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Alford Hill
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Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society.

Notice of a Discovery of Roman Coins

AT BEACHAMWELL.

COMMUNICATED BY

ROBERT FITCH, ESQ., F.S.A., &c.

HON. TREASURER AND SECRETARY.



.1601/231.

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NOTICE

OF A

Discovery of Roman Coins

At Beachamwell,

IN THE COUNTY OF NORFOLK.

BY

ROBERT FITCH, F.S.A., F.G.S., &c.



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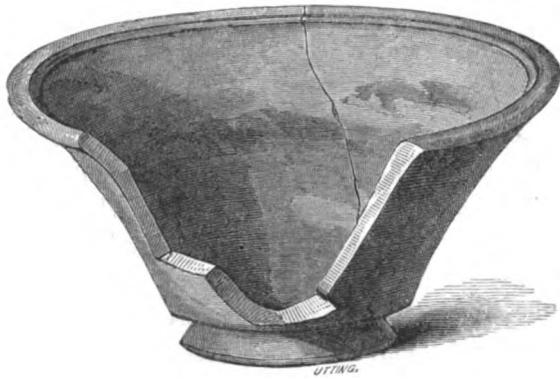
ROBERT FITCH, ESQ., F.S.A., &c.

HON. TREASURER AND SECRETARY.

EARLY in the year 1846 some Roman Silver Coins were found in the parish of Beachamwell in this county. My late friend, S. W. Stevenson, Esq., F.S.A., to whom they were submitted, and whose interest in numismatic pursuits and intimate acquaintance with the ancient classics and their history, peculiarly fitted him for the task, drew up a descriptive catalogue of them, which has been long hidden among my papers, but which the Society may think not unworthy of record in the pages of our *Archæological Journal*; for the study of ancient coins may worthily interest others, besides the antiquary.

Many a student has been indebted to coins for his interpretation of an ancient writer, and the historian has found in them the most certain evidences of history. The reigns of Roman Emperors, Gibbon tells us, might in some instances be almost written from their coins; and the artist has been indebted to them for the delineation of much that is beautiful in art; and not unfrequently for models of admirable execution.

Those which are described in the following catalogue were found on Beachamwell Sheepwalk, near the Wellmore plantation, by a lad sent to fetch a load of sand. In digging for the sand, he struck his spade against an earthen pot, from which fell fifty or more pieces of silver money. The pot, which was of Roman manufacture, was broken by the stroke. It had been covered—as was usually the case when such vessels were buried with treasure, and were not inverted—by a smaller jar, or dish, of much finer ware than the larger one: this escaped the blow of the spade. The engraving here given shows the form of the larger vessel, and on the bottom, the potter's name, SOSIMIM, clearly stamped.



The spot where they were buried was about two feet from the surface; and level with and near to it during the preceding summer had been found an urn, but no vestiges of



charcoal, bone, or metal, which usually indicate a burial-ground. Not that this is conclusive that the place had never been used for the purpose of interment, as such relics might easily escape cursory observation ; and if the spot had been so appropriated, it was probably, according to the Roman practice of sepulture, near a highway ; but I am not aware that any traces of such remains have been or can at this day be discovered.

The positions in which from day to day these treasures are found in the county, show that the Romans had at one time complete possession of the hills and streams of the district. None of these discoveries have hitherto pointed to the existence of a city, or of any extensive villa, but rather to stations occupied for military purposes, and these are shown to have been numerous and well chosen, both for defence and for facility of communication with each other.

Upon this subject, Pinkerton, in his *Essay on Medals*, remarks, "It was no doubt a custom with that people, in every instance ardently desirous of fame, to bury parcels of coin as a monument of their having as it were taken possession of the ground," leaving behind them these enduring memorials, and thus preserving an unquestionable record of facts.

There is also another reason to account for the occasional discovery of parcels of coin, which is, that they were probably deposited by their possessors whenever they had more than they could carry about with them, a custom even to this day amongst some of the nations of the East.

These hoards are sometimes discovered undisturbed, but they are more frequently dispersed by modern excavations, and, scattered about, are found singly or in small numbers, at different times, as chance or accident may bring them to the surface.

The land on which the coins were found was the property of the Hon. C. Spencer Cowper, and to him, I believe, they were ultimately sent.

