

THE CHALFONT ST. PETER ROMAN COIN HOARD 1989

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with contributions by
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Following the discovery of a large number of late third-century AD coins in a ploughed field and the subsequent unearthing of a group of three pots by a metal detector user, the County Museum excavated an area around the site of the discovery. A fourth pot was found and the location of a number of plough-scattered coins recorded. An inquest was subsequently held and a small part of the hoard declared Treasure Trove. A total of 6,685 coins were recovered from all contexts, the latest being of Probus of c. AD 281.

Numismatic study of the group by C. Cheesman suggests that a selective process was followed during accumulation of the hoard, perhaps relating to silver content, but that the pots were all filled and buried at roughly the same time. The archaeological site evidence suggests fairly strongly that there were three phases of deposition, although these may have been very close in time. It is of some interest that coins apparently from two identified foci, were found distributed over a distance as great as 10 metres. This might have been dispersal by ploughing but could also have been due to the presence of contemporary non-hoard coins on the site.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FIND

On the 24th September 1989 Mr Christopher Conway informed the Museum of the discovery, by metal detector, of about 40 Roman coins in a ploughed field at Chalfont St. Peter, Buckinghamshire. He noted that two pairs of coins were corroded together. He had been detecting in the field for two or three years prior to the discovery and had a 50:50 agreement with the landowner over finds discovered. The field had been deep-ploughed by contractors ten or eleven years previously in order to break up the subsoil. The coins first became detectable after a very dry period and the use of a reversible plough in August 1989.

After a site visit, contact was arranged between the finder and Dr. R. Bland of the British Museum, since it appeared that the coins might be from a dispersed hoard. By 9th October 120 coins had

been found. Shortly afterwards the discovery of three pottery vessels all containing coins was reported. It was at that time estimated that several thousand coins were contained within the vessels with additional loose coins dispersed in the general area. A pit had been dug by Mr. Conway and helpers (Fig. 1) and two of the pots (Fig. 1, 1 and 3) removed. At the same time other areas nearby were investigated with a fork (Fig. 1 'disturbance'). The Museum was then called to lift a further pot Fig. 1, (2) owing to its friable condition. This had been left on a pedestal of soil with no stratigraphic information remaining. The original position of pots 1 and 2 was pointed out at that time. They had lain almost immediately adjacent to each other and at the same depth below ground level (0.5m to the base of pot 2 from ground level), while pot 3 lay at a depth of approximately 0.7m to its base, suggesting two episodes of deposition (Fig 3).

A worn, domed, pottery lid with a diameter of 15cm was reported to have been found in loose association with the initial discovery. Mr Conway described its find spot as being "between pots 1 and 3" (Fig. 2, B). Also found within the pit dug by the finders, was a piece of worked flint (Fig. 2, C). A Mesolithic tranche axe was also recovered and thought to have been discovered in the most north-easterly part of the area disturbed during the search.

With the agreement of the finder and the landowner the Museum then arranged for archaeological examination of an area encompassing the hole dug by the finders. Further metal detecting was carried out concurrently. This resulted in the discovery of a fragmentary fourth pot (4) which also contained coins, some 4m distance from the first three. Further scattered coins (169) were also found, largely by metal detector, and plotted. Of these 43 were corroded together in clusters of between two and four coins. Plough-scoring was visible at subsoil level over the whole area and it was by this agency that many of the coins must have been scattered. Several other dispersed artefacts of various periods were also recorded.

All the finds from the excavation, including pot 4 and its contents, were handed to Mr. Conway who then passed them to the British Museum for identification and conservation.

THE EXCAVATION

The aim of the excavation was to locate any further vessels in the immediate vicinity of the group and to seek evidence for any associated structures or features which might give clues as to why this particular spot had been chosen for the deposition. An area 20 × 20m was defined for excavation, encompassing the find-spot of the group of three urns, and an area to the north and west where metal detector readings indicated a further concentration (Fig. 1).

The ploughed field in which the find was made slopes gently to the east and lacks distinguishing topographical features. The underlying geology of the site is Eocene Reading beds, which in this area are composed of rounded pebbles between 40–100mm, contained in a slightly clayey sand ma-

trix. The sand was yellow to pale yellow with iron-staining in places. Also present were occasional patches of grey clay flecked with manganese. There are chalk outcrops not far distant.

The topsoil was removed by a mechanical excavator with a 5' toothless ditching-bucket to reveal plough-scored weathered subsoil. This proved to be very shallow with an average thickness of 0.06m which deep-ploughing had in places cut through into the underlying natural. The subsoil, therefore, generally only survived between plough-scores. This layer was hand cleaned until the plough-scored horizon became clear. Any coins discovered were left *in situ* and plotted. Metal detecting was carried out intermittently and many more coins were recovered. Some lay within the blue-grey fill of the plough-scores, many were found in the meagre weathered subsoil between plough-scores. The fourth pot was located through its coin fill content, by metal detector. It proved to be the most shallowly buried of the four and in consequence had suffered most plough damage, the upper half of the pot having been removed. Despite careful examination, no cut or fill was observed around it. Eleven coins were found immediately around it, seven of which were corroded together in two pairs and a cluster of three. Several fragments of pottery derived from the vessel were also found near by and two orange-red sherds possibly derived from the pottery base lay 1.25m to the SSE (Fig. 2, A).

The area around the four pots was cleaned several times until the plough-marks disappeared and only clean, stony natural remained. It was not possible to do this over the whole trench owing to lack of manpower and time. Each time the level of the ground was reduced, coins were found either in the process of excavation or by metal detector; the effectiveness of the latter improved as the distance between detector and find reduced.

