

# The Beau Street, Bath Hoard

edited by

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ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD

Summertown Pavilion

18-24 Middle Way

Summertown

Oxford OX2 7LG

[www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com)

ISBN 978 1 78491 594 0

ISBN 978 1 78491 595 7 (e-Pdf)

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Printed in England by P2D

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## Foreword

The Beau Street Hoard is one of the most remarkable finds ever to be discovered in Bath. It is a coin hoard with a fascinating story of discovery, and a mystery at its heart, as we look for explanations of why it may have been hidden. It is also a find with the potential to tell us more about the Roman settlement and its setting, and through further analysis of its metallurgy to offer insights into the nature of the Roman currency and how people were using the coins it contains in the wider Roman world.

The research and publication of the hoard is the result of a partnership between The Roman Baths and the British Museum. The many contributors to this volume have tackled the questions the hoard poses and shared with us their current thinking on its meaning and significance. It is not the largest Roman hoard from Britain, but it is one of the largest yet found from a Romano-British town. The results from the micro-excavation of the hoard in the British Museum laboratory, which allowed its coins to be separated and allocated to the original bags in which they were deposited, has shown how careful scientific examination can yield so much more information than less carefully excavated finds. It is a model for others to follow.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank the authors and the many people and organisations who have helped with the publication of this work and the delivery of the wider Beau Street Hoard project.

Firstly, the generosity and support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund in encouraging the development of a project that created the greatest public benefit for an enormously wide range of people. This included support for a re-worked display gallery the legacy of which is that the hoard can now be seen by more than a million people each and every year. Secondly the contribution of Julia Tubman, then project conservator at the British Museum, who gave the better part of a year of her life to the careful micro-excavation and cleaning of the hoard in the lab: work that made possible the detailed analysis and interpretation that is reported on in this volume. Then Richard Abdy who led the wider British Museum team that carried out the analysis of the hoard and Verity Anthony from the Roman Baths who co-edited this volume with him.

The excavation of the hoard was carried out by Cotswold Archaeology in terrible conditions on a cold, wet and windy November day. The curatorial and learning teams at the Roman Baths, led by Susan Fox and Lindsey Braidley, organised and recorded the hoard and managed the enormous number of learning and public engagement activities that were built up around it. They were helped by their many volunteer supporters, both individuals and from the U3A.

All of this was overseen by Project Officers Saira Holmes and Katie Scaife.

Notable amongst the project benefactors was Trevor Osborne whose donation funded the conservation of the hoard, and the Headley Trust whose regular support has helped this and many other museums to respond to the impact of the Treasure Act. Bath & North East Somerset Council played its part and other significant grants came from YTL Hotels (Gainsborough Bath Spa Hotel); Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund; The Roman Society; The Association for Roman Archaeology and The UK Numismatic Trust.

Finally, but not least, thousands of visitors to the Roman Baths, inspired by its site and collections and the story of the hoard, supported the project through small and modest contributions – a real crowdfunding solution.

Stephen Clews  
Roman Baths & Pump Room Manager



## List of Bibliographic Abbreviations

<i>BMC</i>	H Mattingly et al. <i>Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum</i> , 6 vols. (London, 1923).
<i>CHRB</i>	A Burnett et al. <i>Coin Hoards from Roman Britain</i> (various publishers).
<i>Cunetio (Cu.)</i>	E M Besly and R F Bland, <i>The Cunetio Treasure</i> , (London, 1983).
<i>Eauze</i>	D Schaad et al, <i>Le tresor d'Eauze</i> (Toulouse, 1992).
<i>Elmer</i>	Elmer, G, 'Die Munzprägung der gallischen Kaiser in Koln, Trier and Milan' <i>Bonner Jahrbucher</i> 146 (Berlin, 1941), pp. 1-106.
<i>Göbl</i>	R Göbl, <i>Die Münzprägung des Kaisers AURELIANUS (270 / 275)</i> . (Vienna, 1993). R Göbl, <i>Die Münzprägung der Kaiser VALERIANUS I / GALLIENUS / SALONINUS (253/268), REGALIANUS (260) und MACRIANUS / QUIETUS (260/262)</i> . (Vienna, 2000).
<i>Normanby (Nby)</i>	R F Bland and A M Burnett, 'Normanby, Lincs' in <i>CHRB VIII</i> (London, 1988), pp. 114-215.
<i>RIC</i>	H Mattingly et al., <i>The Roman Imperial Coinage</i> , I-X (London, 1923-95).
<i>RRC</i>	Crawford, M. H. <i>Roman Republic Coinage</i> (Cambridge, 1974).
<i>Stge</i>	R F Bland, 'Stevenage, Hertfordshire', in <i>CHRB VIII</i> (London, 1988), pp. 43-73.
<i>Thirion</i>	M Thirion, <i>Le Monnayage D'Élagabale (218-222)</i> (Brussels 1968).