The only rare reverses amongst them are the "Tellus Stabilita" and the "Hispania" of Hadrian, together with a type of Hercules of the same reign, and the "Fortuna Obsequens" of Antoninus Pius.

I have ventured to make the catalogue rather more descriptive than usual, but to this some of our younger members will probably not object.

VESPASIAN,

Reigned from A.D. 69 to A.D. 79.

1. IMP. CAESAR VESPASIANVS AVG. Laureate head of Vespasian.
Reverse: COS. VII. An eagle standing on an altar. (A.D. 76.)
2. Same obverse.
Reverse: COS. ITER. TR. POT. Female figure, seated, holding ears of corn in her right hand, and a caduceus in the left. (A.D. 70.)
3. Same obverse and apparently the same reverse.
4. Same obverse.
Reverse: COS. ITER. TR. POT. Mars, walking; a spear in the right hand, and a trophy on his left shoulder. (A.D. 70.)
5. [IMP. CAE]S. VESP. AVG. CENS.—*Imperator Caesar Vespasianus Augustus Censor*. Laureate head of the Emperor. The legend and portrait of the obverse much effaced, and the impression of the reverse totally obliterated.

DOMITIAN,

A.D. 81 to 96.

6. CAESAR DIVI F. DOMITIANVS COS. VII. Laureate head.
Reverse: PRINCEPS IVENTVTIS.—*Prince of the Roman Youth*. A title of honour appropriated to the heir apparent or presumptive of the imperial throne. (A.D. 77—79.) Struck during the lifetime of Vespasian. Type—a lighted altar.
7. IMP. CAES. DOMIT. AVG. GERM. P. M. TR. P. XIII.—*Imperator Caesar Domitianus Augustus Germanicus Pontifex Maximus, Tribunitiae Potestatis xiii.*—The Emperor Cæsar Domitian, the August, the German, Sovereign Pontiff, enjoying the Tribunitian power for the thirteenth time.
Reverse: IMP. XXII. COS. XVI. CENS. P. P. P.—*Imperator XXII., Consul XVI., Censor Perpetuus, Pater Patriæ*—Emperor for the twenty-second,

Consul for the sixteenth time, Perpetual Censor, Father of his Country.
Minerva, standing, with javelin in right hand, and buckler in the left.
(A.D. 94.)

NERVA,

Rigned two years, viz., A.D. 96 to 98.

8. IMP. NERVA. CAES. AVG. P. M. TR. P. COS. II. P. P. Laureate head of the Emperor.
Reverse : FORTVNA AVGVST. Fortune, standing, with rudder in right hand, and cornucopiae in the left. (A.D. 97.)

TRAJAN,

From A.D. 98 to A.D. 117.

9. IMP. CAES. NERVA TRAIAN. AVG. GERM. Laureate head.
Reverse : PONT. MAX. TR. POT. COS. II. Peace, standing, with branch and cornucopiae. (A.D. 98.)
10. IMP. TRAIANO. AVG. GER. DAC. [P. M. TR. P.] Laureate head of Trajan.
Fine portrait of him.
Reverse : COS. V. P. P. S. P. Q. R. [OPTIMO PRINC.] Equity, standing, with balance and cornucopiae. (A.D. 104—110.)
11. Same epigraph and head; and probably same legend on the reverse. Figure holding cornucopiae, but in bad preservation.
12. IMP. CAES. TRAIAN. HADRIANVS. AVG. Head of the Emperor, laureate.
Reverse : P. M. TR. P. COS. III. Female figure, clothed in the stola, holding a branch in right hand, and the *hasta pura* in the left.

HADRIAN,

A.D. 117 to 138.

13. IMP. CAESAR TRAIAN. HADRIANVS. AVG. Well-preserved and good portrait of the Emperor.
Reverse : P. M. TR. P. COS. III. Figure of a female divinity, standing, with *hasta pura* and branch.
14. HADRIANVS AVG. COS. III. P. P. Laureate head.
Reverse : VICTORIA AVG.—Victory of the Emperor. Victory, seated, holding a garland; patera in right hand, and palm branch in left.
15. HADRIANVS AVG. COS. III. P. P. Head laureate.
Reverse : TELLVS STABIL.—*Tellus stabilita*—"The earth made firm," or established. *Tellus* was worshipped as a deity at Rome. A figure, in

a short rustic vestment, standing, holding in the right hand a plough-share, and in his left a rake; at his feet are two corn ears.