During the course of the excavation the complete base of a fifth pottery vessel in an orange-red fabric (Fig. 2, A) was found in an upright position between urns 1–3 and 4, immediately beneath the plough soil. It survived to a height of 50mm. It is tempting to see this as a further possible coin container, but no copper corrosion was present within the base.



Fig. 1: Chalfont St Peter: area of excavation, showing locations of Pots 1 to 4, and distribution of plough-scattered coins.

Immediately to the south of the three vessels, fifteen sherds of coarse black pottery with silica grits were found during excavation. (Fig. 2, D). There was a faint suggestion of a roughly oval pit containing them but, being on the same horizon as the plough-scoring and lacking any substantial depth, it was impossible to distinguish it from other subsoil features, such as root and animal action.

After the excavation Mr. Conway reported the discovery of a further 50 or so Roman coins, some fused together, in a field nearby. No further information is available about this discovery.

THE COINS

by Clive Cheesman

The total number of coins recovered was 6,685, distributed amongst the pots as indicated in Table 1 (see below). Of these 15 were bronze coins of various denominations, 43 were silver *denarii*, and the rest were base silver "radiates" or *antoniniani*, which are thought to have had a face-value of two *denarii* each. The coins were delivered to the British Museum for cleaning and cataloguing. A report and full list of the coins was later published in the British Museum's series *Coin Hoards from Roman Britain* (Cheesman, 1992).

The latest coins, all from Pot III, can be dated to

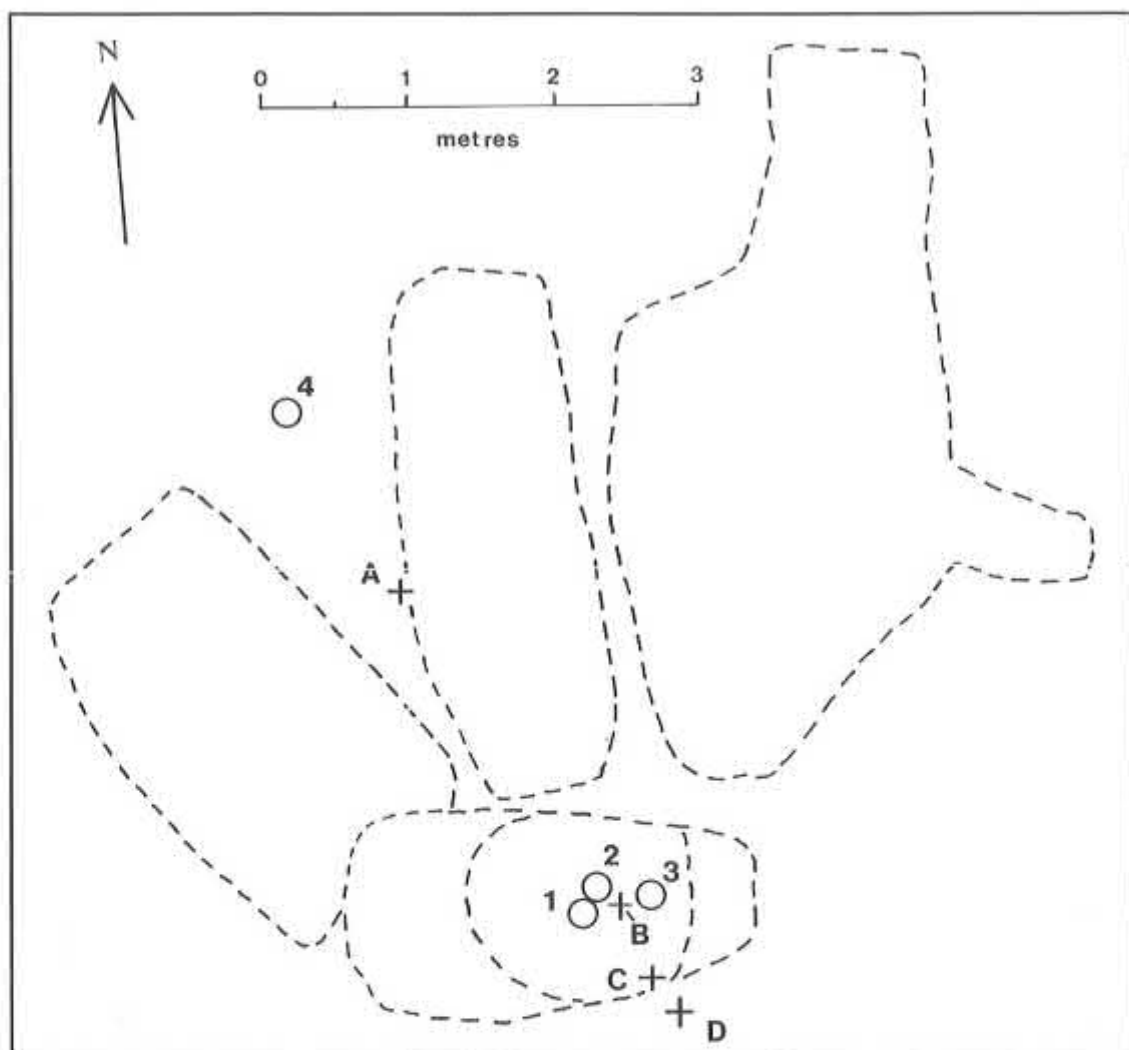


Fig. 2: Detail showing areas of disturbance, locations of pots 1 to 4, and associated finds. Also A: potbase (1000); B: approx position of the pottery lid (1502); C: flint flake (4012); D: pottery (1002).