## List of bust varieties

The following abbreviations are used. Most of the coins in the hoard are radiates and default descriptions refer to heads with radiate crowns (emperors) or busts on crescent (empresses), with the effigy facing to the right. Left-facing busts are indicated by the suffix l. (e.g. A1l, G1l). For the busts on denarii, the descriptions are modified as follows:

suffix \* : head laureate (emperors); no crescent below bust (empresses);  
suffix + : head bare (Caesars).

Details such as decoration on shields are given in footnotes. Where the bust type cannot be determined, the letter Z is used.

- A: *heads*  
A1 head.  
A2 head, with traces of drapery to front of truncation.  
A3 head, with traces of drapery to front and rear of truncation.
- B: *cuirassed busts*  
B1 cuirassed bust, viewed from front.  
B2 cuirassed bust, viewed from rear.
- C: *draped busts*  
C1 draped bust, viewed from front.  
C2 draped bust, viewed from rear.
- D: *draped and cuirassed busts*. These are usually distinguished from C by the presence of *pteryges* at the shoulder.  
D1 draped and cuirassed bust, viewed from front.  
D2 draped and cuirassed bust, viewed from rear.
- E: *busts of Empresses*, distinguished by headdress.  
E1 Empress bareheaded, bust draped viewed from front; crescent behind.  
E2 Empress diademed, bust draped viewed from front; crescent behind.  
E2a Empress diademed, bust draped viewed from front; crescent below.  
E3 Empress veiled, bust draped viewed from front; crescent behind.  
E4 Empress diademed and veiled, bust draped viewed from front; crescent behind.
- G1 cuirassed bust, from front, spear over r. shoulder, shield on l. shoulder.
- L3 nude bust viewed from front; club over r. shoulder, lion-skin on l. shoulder.



## Further notes to the catalogue

### Illustrations

A full concordance of coin types and the bags they appear in can be found in the plates. Coin types listed in italics in the concordance are those that do not have an image.

### Mint-marks

The following convention is used to denote the marks used on the reverses: --//-, where the first - refers to the left field, the second to the right field and the third, after the //, to the exergue. Marks in the centre field are indicated as follows: A //XXI, and where marks in the field are on more than one level they are shown as follows: R -/A F//BSISC. Thus:

<u>S</u>  P	becomes:	<u>A</u>	becomes:	R	becomes:
MLXXI	S P//MLXXI;	XXI	A //XXI	<u>A</u>  F	R -/A F//BSISC
				BSISC	

### Abbreviations

The following abbreviations and contractions can be found in the catalogue.

adv.	Advancing
avg.	average
BM	British Museum
cf.	compare
frag.	Fragment
l.	left
m.-m.	Mint mark
No	number
Obv.	Obverse
Qty	quantity
r.	right
Rev.	Reverse
std	seated
stg	standing
Var.	variant
Wt	weight (in grams)



# Beau Street, Bath: Overview

Richard Abdy

British Museum, Dept of Coins and Medals

1904 denarii and 15756 radiates to AD 274

BM treasure ref.: 2007 T677; PAS ID: GLO-40A9B6

Bath's major third century AD Roman treasure find now known as the Beau Street hoard was discovered in the course of archaeological excavation by Hazel O'Neill of Cotswold Archaeology<sup>1</sup> at a city centre building site in November 2007 (see following chapter).

