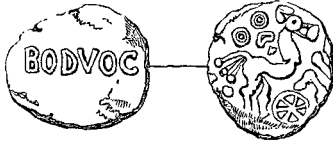


## III.

## NOTES ON AN ANCIENT BRITISH GOLD COIN INSCRIBED "BODVOC."

By GEORGE SIM, Esq., CURATOR OF COINS S.A. SCOT.

The coin, of which the annexed woodcut is given, was found on November 27, 1861, in a recently enclosed garden at a place called Birkhill, near the town of Dumfries, by Mrs Lilius Christie or Kinross, mother-in-law of Mr Robert Cowan, seedsman, the owner of the spot. It was claimed



by Exchequer, and has now been presented to our Museum.

Mr Akerman states,<sup>1</sup> "We have the assurance of Cæsar that the Britons had not a coinage of their own at the period of his invasion; and on this authority Eckhel maintained that they were unacquainted with a stamped currency until a late period of the Roman empire." He also states that Mionnet adopted the opinion of Eckhel, but that Sestini notices the absurdity of Mionnet, in having classed the coins of Verulam and Camulodunum under the head of Gaulish chiefs.

It has now, however, been satisfactorily established,<sup>2</sup> that a currency of coined money must have existed in some parts of the island before the time of Cæsar's invasion, and that the coins of this class are those rudely imitated from the Greek or Gaulish Philippus. From this prototype, by means of successive imitations by ignorant moneyers, a number of new and totally distinct types arose, until their original was quite lost sight of.

It has also been farther established,<sup>3</sup> that the native British coinage must have survived till, at all events, some years after the accession of Claudius, not only among the Brigantes and Iceni, as had hitherto been conjectured, but also among one of the tribes of the west of England, and that possibly the long-sought for Cangi.

<sup>1</sup> Cities and Princes, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Numismatic Chron. vol. xii. p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Numism. Chron. New Series, vol. i. p. 1.

On intimating the discovery of our coin to Mr John Evans, F.S.A. (editor of the "Numismatic Chronicle" and secretary of the Numismatic Society), he most kindly submitted to me the MSS. of his forthcoming admirable work on Ancient British Coins, and supplied me with part of the information contained in my paper, and I am also indebted to him for the use of the woodcut. Since it was read, however, Mr Evans has published in the "Numismatic Chronicle" an account of this coin; and as he embodies all my details, giving a most concise and learned summary of all that is known on the subject, I have by his permission substituted a portion of his communication for my own:—

"The type is already well known, but this specimen, though not in fine preservation, is remarkable as giving the whole of the legend,—either the initial B or the final C being usually wanting on these coins, on account of the flan being generally smaller than the dies, as is so commonly the case with the coins of this series. On the obverse is BOBVOC in large letters across the field, and on the reverse is a disjointed three-tailed horse to the right; above two ring ornaments and a crescent; below a wheel, behind a pellet; in the field three small pointed crosses. From some specimens, the whole appears to have been surrounded by a circle of pellets set at a little distance apart. The usual weight of these coins is from 83 to 85 grains; in the present instance it is  $80\frac{3}{4}$  grains, the coin having lost to some extent by wear.

"There are two slight varieties of them, one having the letters rather larger than the other, and being also more convex and concave. The Dumfries coin is of the flatter kind, with the smaller letters. On both there is a slight indentation round the edge of the letters, showing that they were not engraved, but punched into the dies, and that the burr thus occasioned was not removed from the face of the dies, probably with the view of giving greater apparent relief to the letters on the coins.

"Though the legend upon them occupies the same position as the TINC and COM . F . on the coins found in Hants and Sussex, yet it differs materially from them in its not being placed in a sunk recess like a countermark, but standing up in relief on the field. When we look at some of the British coins, with a plain convex obverse,—such, for instance, as those found at Whaddon Chase (Num. Chron., vol. xii. Pl. i. Nos. 8, 9),—we at once perceive that this presents the most eligible

place for an inscription on coins struck after that pattern, and the reverse of these *BODVOC* coins testifies to some such prototype having been used.

“The small crosses upon the field of the reverse are found also upon the coins reading *CATTI* and *VOCORI* . . . as well as on those of *Antedrigus*.<sup>1</sup> The same cross appears under the horse’s head on the gold coin found at Mount Batten, near Plymouth, engraved in Hawkins, Pl. i. 6, as well as on the silver coins, both inscribed and uninscribed, of which a number were found at Nunney, near Frome. The small cross which occasionally is found on the gold coins of *Cunobeline* (see Akerman’s ‘*Cities and Princes*,’ Pl. xxiii. 1, 2), differs in character from these, and has more the appearance of being a sort of mint mark.