about AD 281 under the emperor Probus. The earliest ones, all from Pot IV, are the bronze coins and silver *denarii*. From the reign of Gordian III onwards, the *denarius* was superseded as the main "silver" denomination of the Empire by the radiate, which had first been issued in 215 by Caracalla. In the second half of the century vast quantities of radiates were minted both by the legitimate Emperors in Rome and by breakaway states such as the so-called Gallic Empire which maintained independence from Rome between 260 and 274, comprising the provinces of Gaul,

Germany, Britain and Spain. Part of the reason that this section of the Empire was allowed to maintain independence for so long was that the Roman world as a whole was increasingly threatened by invasions and war, and the Gallic emperors at least shouldered the burden of repelling the Germanic incursions in the west, leaving the central authorities free to tackle the Parthians in the East. After the eastern threat was temporarily dealt with, the Gallic Empire was re-incorporated into direct Roman rule in 274, though warlike disturbance scarcely died down as a result.

One upshot of the general unrest and uncertainty of this period was that large numbers of radiates were laid down in hoards for safekeeping, and many deposits are known from all over the western provinces which consist of little or nothing else. The Chalfont St Peter find fits clearly into this category. There are, however, subtle differences in internal composition visible in radiate hoards of different date, owing to the changing proportions of the coinage in circulation: this was in turn due to the declining silver content of the metal from which they were minted, which led the earlier and better coins to be removed from circulation.

In examining and analysing the coins it was decided to treat them as making up a single find. This is a debatable approach, and has been subject to criticism (Guest, 1994). The same dilemma has arisen in other cases involving multiple deposits from the same field, such as Oliver's Orchard in Essex,¹ where one pot had a terminus of about 269, while the others date from 273 and 274.

An alternative interpretation of the present find would be to see Pots I–III as one hoard and Pot IV as another, partly because of its having been discovered at a distance from the other pots, and partly because of its different contents. It can be seen from the accompanying tables that Pot IV contains the earlier coins, namely all the silver minted before the rule of Trebonianus Gallus, and the greater part of that minted before Gallienus' sole reign. It virtually excludes coins minted after the death of Postumus, with only 36 from the later Gallic Empire, which give it a technical terminal date of 274. As stated above, the deposit as a whole has a terminal date of 281, and the differences between hoards of 274 and 281 are usually quite marked. So it would be possible to see Pot IV as a hoard of 274, and the other three pots as a single hoard of 281.

The reason for not adopting this approach was essentially that, even as a hoard of 274, Pot IV was unusual. Though there are differences between deposits of the mid-270s and those of the reign of Probus, they are not the same as the differences

between Pot IV on the one hand and Pots I–III on the other. Pot IV contains much more early, good silver coin and much less late base coinage than most independent deposits of the period around 274. Certainly it is unusual to find this much good silver coin of the early part of the century in a hoard of the 280s, but if one regards Pot IV as part of a single deposit together with the other pots the proportions are at least considerably less unlikely. It was therefore decided to treat the deposit as a single hoard, the owner or owners of which had deliberately placed the earlier and more valuable coins in a separate pot, perhaps beginning to fill it up some considerable time before the date of deposition. Selection of this sort is hardly rare, and has been discussed by J-P Callu (1979). He notes that, in hoards of more than one pot, but with a common terminus for all the pots, one pot may represent the normal circulation of the time of deposition, while the others show signs of "thésaurisation", either by weight, type, denomination, or size. Of course, the extent to which the "normal" part of the hoard really does show normal proportions depends entirely on the exclusivity of the criteria adopted for selecting the other part of the hoard.

It is clear that if this interpretation is correct in the case of the Chalfont find, the criterion being employed was silver content, which took a distinct down-turn in Gallic Empire mints late in the reign of Postumus. In the Central Empire, silver content had dipped at the start of the sole reign of Gallienus, and it is immediately noticeable that practically all the Central Empire coins minted from then on are in Pots I, II and III. Since the sole reign of Gallienus began nine years before the death of Postumus, it may well be that the burier of the hoard was paying close attention directly to decreasing silver content rather than applying a universal cut-off point for Pot IV.

The initial interpretation of the coins, that they are the contents of a single hoard, is therefore cautiously maintained. The "tail" of 36 later Gallic Empire coins most naturally looks like a handful of pieces casually added by the depositor, perhaps in the process of making the deposition. It of course remains possible (as noted below in the discussion) that the hoard was deposited in phases: Pot III, though containing the latest coins of all, and buried close to Pots I and II, was found at a markedly

1 R. F. Bland and I. A. Carradice, 'Oliver's Orchard, Colchester, Essex', *CHRB* VI, 65–118. Another very similar group of three hoards was discovered at Beachy Head: R. F. Bland, 'The 1973 Beachy Head Treasure Trove', *NC* 1979, 61–107.