The hoard may be summarised by ruler groups as follows:

<i>Summary of hoard<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Pre-Severan denarii (Antony to Commodus)*	16	0.09
Septimius Severus: Wars of the Succession (AD 193-7)	54	0.31
Severus & sons (AD 198-211)	136	0.77
Caracalla (AD 211-7, briefly with Geta)	45	0.25
Macrinus (AD 217-8)	12	0.07
Elagabalus (AD 218-22)	628	3.56
Severus Alexander (AD 222-35)	996	5.64
Maximinus (AD 235-8)	59	0.33
Gordian I & II (AD 238)	1	0.01
Balbinus & Pupienus (AD 238)	24	0.14
Gordian III (AD 238-44)	3589	20.32
Philip I (AD 244-49)	2850	16.14
Decius (AD 249-51)	1230	6.96
Trebonianus Gallus & Volusian (AD 251-3)	1576	8.92
Aemilian (AD 253)	84	0.48
Valerian & Gallienus (AD 253-60)	2365	13.39
Gallienus (sole reign) (AD 260-8)	744	4.21
Claudius II (AD 268-70)	489	2.77
Divus Claudius	47	0.27
Quintillus	51	0.29
Aurelian (AD 270-5)	6	0.03
Postumus (AD 260-69)	170	0.96
Laelian (AD 269)	1	0.01
Marius (AD 269)	6	0.03
Victorinus (AD 269-71)	939	5.32
Divus Victorinus	2	0.01
Tetricus I (AD 271-4)	1044	5.91
Tetricus II	58	0.33
Uncertain Gallic (AD 269-74)	165	0.93
Uncertain Emperor	236	1.34
Irregular	37	0.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>17660</b>	

*\*For breakdown of the small component of pre-Severan issues see section for Bag 6*

<sup>1</sup> [www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk/beau-street-hoard-update](http://www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk/beau-street-hoard-update)

<sup>2</sup> Not including a stray fourth Century AD Constantinian nummus presumably disturbed from overlying archaeological layers; see end of the loose coins section of the catalogue.

### Denominations in the Beau Street hoard

About twelve percent of the hoard consists of denarii. By the third century AD this denomination was in its final epoch: it had been the mainstay of the Roman state's taxation and expenditure since the end of the third century BC. Early in the reign of Septimius Severus (AD 193-211) the silver quality was dramatically reduced to a base silver mixture of about 50% purity which continued to decline more gradually thereafter.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, as can be seen in the summary, all but a handful of the denarii from Beau Street post-date what is often cited in modern scholarship as the 'great debasement' of the mid AD 190s (see chapter by Butcher and Ponting).

The mainstream production of denarii expired in the early issues of Gordian III (AD 238-44) and was replaced thereafter by the radiate. The radiate represented a multiple silver denomination and its modern name is simply a description of the solar rays crowning the emperor's bust and such iconography (later to become analogous to the moon-crescent of the empress busts) was conventionally indicative of a double of the denarius. The radiate however represented some discount of the metallic value to face value since it was of the same alloy but less than twice the weight of a denarius. Note that the name *antoninianus* which is widely used in older textbooks for the radiate comes from the fourth century *Scriptores Historia Augusta*. It is referred to there in general terms as coinage that is not specifically silver and is thus unlikely to mean a particular denomination. The name *Antoninianus* comes from the official name of Severus's son Antoninus, who was and is still normally known as Caracalla. It was he who introduced the coin in AD 215.<sup>4</sup> This initial production ran alongside the denarii through the brief reign of Macrinus (AD 217-8) before ceasing within the first couple of years of the next reign; Elagabalus (AD 218-22). Even under Macrinus production was seemingly sporadic, being produced only in the initial phases (his short beard portraits) and regular production of radiates was only restarted in the chaotic months prior to the accession of Gordian III.

