THE BARBAROUS RADIATES FROM RICHBOROUGH

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The barbarous radiates from Richborough are the largest collection of these coins from a single excavated site in the south of England. Despite the advances made towards an understanding of this strange currency, our knowledge has so far come almost exclusively from hoard studies. The analysis of site collections is an essential step towards a fuller understanding of these coins, and in particular to determine what types were in everyday use and how they circulated. Indeed, of the large number of hoards buried during the late third century containing barbarous radiates, many comprise coins which never reached circulation. Some contain coins which have come straight from a mint, still accompanied by others struck from the same dies. It is not possible to make firm conclusions about the behaviour and function of this coinage without some reference to large site collections.

Classification and composition

Where possible, the 2010[1] coins have been separated between Central Empire and Gallic Empire copies. Others, though exhibiting some sign of being irregular, but which defy identification because of corrosion and wear, are totalled separately. Both major categories list total copies of each emperor. Under the second category the vast majority of coins derive from Tetrican prototypes, and these have been sorted into reverse types, as used by Dr Sutherland.[2] Further categories considered under the Gallic Empire section include badly worn, partially identified coins, as well as many unusual types which deserve separate consideration and discussion.

The poor preservation of coins recovered from the site is in contrast to the condition of many hoards and is an inhibiting factor in the identification process. As well as the problem of corrosion, these site finds exhibit wear derived from vigorous circulation prior to deposition. The assemblage as a whole contains a great variety of types and represents a complete sequence from the earliest to the latest copies, which is seldom seen in a single hoard. The Richborough coins also show the usual weaknesses of this series including illiterate, or absent, legends, off-centre striking, blurring from over-use of dies and a wide variety of flan sizes and shapes. Some ninety per cent of the coins have been classified to some degree, for comparative purposes.

The types found to be most numerous are those which commonly predominate in hoards. Strangely the Central Empire as a whole, but in particular the ubiquitous Divo Claudio types, are poorly represented and are sparser than on comparable sites.[3] From the Gallic Empire category coins assignable to Victorinus are again rather few. The bulk of the collection derives from Tetrican prototypes, with Pax and Spes reverses predominating, but with

List of Types at Richborough

		No. of coins	*% of total*
A.	Central Empire types		
	Gallienus	10	
	Claudius 2	28	
	Divo Claudio	25	
	Aurelian	3	
B.	Gallic Empire types		
	Postumus	3	
	Victorinus	77	3.8
	Tetricus 1 and 2		
	Aequitas	3	
	Felicitas	2	
	Fides Militum	16	
	Fortuna	10	
	Hilaritas	28	1.4
	Jupiter	2	
	Laetitia	31	1.5
	Mars	1	
	Pax	310	15.4
	Pietas, Implements	49	2.4
	Providentia	16	
	Salus	98	4.9
	Spes	183	9.1
	Victoria	18	
	Virtus	40	2.0
	Tetricus 1, illegible rev.	123	
	Tetricus 2, illegible rev.	69	
	Uncertain obv., female figure rev.	174	
	'Pin figure' rev.	85	
	Unidentified minims	300	14.9
	Unusual types	76	
C.	Illegible, above minim size	230	11.4
	Grand Total:	2,010	
	Total number of minims recorded	697	34.7

Hilaritas, Laetitia, Pietas (sacrificial implements), Salus and Virtus also popular. One reason for the apparently low tally under Victorinus must be the lack of really distinctive reverse types used by this emperor, apart from Invictus and Pax, with transverse sceptre. His benign features and hooked nose become indistinguishable among the near caricature, poorer copies, which predominate.

The classification of the smallest coins as minims again facilitates easier comparison. Although they represent a later phase of copying[4] they do appear to have circulated alongside barbarous radiates of larger module. However, as Mr Boon has warned elsewhere, this separation is not intended to reflect a denominational distinction.[5] The coins termed minims, in common with this coinage as a whole, refuse to conform to any strict constraints, meaning that no rigid criteria could be used for their classification. Mr Boon has shown that weight can differ appreciably between coins struck from

the same dies.[6] A study of the many die-linked groups present in the Sussex minim hoards from Worthing, Goring and Hove clearly confirms that there was no precise standard size or weight associated with a particular die combination.[7] One group from the Goring hoard contains nineteen coins which share common obverse and reverse dies. They all exhibit very irregular flan shapes, of between 10mm and 15mm diameter. Thickness varies from 1.5mm to 3.5mm and weight between 0.55g and 3.40g. In the present study, 13mm has been taken as the uppermost limit, measured across the widest part of the flan, with the coin thickness and die-size also being considered. No less than 697 coins fall into this category, which is thirty-five per cent of the total barbarous radiates.

