

A hoard of *denarii* from Middlewich, Cheshire

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A hoard of thirty *denarii* was found in May 1998 on a development site on the west side of King Street, the main Roman military route from the north Midlands into north-west England (NGR lodged with the County Sites and Monuments Register). The coins range in date from a legionary *denarius* of Marcus Antonius (32–31 BC) to an issue of Hadrian's reign (AD 125). The present hoard thus joins a recognisable group in north-west England with termination-dates in the first quarter of the second century.¹ There was no sign of a container, and the coins may have been kept in a bag or wrapper of fabric. I am grateful to the late Stephen Penny, Curator of the Salt Museum at Northwich, for facilitating my examination of this hoard.

Summary of coins

Era	Number of coins	Reference (see abbreviations)
Republican	1	Crawford 544,29
Augustus	1	<i>RIC</i> I (2) 167a
Vespasian	4	<i>RIC</i> 8, 21, 67, 90
Titus (as Caesar)	2	<i>RIC</i> (Vesp), 208, 218
Titus	2	<i>RIC</i> 26a, 63
Domitian	4	<i>RIC</i> 138, 166, 175, 186
Trajan	12	<i>RIC</i> 52, 99, 104, 115, 128(2), 180, 202, 216, 269, 275, 287
Hadrian	4	<i>RIC</i> 44, 83, 139, 162

¹ D. C. A. Shotter, 'Three early Imperial hoards from Lancashire', *Coin Hoards* IV (1978), p. 44.

As one would expect of a savings-collection which closed early in Hadrian's reign, the bulk of the coins are Trajanic and Hadrianic (80%), although the earlier Flavian coins exhibit a considerable degree of wear, indicating much usage in circulation. There are clear signs of the effects of Trajan's recall of 'old silver' in c.AD 107² in the near-absence of pre-Neronian silver from this hoard. The presence, however, of the coin of Augustus indicates that Trajan's legislation may have taken some time to become fully effective in Britain. The issue of Antonius is less significant because contemporary belief in the poor silver-quality of Antonius' coins evidently allowed them to escape the recall; it is not unusual to find them, worn virtually smooth, in contexts as late as the early decades of the third century. I have discussed elsewhere Roman coin-hoards from Cheshire and the large sample of Roman coins from the Middlewich area.³

The coins

Inscriptions, dates and references to the individual coins are given in the following listing:

Marcus Antonius (1)

1. ANT AVG IIIVIR R P C | LEG XIV; Crawford 544,29; 32–1 BC

Augustus (1)

2. AVGVSTVS DIVI F | IMP X (Bull butting right); *RIC* I (2) 167a; 15–13 BC

Vespasian (4)

3. IMP CAESAR VESPASIANVS AVG | COS ITER TR POT (Neptune); *RIC* 8; AD 69–71
4. IMP CAESAR VESPASIANVS AVG | PONT MAX (Caduceus); *RIC* 21; AD 69–71
5. IMP CAES VESP AVG CEN | SALVS AVG; *RIC* 67; AD 73

² Dio Cassius 68.15, 3; R. Reece, 'Numerical aspects of Roman coin hoards in Britain', pp. 79–84 in *Coins and the archaeologist*, ed. P. J. Casey & R. Reece, Oxford (*BAR* 4), p. 84.

³ Shotter, 'Middlewich: The evidence of Roman coin loss', *Chester Arch. Journal*, LXXV (1999), pp. 51–60; Shotter, *Roman coins from north-west England: Second supplement* (Lancaster, 2000), pp. 157–91.

6. IMP CAESAR VESP AVG | PON MAX TR P COS VI (Pax); *RIC* 90; AD 75

Titus (as Caesar) (2)

7. T CAESAR VESPASIANVS | ANNONA AVG; *RIC* (Vespasian) 218; AD 78–9
8. T CAESAR IMP VESPASIANVS | TR POT VIII COS VII (Trophy and Captive); *RIC* (Vespasian) 208; AD 79

Titus (2)

9. DIVVS AVGVSTVS VESPASIANVS | Shield, bearing S C, supported by two capricorns; *RIC* 63; AD 80–1
10. IMP TITVS CAES VESPASIAN AVG P M | TR P IX IMP XV COS VIII P P (Dolphin and Anchor); *RIC* 26a; AD 80

Domitian (4)

11. IMP CAES DOMIT AVG GERM P M TR P VIII IMP XIX COS XIII CENS P P P | (Minerva); *RIC* 138; AD 88–9
12. IMP CAES DOMIT AVG GERM P M TR P XI IMP XXI COS XVI CENS P P P | (Minerva); *RIC* 166; AD 92
13. IMP CAES DOMIT AVG GERM P M TR P XIII IMP XXII COS XVI CENS P P P | (Minerva); *RIC* 175; AD 93–4
14. IMP CAES DOMIT AVG GERM P M TR P XIII IMP XXII COS XVII CENS P P P | (Minerva); *RIC* 186; AD 95

Trajan (12)

15. IMP CAES NERVA TRAIAN AVG GERM | P M TR P COS IIII P P (Mars); *RIC* 52; AD 101–2
16. IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P | COS V P P SPQR OPTIMO PRINC (Victoria); *RIC* 128; AD 103–11
17. As 16
18. IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P | COS V P P SPQR OPTIMO PRINCIPI (Genius); *RIC* 180; AD 103–11
19. IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P | COS V P P SPQR OPTIMO PRINC (Roma); *RIC* 115; AD 103–11
20. IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P | COS V P P SPQR OPTIMO PRINC PIET; *RIC* 104; AD 103–11
21. IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P | COS V P P SPQR OPTIMO PRINC DAC CAP; *RIC* 99; AD 103–11

22. IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P | COS V P P SPQR
OPTIMO PRINCIPI (Virtus); *RIC* 202; AD 103–11
23. IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P | COS VI P P SPQR
OPTIMO PRINCIPI (Mars); *RIC* 269; AD 112–7
24. IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P | COS VI P P SPQR
OPTIMO PRINCIPI (Genius); *RIC* 275; AD 112–7
25. IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P | COS VI P P SPQR
OPTIMO PRINCIPI DACICA (on shield) (Victoria); *RIC* 287;
AD 112–4
26. IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P | COS VI P P SPQR
OPTIMO PRINCIPI (Dacia); *RIC* 216; AD 112–7

Hadrian (4)

27. IMP CAESAR TRAIAN HADRIANVS AVG | P M TR P COS II
PAX; *RIC* 44; AD 118
28. IMP CAESAR TRAIAN HADRIANVS AVG | P M TR P COS III
SALVS AVG; *RIC* 139; AD 119–22
29. (Fragmentary) IMP CAESAR TRAIAN HADRIANVS AVG | P
M TR P COS III (Felicitas); *RIC* 83; AD 119–22
30. HADRIANVS AVGVSTVS | COS III (Roma); *RIC* 162; AD
125–8

Abbreviations

Crawford: M. H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (Cambridge, 1974).
RIC: H. Mattingly, et al., *The Roman Imperial Coinage* (London 1923–).