

Roman Coins found at North Curry, including Part of a Hoard.

BY H. ST. GEORGE GRAY.

IN the "Victoria History of Somerset" (Vol. I, pp. 354-6), Dr. Haverfield has brought together a record of several hoards of late Roman silver coins found in Somerset; and it appears from his remarks that such hoards are commoner in this county than in most parts of Britain. This is a remarkable fact, and the reason for their occurrence in the south-west is not clear.

The recent donation of eight silver Roman coins to Taunton Castle Museum, by Miss Mary Woodforde, of Stoke St. Mary, near Taunton, brings to light the record of the discovery of a hoard of Roman silver coins at North Curry in 1748 (the eight coins above-mentioned forming part of the hoard). This "find" was evidently considered of some importance at the time, as it was recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. xviii, 1748, p. 405, as follows:—

"Mr. Urban,

"At North Curry, near Taunton, Somersetshire, July 12, 1748, there was ploughed up, in a field where a hedge had stood, an urn, in which were contain'd several silver Roman coins, viz., of Gratianus, Valentinianus, Valens, Theodosius, Honorius, Arcadius, Constantinus, Constans, Julianus, Mag. Maximus, and many others. They are all of the same size, excepting one of Gratianus, with this inscription: D. N. GRATIANUS. P. F. AUG., and, on the reverse, a sort of an

angel standing with one of his feet on a globe, with a shield in his hands; in which are these words, VOT. V. MUL. X. and in the round, VICTORIA AUGUSTORUM, and in the bottom, S.M.T.R. This piece is three times as large as any of the others, and weighs very near a shilling. There have been found about 150 of the smaller pieces, and the greatest part of them are now in the possession of the Rev. Mr. Woodforde, vicar of North Curry above-mentioned.

“They have been view’d by several learned gentlemen, and are reckon’d to be some of the greatest curiosities of that kind hitherto found. They are as perfect, and free from decay, as if they were but very lately coin’d, notwithstanding the latest of them is above 1350 years old.

Your constant Reader, etc.,

Sept. 12, 1748.”

J. PILE.

Mr. Woodforde was the Rev. John Woodforde, Vicar of North Curry from 1746 to 1760; he was Miss Mary Woodforde’s great grandfather, so that there is no doubt as to the authenticity of the remaining coins. She states that the hoard was found in Mr. Woodforde’s glebe land, but she has no written testimony to that effect: I think therefore that we should follow Dr. J. H. Pring, who wrote in 1878 that the hoard was found in Lillesdon, one of the tithings making up the large parish of North Curry (*Proc.*, xxiv, ii, 109).

Unfortunately nearly all the coins have been dispersed. The eight that remain together are small base silver coins, or *siliquae* as they were called during the Byzantine Empire. There are six of Julianus II (Julian the Apostate), A.D. 355-363, one of Valens, A.D. 364-378, and one of Magnus Maximus, A.D. 383-388. From the account in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, assuming that “Constantinus” is Constantine the Great, the period represented by the hoard extends approximately from A.D. 306 to A.D. 410. These dates are similar to those covered by the silver coins (A.D. 337-410) found in 1821 in a field

called "Ten Acres," at Holway, Taunton, of which hoard there are several specimens in the Society's Museum. (*Proc.*, vol. xxiv, ii, 104).

The following are the details of the eight silver coins forming part of the hoard found in the parish of North Curry:—

JULIANUS II (6).

Nos. 1 to 3. *Obv*:—D. N. FL. CL. IVLIANVS P. F. AVG. Diademed and draped bust to r. *Rev*:—VOT. X. MVLTV. XX. within a wreath of laurels. In exergue PCONST. [*Struck at Arles (Constantia). Cohen 148*].

No. 4. *Obv*:—As last. *Rev*:—As last, except the mint-mark, which is SCONST. [*Struck at Arles (Constantia). Cohen 148*].

No. 5. *Obv*:—FL. CL. IVLIANVS P. P. (*sic*) AVG. Diademed and draped bust to r. *Rev*:—VOT. X. MVLTV. XX. within a wreath of laurels. In exergue PLVG. (*Struck at Lyons. Cohen 146*).

No. 6. *Obv*:—D. N. IVLIANVS P. F. AVG. Laureated and draped bust to r. *Rev*:—VOTI. V. MVLTI. X. within a wreath. Mint-mark cut off. (*Apparently a new variety. Cohen, 160, gives VOTIS. V. MVLTI. X.*)

VALENS (1).

No. 7. *Obv*:—D. N. VALENS P. F. AVG. Diademed and draped bust to r. *Rev*:—VRBS ROMA. Rome seated to l., holding a Victory upon a globe, and a sceptre. In exergue TRPS. (*Struck at Trèves. Cohen 109*).

MAGNUS MAXIMUS (1).

No. 8. *Obv*:—(D. N. MAG. MAXI)MVSV P. F. AVG. Diademed and draped bust to r. *Rev*:—VIRTVS BO(MANORVM). Rome seated to l., holding a Victory upon a globe, and a sceptre. In exergue TRPS. (*Struck at Trèves. Cohen 20*).

The eight under-mentioned "base denarii" (popularly known as Roman "third brass" coins) were also found at North Curry during the Rev. J. Woodforde's incumbency, and have been presented to the Society's Museum by Miss Woodforde.

GALLIENUS, A.D. 254-268 (1).

No. 1. *Obv*:—GALLIENVS AVG. Radiated head to r. *Rev*:—APOLLINI CONS. AVG. Centaur walking to l., holding a globe and some arrows. In exergue H. [*Struck in Thracia (?). Cohen 73*].

SALONINA, wife of Gallienus (1).

No. 2. *Obv*:—SALONINA AVG. Diademed bust to r., with the crescent. *Rev*:—PVDICITIA. Pudicitia standing to l., holding her veil and a sceptre. In field Q. (*Cohen 92*).

VICTORINUS, A.D. 265-267 (4).

No. 3. *Obv*:— —INVS P. F. AVG. Radiated head to r. *Rev*:—Defaced.

No. 4. *Obv*:—IMP. C. VICTORINVS P. F. AVG. Radiated and draped bust to r. *Rev*:—PIETAS AVG. Piety standing to l., near a kindled altar, putting there a grain of incense and holding a perfume-box. (*Cohen* 90).

No. 5. *Obv*:—As No. 4. *Rev*:—SALVS AVG. Health standing to r., feeding a serpent which she holds in her arms. (*Cohen* 112).

No. 6. *Obv*:—As Nos. 4 & 5. *Rev*:—Inscription defaced; "Virtus Aug." type. Mars (?) or a helmeted soldier standing to r., holding a spear and leaning upon a shield. (*Cohen* 131).

CLAUDIUS GOTHICUS, A.D. 268-270 (1).

No. 7. Probably Claudius Gothicus, but somewhat defaced.

QUINTILLUS, A.D. 270 (1).

No. 8. *Obv*:—IMP. C. M. AVR. CL. QVINTILLVS AVG. Radiated and draped bust to r. *Rev*:—FORTVNA REDVX. Fortune standing to l., holding a rudder placed upon a globe, and a cornucopia. In field Z. (*Cohen* 32).