The Richborough coins exhibit the diverse range of manufacturing techniques associated with barbarous radiates.[8] Clipping of flans is shown by numerous angular and square-shaped flans (Pl.1, 2). Some flans are clearly derived from quartered antoniniani (Pl.1, 1).[9] A general lack of desire for precision is shown by the incompatibility of die and flan sizes (Pl.1, 4). There was also a single brockage. Die axes are totally arbitrary, indicating no attempt to align dies.

Unusual coins and internal linking

Upon initial examination, the range and variety of types present at Richborough appears almost unlimited. Apart from less-obvious hybrids that cannot be assigned to the standard groups (two such examples are shown in Pl.2, 27-8), many others show figures stylised in such a way as to warrant the term 'pin figures' (Pl.2, 34-6).[10] Nine coins carry reverses which are in varying states of disintegration towards designs. Pl.1, 7, shows a Hilaritas derivative which has not quite lost its figure shape. Other distinctive types can be grouped together, each type being apparently linked by a common engraver. Because the most unusual coins are recognised in this way, and are most easily remembered, they tend to form the basis of die- and style-linked groups. A representative selection of the coins discussed is illustrated in the two plates.

One such group of four coins is characterised by a tiny, grotesque head and vigorous legend (Pl.1, 28-30). Another distinctive group, with two examples here, displays the square jaw of Claudius Gothicus on the obverse, coupled with the uncommon transverse sceptre variety of Pax on the reverse (Pl.2, 1-2). There are two examples with similar obverse in the Richborough (1931) hoard.[11] This hoard, housed at the British Museum, contains a few coins which display a closeness of style with the site coins, and include a single die-linked specimen.

Two unusual site coins share a common die-linked reverse, which depicts an animated male figure, wearing a halo (Pl.1, 20-1). Another internal style-group contains four coins with similar obverses (Pl.2, 6-9). A different distinctive trait seen on a small number of coins is a grossly accentuated jaw on a portrait of Tetricus II (Pl.1, 13-15). Some unusual types are represented by single examples. One such coin has a reverse legend which is a mirror image of the letters PIETAS, reading from right to left (Pl.1, 3). Another unusual reverse, of a standing figure with crossed legs, brings to mind a reverse from the Newgate Street (Paternoster Row) hoard from London (Pl.2, 30).[12] Worthy of note is a Claudius Gothicus derivative which combines a joined-hands reverse, a type used by Gallienus and by Postumus (Pl.1, 16).

Two coins depict a reverse type so far unrecorded in barbarous radiates, of a female figure seated (Pl.1, 11-12). This is a copy of the

Concordia reverse used by Aurelian and Severina. The figure is very well engraved in both cases. What can only be described as 'mint marks' appear in the exergue on three coins (Pl.1, 9-10), although one example is clearly the result of an extended barbarous legend. Professor Mattingly has identified the same phenomenon in the Sussex minim hoards, where he found five examples at Worthing and two at Goring, and also in the Lightwood and Calverton hoards.[13] Examples of reverses with two or more figures occur occasionally in collections and have been recorded elsewhere.[14] There are four examples at Richborough. Barbarous radiates with more than one figure often show prominent and subsidiary figures, but the example illustrated (Pl.1, 17) shows two well-engraved figures of equal size. This reverse type is again derived from one of several such issues of Aurelian (probably *RIC* 215 or 394) but the obverse clearly depicts the features of Victorinus. One other type illustrated (Pl.1, 8) is still rarer amongst irregular coinage. It is a version of the non-figurative Saeculi Frugifero (winged caduceus) reverse of Postumus.

There are two other reverse types present at Richborough which, though not common, recur occasionally on sites and therefore warrant some discussion. They clearly illustrate the process by which new types were derived from a limited range of originals, by successive copying. The first of these shows a female or male figure brandishing a spear and a circular shield (Pl.1, 5-6). The prototype is not immediately apparent, especially regarding the circular shield. It is likely that through the process of copying from copies, this has been derived from the wreath held by the Laetitia figure. Two examples are present at Richborough. A second, and at first glance more puzzling, type is again represented by two examples (Pl.2, 25-6). A single 'pin figure' stands centrally in a 'trough'. This may be a derivative of the sacrificial implements type, or possibly represents a debased Virtus Augg of Tetricus. Whatever the original, this derivative is present elsewhere, notably at Verulamium and in the Newgate Street hoard. The style of workmanship is obviously different in these examples and shows that this distinctive type was arrived at independently.