A longer period followed with decades of gradual diminution of the radiates' fineness and weight standards. By the AD 250s, radiate dies could comfortably recycle old denarii by overstriking the flans of the nominally lower denomination.<sup>5</sup> This reached

its conclusion with two ominous years for the Roman Empire. In AD 260 the emperor Valerian suffered the ultimate ignominy of capture and enslavement by the Parthian king Shapur. This left Valerian's son Gallienus with a divided empire and a nominal silver currency which had collapsed to a silver content of a few percent. In the west, Postumus (AD 260-9) had carved out the Gallic Empire based at Trier which initially maintained the silver standard during an uneasy stand-off with Rome. Nevertheless, Gallic silver reached the same nadir as that of the Central Empire by AD 268. From sight alone one could be forgiven for thinking the fully debased radiate of AD 260/8 was a completely different denomination to its predecessor; indeed the following analysis of the individual bags of Beau Street will show this is most apposite. Not only was the post AD 260/8 coin distinctly shrunken but it usually appears to the modern viewer to be a bronze piece due to the usual loss of its silvery surface after nearly two millennia of burial. Base silver coins could be silvered up with a process of surface enrichment: the chemical leaching of the base material of the coins' surface with an acid prior to striking which would consequently compress the leached spongy layer. However, with fully debased coins a surface employing a silver coating had to be applied, which is thought to have been achieved by coating with a mercury paste which was then driven off with heat.<sup>6</sup> This thin coating inevitably proved to be friable, wearing in circulation and with the passage of time, but that was not the immediate concern of those producing it.

In AD 268 Postumus also extended his influence into Italy, even briefly minting at Milan. He precipitated the fall of Gallienus and the establishment of emperors who were more effective in the military sphere. Among them was Aurelian (AD 270-5) who would defeat the last Gallic rulers, Tetricus I and II (AD 271-4), before stabilising the radiate; a story not covered by the Beau Street hoard.

<sup>3</sup> See R. Duncan-Jones, table '15.9: Median denarius fineness', p.232 of *Money and Government in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 1994). Note Butcher and Ponting's series (see next footnote) will eventually cover this period too using more modern techniques.

<sup>4</sup> *RIC* no.245 lists a radiate type in the previous year but this appears to be transmitted from a mistaken 19thC catalogue reference; probably an indistinct specimen where the emperor's regnal year – recorded as annual iterations of the power of the office tribune or TR P XVIII – lost its final I.

<sup>5</sup> BM specimen of a radiate of Decius (AD 249-51) overstriking a

Caracallan denarius is a good example of this process. BM 1991,0149.7 (Chalfont St Peter hoard). See: [www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1557939&partId=1&searchText=1991,0149.7&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1557939&partId=1&searchText=1991,0149.7&page=1)

<sup>6</sup> Dr Constantina Vlachou-Mogire *pers comm*.

