 103, but it may be that 'Latton' is incorrect and that the findspot was in Gloucs., rather than that the wrong county has been given.

These correct entries in Allen, *Origins* and in the recently published supplement to that work.

N.B. The Dobunnic AR coin, Allen class B, reported as having been found at Rushall Down and preserved in Devizes Museum (supplement to Allen, *Origins* (1978), p. 94) does not exist. The reference is to the Irregular Dobunnic coin from Widdington/Rushall Down described above in this paper.

**POSTSCRIPT**

It would seem possible that the three AU staters reported from Chiseldon may have formed part of a hoard. The traces of corroded silver which Mr. Mossop has advised me were to be seen upon his COMUX stater before it was cleaned would suggest that silver coins may also have been present. There is also reason to believe now that the coins were not found at Chiseldon but in south Oxfordshire.