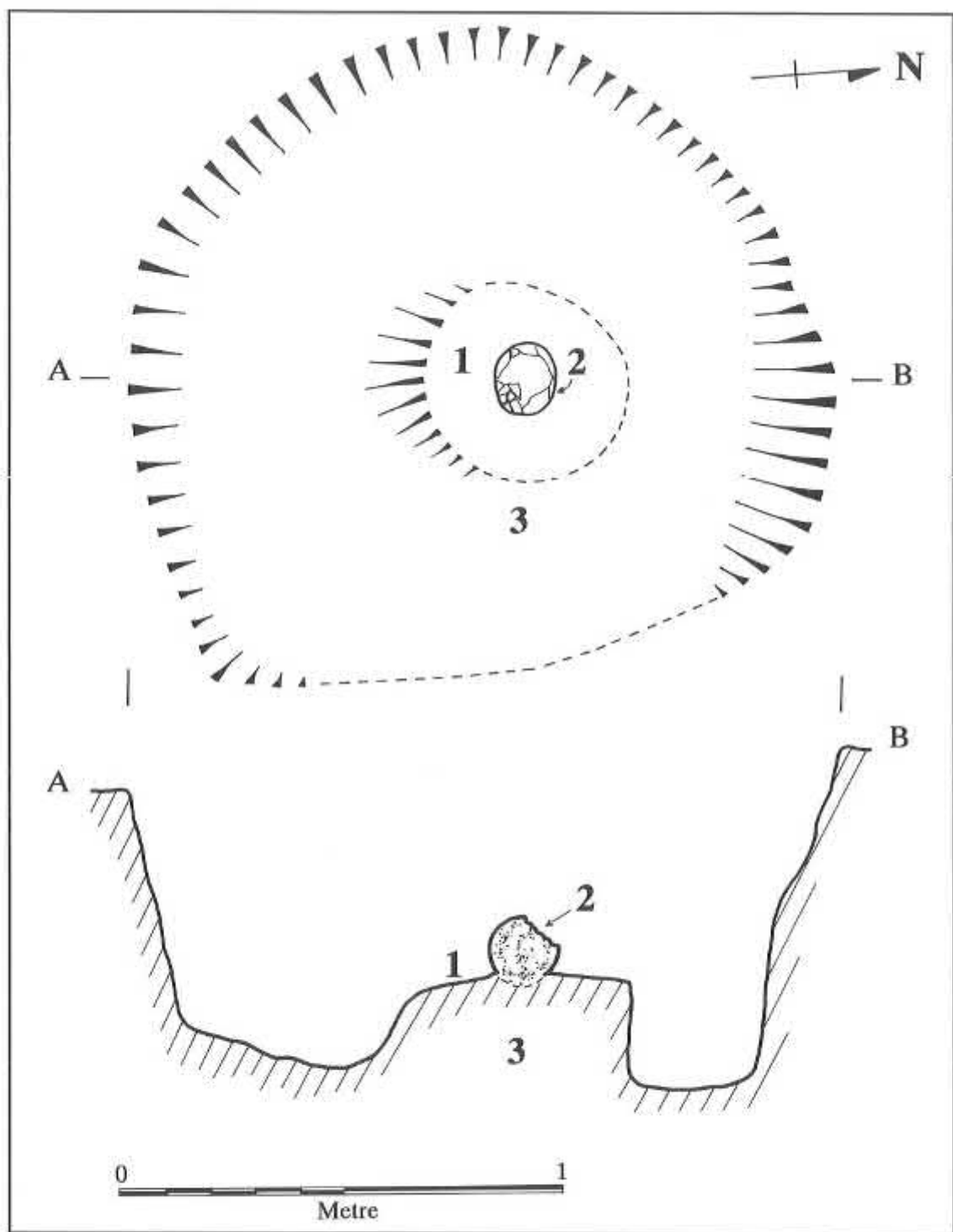


Fig. 3: Plan and section showing location of Pots 1-3.

TABLE I.
Chalfont St Peter hoard

<i>Reign</i>	<i>Pot IV</i>	<i>Pot II</i>	<i>Pot I</i>	<i>Pot III</i>	<i>Scatter</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Bronze coins	5	—	—	2	8	15	0.2
Central Empire							
Septimius Severus	3	—	—	—	—	3	<0.1
Caracalla	2	—	—	—	—	2	<0.1
Elagabalus	15	—	—	—	—	15	0.2
Severus Alexander	21	—	—	—	—	21	0.3
Maximinus	1	—	—	—	—	1	<0.1
Gordian III	120	—	—	—	—	120	1.8
Philip	109	—	—	—	—	109	1.6
Trajan Decius	65	—	—	—	—	65	1.0
Trebonianus Gallus	97	—	—	1	—	98	1.5
Aemilian	2	—	—	—	—	2	<0.1
Valerian and Gallienus	314	11	—	47	13	385	5.8
Gallienus and Salonina	15	179	120	520	52	886	13.3
Claudius II	11	79	112	354	37	593	8.9
Divus Claudius II	1	5	4	23	3	36	0.5
Quintillus	3	3	13	37	6	62	0.9
Aurelian	—	3	—	19	—	22	0.3
Tacitus	—	—	—	80	—	80	1.2
Florian	—	—	—	4	—	4	0.1
Probus	—	—	—	55	—	55	0.8
<i>Total Central Empire</i>	<i>784</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>249</i>	<i>1142</i>	<i>119</i>	<i>2574</i>	<i>38.5</i>
Galic Empire							
Postumus	85	35	8	135	12	275	4.1
Laelian	—	—	—	3	1	4	0.1
Marius	—	3	4	17	1	25	0.4
Victorinus	27	136	263	902	77	1405	21.0
Divus Victorinus	1	—	—	1	—	2	<0.1
Tetricus I & II	8	113	741	950	37	1849	27.7
<i>Total Gallic Empire</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>287</i>	<i>1016</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>3560</i>	<i>53.3</i>
Irregular coinages	6	17	65	103	6	197	2.9
Illegible	8	2	3	1	340	354	5.3
Total	919	586	1333	3254	593	6685	

lower level than the others, while Pot IV was almost four metres away. But since by terminal date Pots I, II and IV were all associated with each other and distinguished from Pot III, any reconstruction of the order and manner of deposition will be by necessity complex, and therefore tenuous. Perhaps the simplest is that Pots I, II and IV were buried at the same time in the mid-270s, Pot IV being placed away from the others because it had more valuable contents: a deliberate avoidance of putting all the eggs in one basket. Some coins from Pots I or II had perhaps fallen out, and these were added to Pot IV before it was interred. Later, Pot III was deposited on the same spot as the other two pots that contained similar coins.