Finally, examples from other internal groups are illustrated. Two examples come from a group characterised by their grotesque obverse portraits (Pl.1, 31-2). Similarly, three other coins show equally poor reverses (Pl.1, 33-5). Examples of coins linked by obverse portraiture are shown by two other groups (Pl.2, 4-5, and 32-3). Similarity of reverse style is shown by another (Pl.2, 10-11).

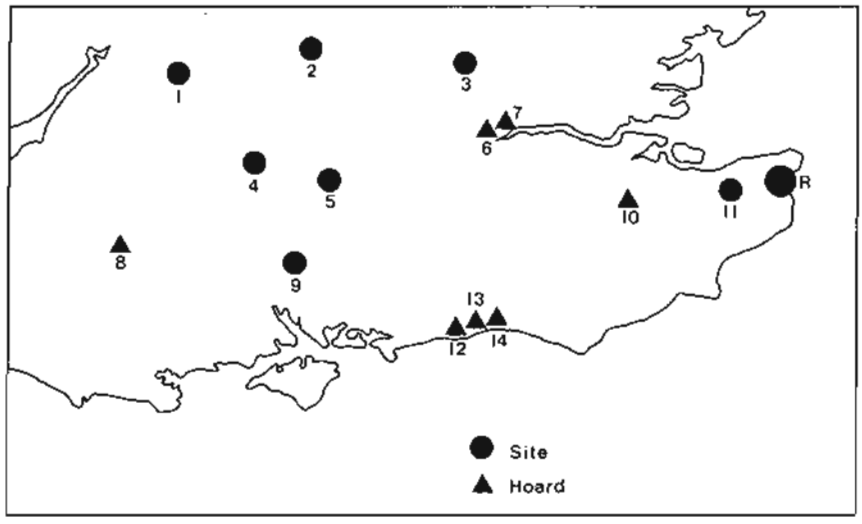
Links with other sites

Professor H.B.Mattingly has established evidence of the way in which barbarous radiates travelled widely and freely in Britain.[15] His groupings, based on die-links and closeness of style in hoards, provide a reference point from which to relate the types present at Richborough.

Mattingly's Midlands - Sussex Pax Aug group is the largest numerical group of barbarous radiates established so far, known to have come from a single source.[16] There are eight examples of this group at Richborough (Pl.1, 22-27). The link with the Sussex hoards is further strengthened by three coins bearing very close affinity to die-linked groups from Goring-on-Sea[17] (Pl.2, 21) and two other examples resembling another group from the same hoard (Pl.2, 22-3, with a Goring example illustrated, number 24).

One reverse contains a rather angular variety of Spes, coupled with a distinctively square head on the obverse (Pl.1, 18). This coin is part of a larger group recognised by Professor Mattingly, with examples from the

Hollingbourne hoard, Kent, from the Newgate Street hoard and from Verulamium.[18] Another coin shares obverse and reverse dies with an unpublished coin from Silchester (Pl.1, 19). A single minim example characterised by its high quality engraving, absence of legend and distinctly pointed features of Claudius II is part of a larger group with examples from Cirencester, and from the hoards of Newgate Street, Worthing and Mere, Wiltshire.[19]



Location of sites and hoards in the south of England mentioned in the text

R. Richborough

1. Cirencester
2. Woodeaton
3. Verulamium
4. Mildenhall
5. Silchester
6. Paternoster Row (Newgate St) hoard
7. Lime St hoard
8. Mere hoard
9. Winchester
10. Hollingbourne hoard
11. Canterbury
12. Goring-on-Sea hoard
13. Worthing hoard
14. Hove hoard

Examples from two other groups commonly found on sites and in hoards are present at Richborough. These types share characteristics that were initially recognised by Mattingly,[20] both groups being related by their obverse treatment which reduces the imperial portrait to very angular lines, usually accompanied by a V-shaped neck. Flan size lies in the range of 13-15mm diameter. The first of these groups is characterised by a ewer reverse, derived from the implements type. The ewer dominates the flan and has a large spiral handle. The legend is often reduced to a series of dashes (Pl.2, 12-13). The second group is distinguished by a male figure on the reverse, usually Sol, in a very animated stance (Pl.2, 14-16). Examples of these groups are found on many sites and hoards across the south of England.[21] They do not cluster in any particular area, on the basis of current evidence.

