

IX A Hoard of Roman Coins from Docker

by D.C.A. Shotter and A.J. White

a) The Site (A.J. White)

The hoard consists of 34 Roman bronze coins, detailed below, and was found by Mr. Moore of Carnforth and Mr. Denwood of Borwick on 1st March, 1975 in the bank of the River Keer at SD56207525. The river here is about 3 metres wide and forms the boundary between Lancashire and Cumbria.

A number of the coins were stuck together by corrosion products and lay at a depth of c10 cms. in the edge of the river bank. The remainder had been recently washed out by heavy rains and flooding, and lay scattered about at the water's edge. No trace of a container was seen, so it is probable that the coins had been buried loose or in a cloth bag which had subsequently rotted away. The river bank rises only about one metre above normal water level and consists of a layer of pebbles with iron staining, and above this, a thick layer of alluvial deposit, in which the hoard had lain. It is clear that the valley floor at this point is considerably wider than the river requires and the wooded cliffs rise at some 30-50 metres distance. It is therefore likely that the hoard was buried in an area subject to flooding and also to considerable changes in the river-course.

The find-spot is 50 metres downstream from the present bridge, on the left bank. Midway between the two are the remains of the stone abutment of the earlier (pre 1882) bridge. Just downstream of the find-spot is a ford, marked on the 19th century OS maps. It is suggested that these features represent an ancient route across the watershed of the Lune and Keer and that the hoard may have been deposited with reference to this route. The nearest sites yielding Roman material are Dalton (Cumbria) cSD541753 at 1½ miles, Sealford (Cumbria) SD583789 and Borwick Hall, (Lancs) SD524729 at 2½ miles and a possible site at Whittington, (Lancs) SD605774 at 3 miles. From this it would seem likely that a nearer site, probably a native farmstead, is yet to be discovered in the area.

b) The Coins (D.C.A. Shotter)

The hoard contained 34 coins, all of which were poorly preserved and badly corroded, three being totally illegible. The coins were all Antoniniani of the reigns of Emperors of the mid-third century A.D. Such coins are frequently found in hoards; uncertain economic circumstances not infrequently rendered them valueless almost overnight. Similarly some of these coins belong to Emperors of the rebel Gallic regime (Postumus, Victorinus and the Tetrici), and would therefore likely find themselves demonetised in the light of political change. Also, security within the province was increasingly tenuous, and coins were often buried in the hope of being able to retrieve them later.

The coins in this collection were distributed between the following Emperors;

Legitimate Emperors

Gallienus (253-268) 6  
 Claudius II (268-269) 2  
 Aurelian (269-275) 1

Rebel Emperors (Imperium Galliarum)

Postumus (260-269) 2  
 Victorinus (269-271) 9  
 Tetricus I (271-273) 7  
 Tetricus II (273) 1

illegible 6

a) Gallienus

- i. GALLIENVS AVG/VOTIS X
- ii. GALLIENVS AVG/VIRTVS AVG
- iii. GALLIENVS AVG/LAETITIA AVG
- iv. GALLIENVS AVG/PAX AVG
- v-vi. Coins recognisable from the obverse portrait.

b) Claudius II Gothicus

- i. IMP CLAVDIVS AVG/VICTORIA AVG
- ii. IMP CLAVDIVS AVG/CONSECRATIO

c) Aurelian

- i. Recognisable from the obverse portrait.

d) Postumus

- i. IMP C POSTVMVS P F AVG/?
- ii. Recognisable from the obverse portrait.

e) Victorinus

- i. IMP C VICTORINVS P F AVG/PAX AVG
- ii. IMP C VICTORINVS P F AVG/SALVS AVG
- iii. IMP C VICTORINVS P F AVG/PAX AVG
- iv. IMP C VICTORINVS P F AVG/PAX AVG
- v-ix. Recognisable from the obverse portraits

f) Tetricus I

- i. IMP TETRICVS P F AVG/PAX AVG
- ii. IMP C TETRICVS P F AVG/PIETAS AVG
- iii. IMP TETRICVS P F AVG/VIRTVS AVG
- iv. IMP C TETRICVS P F AVG/?
- v-vii. Recognisable from the obverse portraits.

g) Tetricus II

- i. Recognisable from the obverse portrait.

6 were totally illegible.