The internal proportions of the hoard are worth commenting on in connexion with this argument. The main bulk of the hoard begins with 226 coins of Gordian III and Philip (3.4% of the whole). This is extremely unusual for a hoard deposited in the reign of Probus or later, or indeed at any time after 270. The coins of these emperors had circulated widely in the 250s, but evidence from other hoards has made it clear that they disappeared from the currency during the reign of Postumus.² The fact that all the specimens in the current hoard were in Pot IV therefore can only increase speculation about its own date of deposition and its relation to the rest of the hoard. If it is treated on its own, the proportion of coins from these reigns to the whole is 24.7%, which seems more in line with an earlier burial. However, it is still high for 274. Therefore, as proposed elsewhere, there seems little reason to rule out the notion that collecting coins for the hoard began at an early date, and that Pot IV contains these early pieces.

Again, unusually for deposits made after the reign of Postumus, the hoard has a high proportion of coins of the Joint Reign from the mint of Gaul: 206 out of 385, or 53.5%. It is usually considered that the relative fineness of these coins ensured their removal from circulation, whether by official action or by hoarding, during the reign of Postumus. However, with one exception, all the Mint of Gaul pieces in the current hoard emanate from Pot IV, whose tendency to contain coins of higher silver content has already been noted sev-

eral times. Once again, comparison may be made with the hoard or hoards from Oliver's Orchard, where 'Hoard I', the selected pot, with an earlier terminal date, has 360 coins from Gaul out of 442 of the Joint Reign, or 81.4%, while those 360 pieces in turn represent 86.7% of the total number of Mint of Gaul coins in all three 'hoards' combined. At Chalfont, Pot IV's proportion of 205 Gaul to 82 Rome, or 71.4%, would in any other situation point to an earlier date of deposit for that pot: as it is, the tail of Victorinus and Tetricus pieces indicates that these figures are the result of selection. It may be added that, even without the tail, the total concentration of coins from the Gaulish mint in Pot IV, and corresponding lack of them elsewhere (except for one found amongst the scatter), might appear suspiciously like deliberate selection, rather than different dates of deposit. One would expect a small percentage of Gaul coins in the other pots if they represented a different hoard. As it is, the contents of Pot IV in this respect suggest two things. First, that the silver content of Joint Reign coins from Gaul was generally known to be higher than those from Rome; and second, that Pot IV in particular, and the hoard as a whole, was formed at least partly on different principles from those of most hoards of a post-Postuman date, lacking as they do many pieces from the Mint of Gaul, that is with an element of prospective saving starting some time before the date of deposition. That, at least, is the implication of the discovery of large numbers of such coins in a hoard of similar date to others which contain few or none. The question of the manner of the removal of these coins from circulation during the reign of Postumus, however, remains open. It may be that the phenomenon was entirely due to private action, and that most of the coins saved in this manner were hoarded and buried soon, within the reign of Postumus. The Chalfont examples would be exceptions to this, clearly being kept for much longer than normal before deposition as part of a hoard. On the other hand, it may be that their disappearance from the currency was due to their being officially recalled, and that this action itself alerted the public to the relative fineness of the coins.

There were a number of interesting coins in the hoard. Amongst the earlier issues are two coins from Alexandria, a bronze dichalkon of Marcus

2 See the table in E. M. Besly and R. F. Bland, *The Cunetio Treasure* 1983, 16 (British Museum Publication)

Aurelius and a denarius of Julia Domna. The evidence is uncertain, but it may be that the former represents the first undoubted presence of an Egyptian bronze coin in a British hoard. The denarius of Julia Domna, which is attributed to Alexandria, is also a very rare coin to be found in Britain. The hoard also contained a very rare dated issue from the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus minted at Viminacium, in Moesia: one other example is known, but the reverse reading is less certain. The Chalfont specimen confirms the dating of the third issue of the joint reign at Viminacium to 255. Of the two pieces in the hoard minted for the "Gallic" emperor Victorinus after his death, one is of great rarity, being known only from a few examples previously (one was published in 1988). Its importance lies in the fact that owing to the combination of obverse and reverse designs it possesses, it almost certainly confirms that the coinage minted in memory of the dead Victorinus was produced at more than one mint. In the general lack of detailed knowledge about the minting practices of the Gallic Empire, this is of some importance.

At a Coroner's Inquest at High Wycombe on 31 October 1990, all the silver coins minted before the reign of Trebonianus Gallus (336 pieces) were declared Treasure Trove. Nine of the Treasure Trove coins were acquired by the British Museum (Mr Conway generously waiving his right to the normal reward), together with the 46 coins not declared Treasure Trove which were donated jointly by Mr Conway and the landowner. The remaining 327 Treasure Trove coins have been acquired by the County Museum at Aylesbury.