The other main external links can be described. One very basic, linear obverse (Pl.2, 17) closely resembles a coin from the Newgate Street hoard (Pl.2, 18). This London link is strengthened by another coin (Pl.2, 31) which has a very similar obverse to another Newgate Street coin. A more local link is provided by a distinctive obverse engraving (Pl.2, 3) which resembles the technique used on a number of Canterbury coins. In contrast, other more distant links are present. One obverse (Pl.2, 19) is very similar to a Cirencester coin (Pl.2, 20) and one other reverse (Pl.1, 36) resembles a coin from the Calverton hoard, from Nottinghamshire.[22] In relation to an internal group already described (Pl.1, 33-5) a coin from the Mildenhall, Suffolk, hoard is also of this type.[23]

The range of types and styles in evidence at Richborough is very wide and undoubtedly many types will resemble others by coincidence, and a cautious approach is accordingly taken here. A more thorough consideration of style and technique is essential in order to reinforce the die- and style-links described. Despite this necessarily cautious approach, many other coins do possess likenesses to coins from other areas, and the proportion of linking will in fact be higher, which suggests that these coins were part of a circulation pool which stretched at least right across the south of England, to the Midlands and probably further.[24] The problems involved are shown, for example, by a number of small Richborough coins, all having very simple engravings and no legend. These coins closely resemble others from Verulamium but in the absence of specific diagnostic details, stylistic similarity in such cases is very hard to describe and to prove. On the basis of the comparative date available, the present study has so far isolated about forty external links, with a comparable number of internal links. Others undoubtedly exist, in particular amongst the heavily worn material.

Conclusions

The comparatively small proportion of die- and close style-links identified in this large site collection (approximately five per cent of legible coins) shows clearly the huge scale of output of this coinage and that the high proportion of die-linking seen in many hoards is not representative of those coins in general circulation.[25] However, the number of links identified is high enough to establish a coherent picture. External links occur right across the south of England but without any evident main axis of contact at present. As the amount of comparative material increases, these external links would be expected to increase accordingly.

Mattingly and Stebbing suggested a local mint at Richborough, based on evidence of internal die-linking in the 1931 hoard.[26] The association of the hoard with the site coins and the degree of internal linking identified may in fact reflect some local manufacture, but the small proportion of coins in question shows that if such a mint existed, it was not supplying the sole needs of this site by any means. Only about three per cent of the identifiable coins studied here are found to link internally.

Distinctive traits that have been observed in the irregular coinage of Britain which have been diagnosed as relating to local production exist in certain areas. Many such styles comprise the distinctive cruder types and minims, forming unmistakable style groups. However, evidence from Richborough reinforces Mattingly's picture of a wide circulation and as more material is studied it can be seen that many of these groups are not found solely in one area. Neither is it safe to assume that an engraver was necessarily resident locally when such a group is found.

The period between the Gallic and British Empires allows for significant developments in the production of irregular coinage, which is reflected in the enormous range of quality, size, and type of coins in question. This coinage would have been produced on a scale according to particular requirements over time, in different areas. The evidence from Richborough contributes to our knowledge of some major mint groups, which can be seen to have served wide areas of the country, and indicates a degree of more centralised production alongside the local production which occurred in many areas.[27]

TABLE 1

Summary of internal groups

		Characteristics	
1.	Obv. & Rev. die-link	See Richborough (1931) hoard report, Pl.13, 3.	
2-3.	Rev. die-link	Pin figure, with halo	Pl.1, 20-1
4-7.	Style group	Tiny head, legend	Pl.1, 28-30
8-9.	" "	Head shape	Pl.2, 4-5
10-13.	" "	Head and legend	Pl.1, 31-2
14-16.	" "	Rev. figure and legend	Pl.1, 33-5
17-18.	" "	See 2 coins from (1931) hoard report, Pl.6, 7 & Pl.11, 7.	Pl.2, 1-2
19-20.	" "	With coins from (1931) hoard	
21-23.	" "	Head shape	Pl.1, 13-15
24-26.	" "	Obv. treatment	
27-28.	" "	Head shape, beard	Pl.2, 32-3
29-30.	" "	Obv. treatment	
31-34.	" "	Head shape	Pl.2, 6-9
35-36.	" "	Rev. figure	Pl.2, 10-11