	BAG 1 radiates	BAG 1 denarii	BAG 2 radiates	BAG 2 denarii	BAG 3 radiates	BAG 3 denarii	BAG 4 radiates	BAG 4 denarii	BAG 5 radiates	BAG 5 denarii	BAG 6 radiates	BAG 6 denarii	BAG 7 radiates	BAG 8 radiates	BAG 8 denarii	LOOSE radiates	LOOSE denarii	Total	%
Pre Severan denarii (Antony to Commodus)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0.09
Septimius Severus: Wars of the Succession (AD 193-7)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	2	54	0.31
Severus & sons (AD 198-211)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	5	123	0	0	0	0	0	3	136	0.77
Caracalla (AD 211-7, briefly with Geta)	6	0	0	0	4	2	3	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	5	45	0.25
Macrinus (AD 217-8)	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0.07
Elagabalus (AD 218-22)	19	6	0	1	17	0	5	8	3	1	546	0	1	0	1	13	7	628	3.56
Severus Alexander (AD 222-35)	0	10	0	1	0	4	0	13	0	7	938	0	0	0	0	0	23	996	5.64
Maximinus (AD 235-8)	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	49	0	0	0	0	0	3	59	0.33
Gordian I & II (AD 238)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.01
Balbinus & Pupienus (AD 238)	7	0	0	0	0	6	0	4	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	24	0.14
Gordian III (AD 238-44)	1243	0	16	0	791	0	833	0	114	0	13	3	5	0	0	568	2	3589	20.32
Philip I (AD 244-49)	978	0	9	0	605	0	584	0	167	0	0	3	3	1	0	500	0	2850	16.14
Decius (AD 249-51)	394	0	3	0	265	0	243	0	76	0	0	2	1	0	0	246	0	1230	6.96
Trebonianus Gallus & Volusian (AD 251-3)	411	0	10	0	382	0	308	0	142	0	0	9	1	0	0	313	0	1576	8.92
Aemilian (AD 253)	21	0	0	0	19	0	17	0	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	17	0	84	0.48
Valerian & Gallienus (AD 253-60)	629	0	43	0	583	0	252	0	234	0	0	8	9	5	0	602	0	2365	13.39
Gallienus (sole reign) (AD 260-8)	3	0	563	0	12	0	0	0	2	0	0	74	68	0	22	0	744	4.21	
Claudius II (AD 268-70)	0	0	399	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	28	0	14	0	489	2.77
Divus Claudius	0	0	32	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	0	2	0	47	0.27
Quintillus	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	3	0	0	0	51	0.29
Aurelian (AD 270-5)	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.03
Postumus (AD 260-69)	20	0	61	0	32	0	4	0	13	0	0	0	12	7	0	21	0	170	0.96
Laelian-Marius (AD 269)	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	7	0.04
Victorinus (AD 269-71)	0	0	770	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	91	52	0	18	0	939	5.32
Divus Victorinus	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.01
Tetricus I & II (AD 271-4)	3	0	859	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	134	77	0	16	0	1102	6.24
Uncertain Gallic (AD 269-74)	0	0	154	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	3	0	0	165	0.93
Uncertain Emperor	38	0	43	0	23	0	32	1	1	0	2	0	5	3	0	86	2	236	1.34
Irregular	4	0	16	0	3	0	2	0	1	0	7	0	1	0	3	0	0	37	0.21
<b>Total</b>		<b>3798</b>		<b>3031</b>		<b>2780</b>		<b>2315</b>		<b>780</b>		<b>1807</b>		<b>404</b>		<b>2494</b>		<b>17660</b>	

Beau Street, Bath, hoard: breakdown by bag (excluding a stray 4thc AD nummus)

**A percentage comparison with other major Gallic Empire hoards from Britain containing significant portions of pre-AD 260/8 debasement radiates**

<i>Period</i>	<i>Bath</i>	<i>Cunetio</i>	<i>Bassaleg</i>	<i>Stevenage</i>	<i>M1</i>
Pre-Severan	0.09	<0.01	-	-	0.23
Severus-Maximinus I (AD 193-238)	10.93	1.12	0.11	14.39	46.90
Balbinus & Pupienus-Philip I & II (AD 238-49)	36.60	0.10	8.74	14.27	19.31
Decius-Aemilian (AD 249-53)	16.36	0.66	5.20	8.20	4.60
Valerian & Gallienus (AD 253-260)	13.39	19.22	31.64	38.10	14.94
Central Empire post-AD 260	7.57	30.52	1.44	0.39	1.84
Postumus-Marius (AD 260-9)	0.99	24.01	50.11	24.40	11.26
Victorinus + Divo Victorinus (AD 269-71)	5.33	13.10	1.88	-	0.69
Tetricus I & II (AD 271-4)	6.24	7.31	-	-	-
Irregular / uncertain	2.48	3.95	0.88	2.56	0.23

- **Bassaleg** - one denarius and 903 radiates to AD 270 (E. Besly, CHRB IX, pp.87-104)
- **Cunetio** - one sestertius, 611 denarii and 54339 radiates to AD 274 (ref. see abbreviations)
- **M1 Motorway** - 207 denarii and 228 radiates to AD 271 (R. Abdy, CHRB XII, pp.36-48)
- **Stevenage** - 387 denarii and 2192 radiates to AD 263 (R. F. Bland, CHRB VIII, pp. 43-73)

Cunetio, near Marlborough in Wiltshire, is the largest coin hoard yet known from Roman Britain. Although it contains a large number of radiates they form only a very small percentage of the total. Yet it is most useful to include because it produces the most readily understandable distribution of issues: cresting with the period AD 253-69 and gradually tailing off either side, but more sharply between crest and the closing coins of AD 274 as these have not had sufficient time to flood into the circulation. Stevenage and Bassaleg terminate slightly earlier in the time of the Gallic Empire and although they crest over a similar period it is clear that a greater proportion of earlier radiates were still available. Critically, Stevenage was closed prior to Postumus's complete debasement of AD 268 and its cresting is noticeably less steep than Cunetio or Bassaleg. Against this normality, Beau Street provides a surprising contrast. Inversely, the hoard from Bath crests sharply with the earliest period of the reintroduced radiate and then has a long, weak tail up to its closing issues of AD 274.