THE POTTERY

by Val Rigby

The four vessels which had contained coins were available for study.

Pot 1: Wheel-thrown narrow necked jar decorated with at least three shoulder grooves and a band of combed scroll. Dark grey coarse grained ware heavily tempered with white quartz sand and dark grey argillaceous pellets. A thin white matt slip extends from the neck to below the maximum girth, with drip marks on the lower body. Possibly a product of the Alice Holt

potteries (Farnham, Surrey): all the features are represented there, but not on a single vessel (Lyne and Jefferies 1979). Mid third to early fourth century AD. Complete and standing body, extending in parts to top shoulder groove. No joining sherds recovered although all fractures fresh. Weight 54 grams.

Heavy corrosion deposits invade forming an asymmetrical 'tideline', which reaches the neck on one side and the height of 60mm from the base on the opposite side, suggesting the pot was tilted. Coin impressions: 17mm.

Pot 2: Plain wheel-thrown flask. Fine-grained clay matrix tempered with dark grey argillaceous pellets; light blue-grey ware, with abraded smooth outer surface, and darker grey inner. The complete neck and body circuit survives to below the maximum girth, but no base sherds. The fracture edge is smooth and abraded suggesting that the base may have been lost in antiquity. Probably a product of Oxfordshire grey-ware potteries, similar to Young R16 (1977).

Copper corrosion extends from the fracture edge to within 10mm at the lip edge, leaving room for a 'stopper', so that the pot could have been inverted. Weight 479 grams. Coin size 13mm.

Pot 3: Wheel-thrown flask with a single shoulder groove. Coarse-grained quartz-tempered fabric; under-fired, with brown core, dark blue-grey surfaces; finished with roughly smoothed zones on the shoulder and at the base. A local product. When recovered, complete and standing from neck to base, but body had radial and horizontal cracks and one sherd had fallen away. No evidence of the rim recovered. The fracture edge is smoothed and may have been trimmed deliberately in antiquity. The pot had to be broken to remove the coins. Weight 1221 grams.

Corrosion extends over entire interior surface as far as the pot survives. Two coin sizes represented: 18 and 16mm.

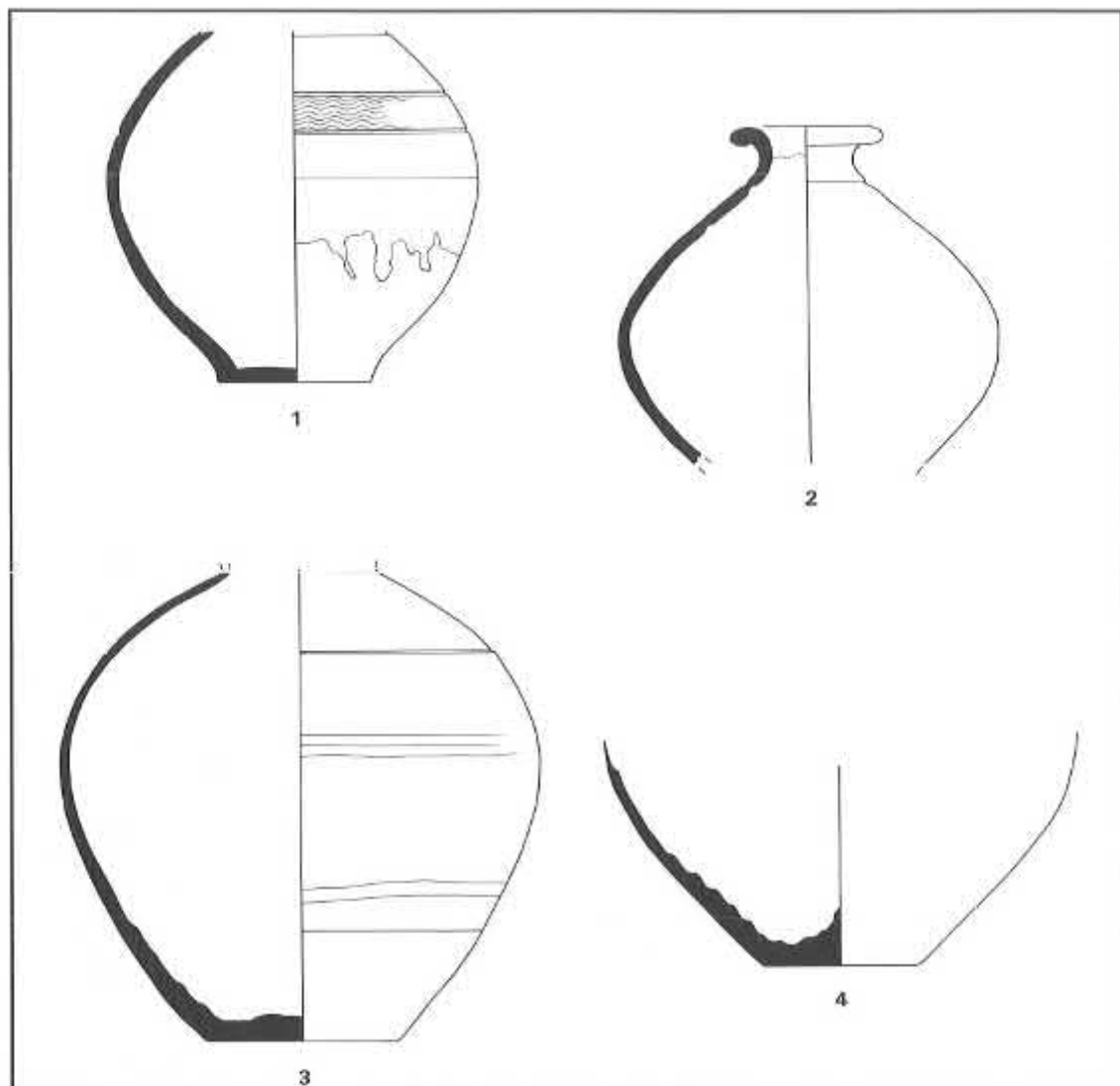


Fig. 4: Pottery from the hoard (scale 1: 3). Drawing by Val Rigby.