“In workmanship, the coins inscribed *BODVOC* are rather neater than the other inscribed coins of the same district—Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Oxfordshire. They are heavier and of finer gold than those of *Antedrigus*, though some few of the coins inscribed *CATTI* and *VOCORI* . . . ? exceed them in weight.”

Mr Evans, after noticing the places where these coins have been found, and the works in which they are mentioned, proceeds:—

“The gold coins have long been known, having been engraved by both Camden and Speed; and most of the earlier writers on British coins, and some of the more recent, who have not gone deeply into the subject, have been inclined to assign them to *Boadicea*, or *Bunduica*, queen of the *Iceni*, the leader of the revolt against the Romans in A.D. 61, which is described by Tacitus, and by Xiphilinus in his *Epitome of Dio Cassius*. There can, however, be no doubt that such an attribution is erroneous, as not only have the types no connection with those of the coins which are usually found within the *Icenian* territory, but the recorded places of finding of the coins inscribed *BODVOC* are all on the opposite side of Britain. These coins, moreover, form only a part of a series peculiar to the western part of England, of which probably they are the earliest, while the latest were in all probability struck some years before the revolt under *Boadicea*.

“There is, indeed, no ground for supposing that any coins were struck

<sup>1</sup> Numism. Chron. N. S. vol. i. p. 11.

by Boadicea, who never seems to have exercised the queenly power, unless as the leader of a short-lived revolt, and whose chief complaint against the Romans was that the kingdom left by her husband, Prasutagus, to which possibly she hoped to have succeeded, was overrun and pillaged by their troops, she herself scourged, and her daughters put to shame. There are, besides, no coins which can safely be attributed to Prasutagus, who, from his wealth and the peaceful possession of his territory, was far more likely to have struck coins.

“There is much more probability of truth in the supposition which originated with Camden, that the inscription on these coins bears some relation to the Boduni, or Dobuni, a tribe whose capital, according to Ptolemy, was Corinium (Cirencester), and who were located in and around Gloucestershire, the county in which the coins have principally been found. . . . .

“In Camden’s *Britannia* (Ed. 1637, p. 645; Gough’s Ed. vol. iii. p. 123) is a notice of an inscription at Mynydd Margan, in Glamorganshire, of which a rude woodcut is given. It runs as follows:—

BODAOC HIC IVCIT  
FILIAS CVTOTIS IRNI  
PRONEPOS ETERNVLI  
VE DOMAA.

“The last words are read by Camden, ‘Æternali in domo;’ but in whatever manner the inscription is to be read, it would seem as if it were in memorial of *BODVOC*, who spelled his name in precisely the same way as it appears on these coins, as there can be no doubt that the fourth letter is a *v*, from its recurring in the same form in *FILIAS*. The *A*-s are also reversed in the same manner in *IVCIT* and *ETERNVLI*. The coincidence in the name is very remarkable, though some centuries must have elapsed between the two *Boduocs*, whose names are preserved, the one on the coins, and the other on the stone of *Maen Llythyrog*. Some remarks, both on the inscription and the coin, are given in the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, vols. iv. and v., by Professor Westwood. *BODVOC* (*BODVOC FECIT*) occurs also among the Potters’ marks from the *Allies*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Roach Smith’s *Coll. Ant.* vol. vi. p. 72

“The supposed connection between *BODVO* and the *Boduni*, may therefore, after all, be purely imaginary, as besides these instances, we meet with the same syllables entering into the composition of some Gaulish names, such as *Boduognatus*, a prince of the *Nervii* mentioned by *Cæsar* (to whom these coins have by some been attributed), and *Boduogenus*, whose name occurs as the maker of an elegant bronze vessel discovered in the Isle of *Ely*, and engraved in the *Archæologia*, vol. xxviii. p. 436, who must probably have been of Gaulish origin.

“Unsatisfactory as it may appear, the whole that can with certainty be predicated of these coins is, that they were struck in the western part of *England* at a rather late period of the *British* coinage. To this may be added the probability that on them is preserved a portion, or possibly the whole of the name of some prince, and that he reigned over the *Boduni*.”