[This legend and type were intended to eulogise the government of Hadrian, not only for affording security to the husbandman from the ravages of war, but also for preserving peace and *stability* throughout the Roman world.]

16. Same obverse.

Reverse: HISPANIA. Female figure, seated on the ground, holding an olive branch in her right hand; at her feet is a rabbit, one of the attributes of Spain when personified on Roman coins.

17. HADRIANVS AVG. COS. III. P. P. Laureate head of the Emperor.

Reverse: VICTORIA AVG. Victory, seated, a garland in the right, a palm branch in the left hand.

18. Same obverse.

Reverse: COS. III. Pallas, sitting on armour, holding the *hasta* in her right hand, and the *parazonium* in her left.

19. HADRIANVS AVGVSTVS. Head laurel-crowned.

Reverse: COS. III. Hercules, holding his club in the right hand, and a figure of Victory in his left, and seated on a shield and a cuirass, near which is a helmet of the Hesperides. Fig. in Dr. King's Table LX., No. iv.

[This reverse is not described by either Mionnet or Akerman, but is engraved and noticed by Pedrusi in his *Musée Farnèse*.]

ANTONINVS PIVS,

Reigned from A.D. 138 to 161.

20. ANTONINVS AVG. PIVS P. P. IMP. II. Laureate head of the Emperor.

Reverse: TR. POT. XX. COS. IIII. Female figure, seated, holding a cornucopiæ, or some other thing, in the right hand.

21. ANTONINVS AVG. PIVS. TR. P. XVII. Head of the Emperor, without laurel.

Reverse: COS. IIII. Female figure, (Fortune personified) with rudder and cornucopiæ. (A.D. 154.)

22. ANTONINVS AVG. PIVS P. P. TR. P. XXIII. Laureate head.

Reverse: SALVTI AVG. COS. IIII. The goddess Hygeia standing, holding in her right hand a patera, which she offers to a serpent rising from an altar. (A.D. 160.)

23. DIVVS ANTONINVS.—*The divine Antonine*. Naked head of the Emperor.

Reverse: CONSECRATIO. The *rogus*, or funeral pile.

[Struck after his death in honour of his apotheosis.]

24. ANTONINVS AVG. PIVS. P. P. IMP. II. Laureate head.
Reverse : TR. POT. XX. (COS. IIII.) The Goddess of Health, seated before an altar, holding out a patera to a serpent. (A.D. 157.)
25. [ANTONINVS]S AVG. PIVS. P. P. TR. P. XVII. Laureate head.
Reverse : COS. IIII. Female figure holding a rudder in the right and cornucopiæ in the left hand. Well preserved.
26. ANTONINVS AVG. PIVS P. P. TR. P. XXI. Laureate head.
Reverse : FORTVNA OPSEQVENS (sic) COS. IIII. Fortune, standing, with rudder in her right and cornucopiæ in her left hand. (A.D. 158.)
 [This is a reverse of some rarity, and the excellent preservation of the coin itself of course adds to its value. We here see, by a change from one consonant to another of similar sound, *opsequens* written for *obsequens*. There were two temples at Rome dedicated to compliant or obedient fortune (*Fortuna Obsequenti*). That the goddess was known under this name at Rome in Plautus's time is proved by a passage in that dramatic author, where a servant or slave, Leonida, being asked "by the name of what deity she wished to be called," answered, "by the name of *Fortuna*, and of *Fortuna obsequens* too." (Eckhel.) The type and legend denotes, says Patin, that the goddess had shewn herself condescending (*obsequentem*) in all things to the Emperor Antoninus.]

FAUSTINA THE ELDER,

Died A.D. 141.

27. DIVA PAVSTINA. Head of the Empress, wife of Antoninus Pius.
Reverse : AVGVSTA. Vesta, clothed in the *stola* and veiled, stands before a lighted altar, over which she extends a patera with the right hand; in her left is the Palladium.
28. The same obverse.
Reverse : CONSECRATIO. A veiled female figure, holding in her right hand ears of corn, and in her left a torch.
29. The same obverse.
Reverse : AETERNITAS. A female figure, holding in her right hand a globe, and in her left the end of a veil which floats above her head.
 [The above three are *consecration* medals, which her husband after her death caused to be struck in honour of her memory and deification.]