Besly's cogent analysis of the Bassaleg hoard, found near Newport in South Wales in 1986, used extensive comparanda to show a wide variability in the composition of hoards terminating around AD 270. It suggests rapid changes in the circulation following the cessation of the production of all but the most fully debased coinage. One of the earliest letters found in Roman London appears to stipulate payment in better quality silver during the AD 60s following the first significant silver debasement of the imperial period.<sup>7</sup>

This commercial situation of favouring or discounting coin according to silver standard (in spite of or alongside face value) was long established at this point in the east of the Empire where a number of silver standards ran concurrently.<sup>8</sup> It is not hard to imagine a desperate free for all during the dramatic collapse of the quality of the coinage in the course of the Gallic Empire. In such circumstances, the length of time taken to withdraw a hoard from circulation would be critical and result in greatly varying compositions.

Roger Bland notes with Stevenage that few contemporary hoards contain significant quantities of denarii, and those that do were probably saved over significantly longer timescales. The denarius represented a far higher commodity value in proportion to face value than even the earlier radiates. The M1 Motorway hoard is a case in point, and a glance at the table above shows it covers most of the main issue periods represented by the Beau Street hoard, although M1 does stop just before the reign of the Tetrici. M1 was recorded by the present writer, who on reflection wonders if the almost 50:50 proportion of denarii (which ceased production in the AD 230s) to radiates represents a fossilised portion of late denarii collected and then kept as a sealed saving within a later radiate deposit. Sadly with M1, no further analysis was possible as all context was lost long before it came to be recorded. Even the precise findspot was lost, the deceased finder being a digger driver on the route of the M1 in Leicestershire.

<sup>7</sup> Cat. No WT31 in *Roman London's first voices: Writing tablets from the Bloomberg excavations, 2010-14*, by R.S.O. Tomlin, 2016 (MOLA monograph 72, London).

<sup>8</sup> For an extensive discussion see K. Butcher and M. Ponting, *The Metallurgy of Roman Silver Coinage: From the Reform of Nero to the Reform of Trajan*, (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Excitingly with the Beau Street Hoard, micro excavation has allowed us to understand the process of collecting, sorting and sealing up bagged groups of coins by their metal value over what was clearly an extensive period of time during the middle part of the third century, and the bag by bag composition of the Beau Street hoard will be examined by Sayers in a later chapter.

### Chalfont St Peter Hoard and the process of thésaurisation

A final comparable hoard from Roman Britain points the way. The Chalfont hoard was found in 1989 in four pots. It actually runs later than the hoards so far discussed, into the reign of Probus (AD 276-82), yet remarkably also still contains denarii.

<i>Period</i>	<i>Bath</i>	<i>Chalfont in total</i>	<i>Chalfont pot IV</i>
Pre-Severan	0.09	-	-
Severus-Maximinus I (AD 193-238)	10.93	0.63	4.59
Balbinus & Pupienus-Philip I & II (AD 238-49)	36.60	3.38	24.67
Decius-Aemilian (AD 249-53)	16.36	2.47	17.90
Valerian & Gallienus (AD 253-260)	13.39	5.76	34.28
Central Empire post-AD 260	7.57	26.01	3.28
Postumus-Marius (AD 260-9)	0.99	4.55	9.28
Victorinus + Divo Victorinus (AD 269-71)	5.33	21.06	3.06
Tetricus I & II (AD 271-4)	6.24	27.68	0.87
Irregular / uncertain	2.48	8.25	1.53

- **Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire** - 43 denarii, 6,624 radiates and 15 bronze coins to AD 281(C. Cheeseman, *CHRB* IX, pp. 154-205). Table above does not include the bronze coins.