TABLE 2

Summary of external groups

1-8.	Die- & style-link	Worthing, Goring, Hove hoards, Sussex; Calverton hoard, Notts.; Lightwood hoard, Staffs.; Whitchurch hoard, Avon.	Pl.1, 22-7
9.	Obv. & Rev. die-link	Silchester, Hants.	Pl.1, 19
10.	Die- & style-link group	Hollingbourne hoard, Kent; Verulamium; Newgate St hoard, London.	Pl.1, 18
11-13.	Style group	Goring hoard	Pl.2, 21
14-15.	" "	Goring hoard	Pl.2, 22-3
16.	" "	Mere hoard, Wilts.	
17.	" "	Various, especially Verulamium	
18.	" "	Various, especially Newgate St hoard	Pl.2, 17
19-20.	" "	Various	Pl.2, 12-13
21-25.	" "	Various	Pl.2, 14-16
26.	" "	Calverton hoard	Pl.1, 36
27.	" "	Woodeaton, Oxon.	
28.	" "	Cirencester, Gloucs.	Pl.2, 19
29.	" "	Lime St hoard, London?	
30-34.	" "	Various Verulamium coins.	
35.	" "	Newgate St hoard	Pl.2, 31
36-37.	" "	Mildenhall, Wilts.	
38.	" "	Winchester?	
39-40.	" "	Various, especially Gorhambury.	
41.	" "	Canterbury, Kent.	Pl.2, 3
42-44.	" "	Mildenhall hoard, Suffolk	Pl.1, 33-5

NOTES

I am extremely grateful to Professor H.B.Mattingly, Dr M.G.Fulford and Julie Gardiner for commenting on earlier drafts of this paper. I would also like to thank Dr R.M.Reece and Dr C.E.King, for their assistance during the preparation of the report, and staff of the Department of the Environment at Fortress House, in particular Mr N.Moore and Dr C.J.Young.

1. R.Reece, 'The Roman coins from Richborough – a summary', *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology*, 18 (1981), 49-71. Reece lists 1966 barbarous radiates whereas the figure in this present report includes others from the heavily abraded material.

2. C.H.V.Sutherland, *Coinage and currency in Roman Britain* (1937), pp.126-53.

3. The author has studied comparative assemblages from over 120 sites in the south of England. Central Empire derivatives normally form close to ten per cent of total imitations on sites. The low percentage here is not a reflection of the numbers of official types on the site (see Reece in note 1).

4. G.C.Boon, 'The counterfeiter's deposit', in *Coygan Camp*, edited by G. Wainwright (Cardiff, 1967), pp.119-20.

5. G.C.Boon, 'Counterfeit coins in Roman Britain', in *Coins and the Archaeologist*, edited by J.Casey and R.Reece (B.A.R. 4, 1974), p.115.

6. Boon, 'Counterfeit coins', p.118.

7. For the publication of these hoards, see H.Mattingly, 'The Hove radiate hoard', *Sussex Notes and Queries*, 7 (1939), 234-39; G.D.Lewis and H.B. Mattingly, 'A hoard of barbarous radiates from Mill Road, Worthing', *NC* 7th ser. 4 (1964), 189-99; H.B.Mattingly, 'A hoard of "barbarous radiates" from Goring-on-Sea', *Sussex Arch. Colls*, 105 (1967), 56-61.

8. Boon, 'The counterfeiter's deposit', p.126.

9. Some clear examples of this are illustrated by G.C.Boon in 'A Roman counterfeiter's den', *Proc. Univ. Bristol Spelaeological Soc.* (1972), Pl.4.

10. A term employed by H.B.Mattingly.

11. H.Mattingly and W.P.D.Stebbing, 'The Richborough hoard of "radiates", 1931', *American Numismatic Soc. Notes and Monographs*, 80 (1938), Pl.6, 7 and Pl.11, 7.

12. H.B.Mattingly, 'The Paternoster Row hoard of "barbarous radiates"', *NC* 7th ser. 7 (1967), Pl.7, 24.

13. Mattingly, 'Barbarous radiates from Mill Road, Worthing', p.191. The Lightwood and Calverton examples are discussed in his 'The Lightwood hoard and the coinage of "barbarous radiates"', *N. Staffs. Jour. Field Studies*, 3 (1963), 26.