Pot 4: Complete base circuit, up to about the maximum girth, from a wheel-thrown vessel of unknown form, in the same fabric and from the same source as Pot 1. Joining sherds were recovered, but include no rims. Weight 383 grams. Corrosion extends over entire interior surface as far as the pot survives. Two coin sizes represented: 18 and 16mm.

Pots 3 and 4 are local products made at a kiln close to their findspot. The gritty texture of the

matrix, with visible white quartz grains, can be matched in sherds from the Roman kiln at Fulmer (Tarrant and Sandford 1972). The match is not exact because the Fulmer sherds also contain a considerable quantity of dark grey organic inclusions which are not noticeable in the Chalfont pots. The current interpretation is that the same source of clay and sand were used for Pots 3 and 4 and some pots in the Fulmer assemblage, so the production centre could be in the vicinity of Fulmer.

It is of interest that all three classifiable vessels are round bodied, an ideal shape to pack in the maximum number of coins, while the vessel neck would be easy to cover or seal.

OTHER FINDS

Amongst other finds recovered either before or during the excavation, and passed back to the owners before being fully recorded, were:

- (a) a transept axe, found by detectorists whilst digging in the area of the hoard pots.
- (b) several struck flints SF nos. 4,000–4,005 and 4,006–4,011
- (c) several metal objects found in the field including the terminal from a hide shaped shield of Iron Age date, and a piece of a late Bronze Age socketed axe.

THE PRESENT DISPOSITION OF THE FINDS

The British Museum has nine Treasure Trove coins and 46 others. The County Museum has 327 coins from that part of the hoard declared Treasure Trove (Acc No 1992–100.1–327) purchased with the aid of a grant from the V & A/MGC, and also 3 pots purchased at the Glendinings, London, auction by the Museum and one kindly presented to the Museum by Mr. C. Conway (Acc No 1993.142.1–3 and 1993.129.1). Many of the remainder of the coins were sold at the auction.

DISCUSSION

The numismatic findings have been discussed above. Numismatically the whole can be defined as one 'hoard'. From an archaeological point of view, however, there appear to have been at least three episodes of 'hoarding', however close they may have been in time. Pots 1 and 2 were at the



Fig. 5: Chalfont St Peter hoard: pit dug by finders, showing location of Pots 1 and 3; Pot 2 has been left *in situ* on an earth pedestal.



Fig. 6: Detail of pot 2 *in situ*, looking east.

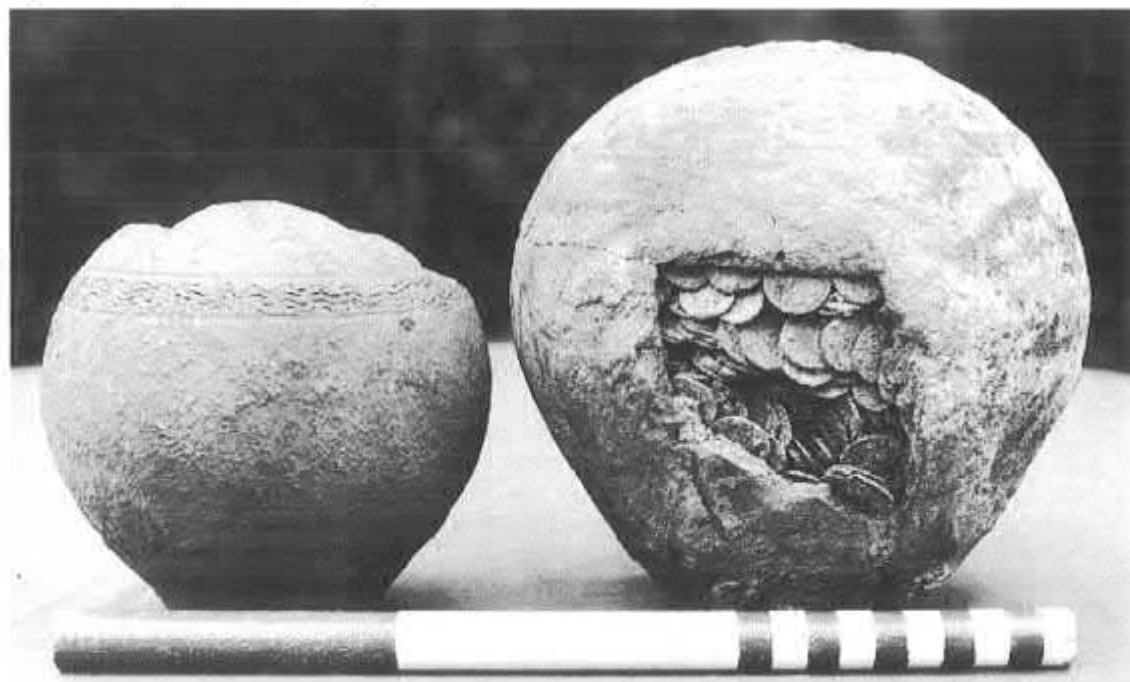


Fig. 7: Pots from the Chalfont hoard: 1, left, and 3, right.