MARCUS AURELIUS,

A.D. 161 to 180.

30. M. ANTONINVS AVG. ARM. PARTH. MAX.—*Marcus Antoninus Augustus Armeniacus Parthicus Maximus*. Laureate head of the Emperor.

Reverse : TR. P. XX. IMP. III. COS. III. The type of Peace, with cornucopia and branch. Below the figure, PAX. (A.D. 166.)

[The legend of the reverse is a continuation of that on the obverse, and marks the year when the coin was struck, viz., that of the Emperor's twentieth investiture with the *Tribunitian* power, his fourth assumption of the title of *Imperator*, and his third *Consulate*.]

31. IMP. M. AVREL. ANTONINVS AVG. Bare head of Aurelius.
Reverse : PROV. DEOR. (*Providentiæ Deorum*—to the Providence of the gods)
 TR. P. XVI. COS. III. A female, standing, with a globe in her right hand, and a cornucopia in her left. (A.D. 162.)

FAUSTINA THE YOUNGER,

Wife of Aurelius, A.D. 140 to 175.

32. FAUSTINA AVGVSTA. Head of the Empress.
Reverse : DIANA LVCIF. (Diana Lucifera.) Female figure, clothed in the *stola*, holding a torch transversely with both hands.
 [Amongst the various names and forms under which this goddess was represented and designated by different nations of antiquity, was the epithet of *Lucifera*, or one who brings light, typified by a torch-bearing female. If her brother, according to the well-known myth, (Apollo, or the Sun) was the God of Day, she, in her capacity of *Lunar* planet, enlightened mortals during the night. Faustina is here flattered as another Diana!]

LUCIUS VERUS,

Reigned as colleague of M. Aurelius from A.D. 161 to 169.

33. L. VERVS AVG. ARM. PARTH. MAX. Laureate head.
Reverse : TR. P. VIII. IMP. V. COS. III. Equity, in the *stola*, stands holding the balance and cornucopia. (A.D. 168.)
 [A well-preserved coin, and, as usual with all those of Verus, of good workmanship.]
34. IMP. L. VERVS AVG. Naked head.
Reverse : PROV. DEOR. TR. P. III. COS. II. The type of Providence, with globe and cornucopia. (A.D. 163.)
35. L. VERVS AVG. ARM. PARTH. MAX. Laureate head.
Reverse : TR. P. V. IMP. III. COS. II. An Armenian captive seated on the ground, with his hands tied behind his back, and near him a quiver, a bow, and a shield. (A.D. 165.)
 [Struck in ill-deserved honour of Verus for the conquest of Armenia and Parthia, achieved by his lieutenants and soldiers whilst he was reveling at Antioch.]

COMMODUS (Lucius Aurelius)

A.D. 180 to 192.

36. **COMMODO CAES. AVG. FIL. GERM. SARM.**—To Commodus Cæsar, son of the Emperor, (M. Aurelius) the German, the Sarmatian. Young head of Commodus.

Reverse : PIETAS AVG[VSTI]. Sacerdotal instruments, consisting of the præfericulum, the aspergillum, the lituus, the simpulum, &c. (A.D. 175.)

[This is a coin of dedication to Commodus, struck whilst he was as yet only Cæsar, before he received the title of *Augustus* or even of *Imperator*. Eckhel assigns it to A.D. 175-176, viz., three years before his father's death, and his own accession to the empire.]

37. — Denarius of the *Antonia* family, struck about 40 years before Christ.

[The legend of the obverse of this denarius being more than half effaced, and both type and legend of the reverse entirely obliterated, it can only be conjectured from comparison with similar consular coins, that it was struck by one of the moneyers of Mark Antony, during his triumvirate with Octavian and Lepidus, the letters being **III VIR. A. P. C.** (*Triumvir Rei Publicæ Constituendæ*), and the representation of a vessel, being the *Navis Prætoria*, or Roman Admiral's galley. On the obverse of such medals we generally see the number of some Roman **LEG[10]**, accompanied by the type of a legionary eagle between two military ensigns.]



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