14. P.V.Hill, 'Three barbarous overstrikes', *NC* 6th ser. 8 (1948), 93-95. Mattingly, 'The Lightwood hoard', p.24, with note 16 and Pl.2, 34.

15. Mattingly, 'The Lightwood hoard', pp.19-36; and 1964.

16. Mattingly, 'Barbarous radiates from Mill Road, Worthing', Pl.16, 34-58, and description on pp.198-99.

17. Mattingly, 'The Paternoster Row hoard', Pl.1, 5-7.

18. Mattingly, 'The Paternoster Row hoard', Pl.7, 36 and description p.66. See also, 1964, Pl.18, 101. Verulamium example illustrated in *NC* 6th ser. 8 (1948), p.89, no.5.

19. The Mere example is illustrated in H.Mattingly, 'A hoard of barbarous radiate coins from Mere, Wilts.', *NC* 5th ser. 14 (1934), Pl.10, 38.

20. Mattingly, 'Barbarous radiates from Mill Road, Worthing', p.192 and Pl. 16, 31-33. Also present in the Lightwood and Calverton hoards. See note 13.

21. Personal inspection by the author. See note 3.

22. H.B.Mattingly, 'Two hoards of Roman coins from Calverton', *Trans. Thoroton Soc. of Notts.*, 64 (1960), Pl.1, 14.

23. A.Robertson, 'A Roman coin hoard from Mildenhall, Suffolk, *NC* 6th ser. 14 (1954), Pl.5, 30.

24. Coins from English sites and hoards are known to die-link with continental hoards. See Mattingly, 'The Lightwood hoard', p.24; J.Lallemand and M.Thirion, *Le Trésor de Saint-Mard 1* (Wetteren, 1970), pp.67-72; Boon, 'Counterfeit coins', and 'Counterfeiting in Roman Britain', *Scientific American* (1974), 120-30. The author knows of others, which will be discussed in future work.

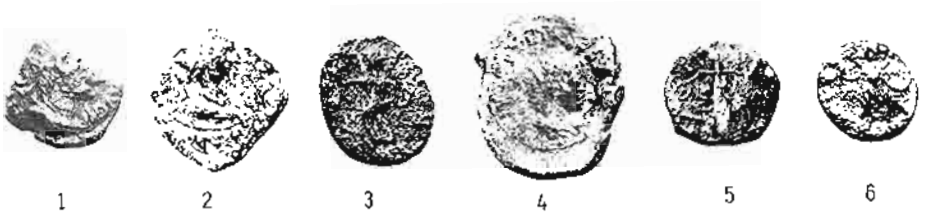
25. Professor Mattingly has encountered a similar situation among the 370 site finds from Winchester (forthcoming report on the barbarous radiates from Winchester).

26. Mattingly and Stebbing.

27. Boon, 'The counterfeiter's deposit' and 'A Roman counterfeiter's den'. H.B.Mattingly, 'A hoard of barbarous radiates from Sprotbrough, South Yorks.', *NC* 142 (1982), 21-33.

BARBAROUS RADIATES FROM RICHBOROUGH

PLATE 1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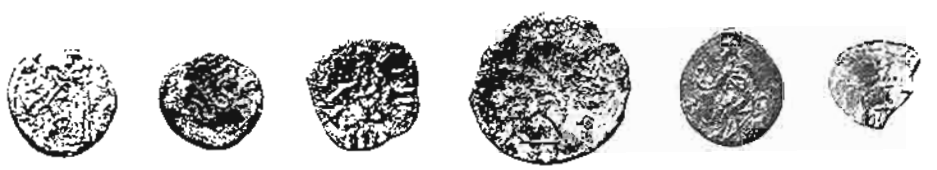
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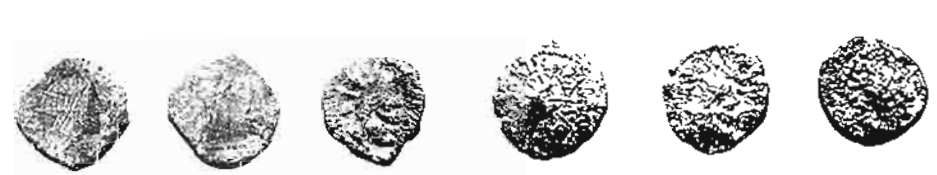
13 14 15 16 17