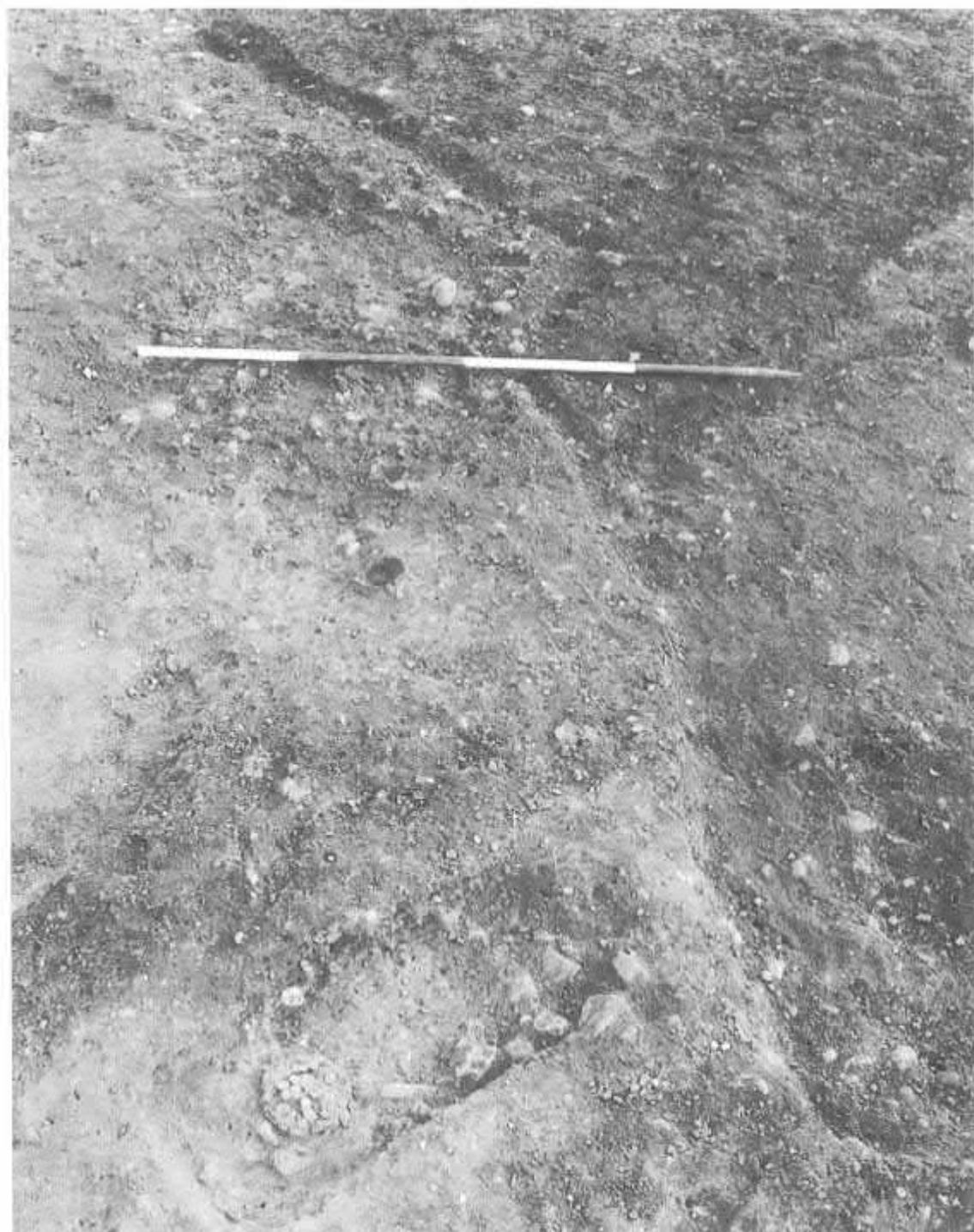


Fig. 8: Detail of excavated area, looking SSE, showing, foreground: Pot 4 *in situ*; pottery base (Fig 2, A), between Pot 4 and ranging rod; site of discovery of Pots 1 to 3 behind ranging rod; area forked over by finders, right of picture.

same depth of 0.50m and lay side by side suggesting one deposit; pot 3 lay at a minimum of 0.20m east of vessel 2 and at the greater depth of 0.70m, suggesting a separate episode of deposition. Pot 4 lay between 3.8–4.00m in distance from pots 1–3, again suggesting a separate episode. There is also the presence of the upright base of a fifth vessel (Fig. 2, A), lying between the two groups, admittedly with no firmly associated coins. The reported presence of a further hoard in an adjacent field, although possibly a coincidence, does raise the question of deposition of the coins for non-economic reasons. It is theoretically possible that some non-hoard coins may have been present on site, providing an explanation for the widely dispersed distribution of the coins (Fig 1), however this dispersal may simply demonstrate the significant impact of cross-ploughing on archaeological deposits over the centuries, even in a level terrain. The find is not associated with any known site of the Roman pe-

riod suggesting that the hoarding may have taken place beside an obvious marker, such as a prominent tree. Perhaps, to speculate wildly, and bearing in mind the separation between the groups, on either side of such a feature.

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