18 19 20 21

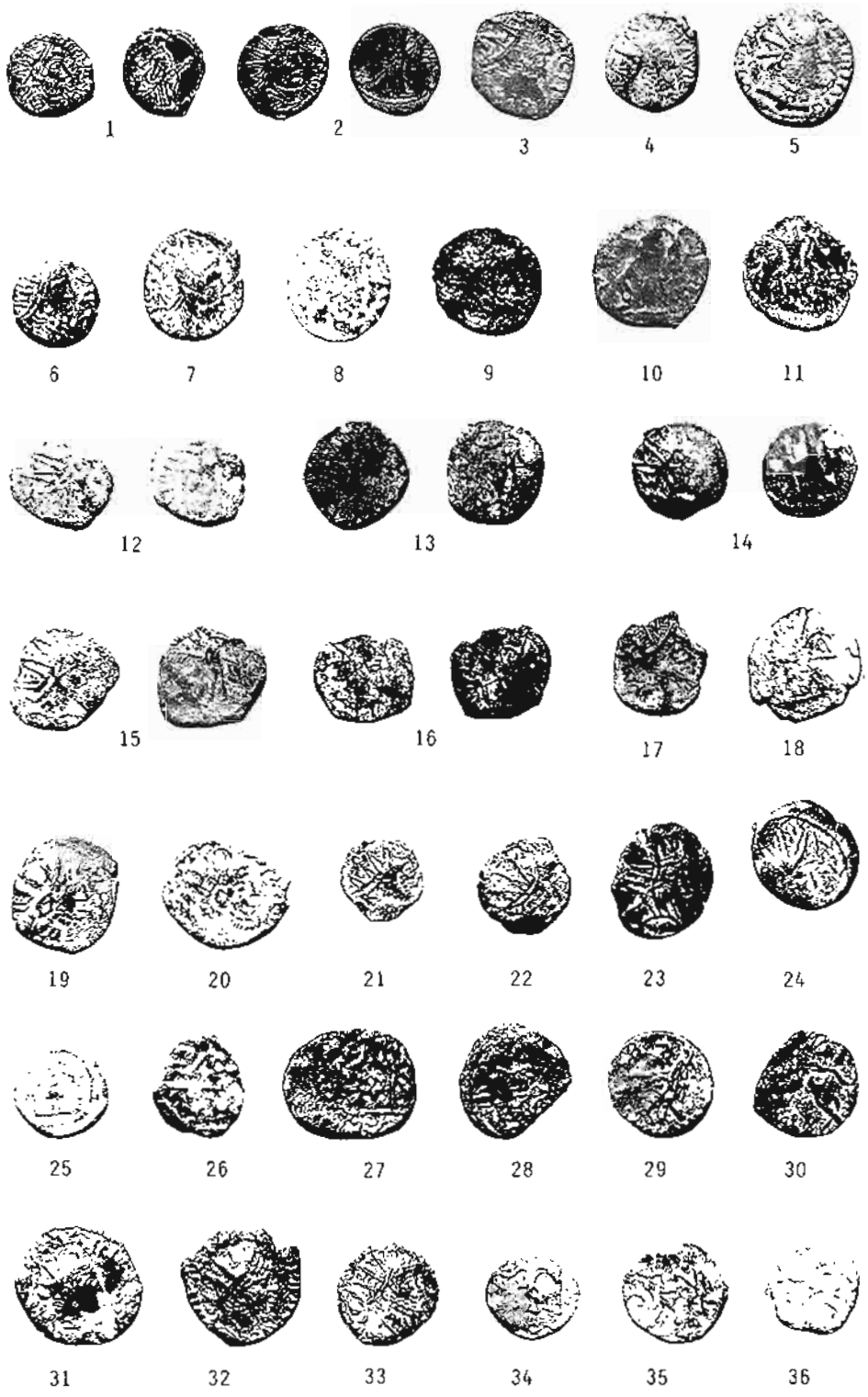

22 23 24 25


26 27 28 29 30


31 32 33 34 35 36

All coins shown are from Richborough

PLATE 2



No.18 is from the Newgate St hoard, London; no.20 is from Cirencester; no.24 is from the Goring-on-Sea hoard; all others are from Richborough.