Chalfont's pots I-III seemed standard for such a late hoard and comprised largely post-AD 260/8 material, but the fourth pot containing 916 coins had an exceptional composition. Pot IV ended earlier but still had a *terminus post quem* in the 270s, and like Bath comprised the bulk of its composition around the early radiates. Pot IV was also the only source of denarii in Chalfont, while pot III was the only source of the material post-dating AD 274. Cheeseman noted that pot IV was found at a slight distance to the rest of Chalfont, but at only four metres it still seemed close enough to be part of the same depositional activity. The hoarder seemed to have undertaken some thésaurisation before the abandonment of the hoard, selecting out the better quality silver pieces as the hoard was gradually withdrawn from the circulation to form a special reserve, presumably a process that had begun many

years prior to the date of the final coin in the deposit (AD 281).<sup>9</sup>

The most evocative Roman artwork depicting a working treasury (*thesaurus*) comes from the first century; a fresco from the House of Julia Felix at Pompeii. Above sets of writing materials (presumably for the accounts) sit two piles of coins: gold and silver on the left and copper and brass on the right. The artist has picked out the metal difference with the colour of the paint very clearly as it was obviously of critical importance. In between sits a moneybag, already full, and clearly more would be required to fill before the treasury chore is complete. Of course in the early empire, with its clear suite of denominations, coin hoards tend to consist (but by no means exclusively) of either gold or silver or bronze, while at the end of Roman Britain precious metal and bronze hoards also seem to be kept separate. It seems that in the third century, while they remained in circulation next to completely debased material the base silver coins were evolving – as far as the end-user was concerned – into a different denomination despite the state's attempt to continue the face value.

<sup>9</sup> Actually there is reason to believe that – although less dramatic than Chalfont – some degree of thésaurisation was present in Cunetio. Besly and Bland noted (*Cunetio* appendix 3) that the lead box found alongside the main pottery vessel had probably contained all the pre-AD 244 coinage in the hoard (643 coins) as well as all those of the Tetrici (4018 coins). The motive for placing both the most and least silvery coins (oldest and freshest) together but separate from the main group is puzzling but may have had something to do with the presumably still intact silvered surfaces of the fresh coinage.

# The Beau Street Hoard: A Summary Account of the Archaeological Context

Mark Corney

AC Archaeology

## Introduction

The discovery of the Beau Street Hoard was made during developer funded archaeological investigations at the Gainsborough Buildings, Beau Street, Bath, (NGR ST 7496 6460). The Gainsborough Buildings is a Grade II listed building dating from 1825 with subsequent additions. The 1825 block occupies the site of St James Parsonage and a 17th century house and garden. Following a number of evaluation excavations the first major site investigations on the Gainsborough Buildings were undertaken between 2006 and 2008 by Cotswold Archaeology; these were followed in 2012 by further works on the Gainsborough Buildings and the adjacent Bellott's Building by AC Archaeology. The investigations were commissioned by the site owners Bath Hotel and Spa B.V. The location of the sites is shown on Figure 1.

Following completion of the site works in 2012, the Cotswold Archaeology archive was transferred to AC Archaeology for completion of finds processing and preparation of the final report. The final report will be available as a free download in 2017 through the ADS website and the AC Archaeology website, [www.acarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.acarchaeology.co.uk).

## The archaeological setting

The hoard was recovered from a room within a large Roman building complex located in the south-west quadrant of the walled Roman town of Aquae Sulis (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016, 65-69). This part of the walled town contains a number of substantial Roman buildings, many probably of a public nature. The first major discoveries and investigations in the area were made in 1864 when James Irvine, Bath Abbey Clerk of Works 1864 – 1871, recorded part of a large Roman bathing complex and other structures during the construction of an extension to Gainsborough Buildings, the then Royal United Hospital (Figure 1). The remains included a heated suite A and a large plunge pool, lined with lead sheeting and entered by a flight of steps; reassessment of Irvine's records (Cunliffe, 1969, 151-4) demonstrated that the bathing complex had been built over an earlier building of at least two wings and with stone guttering. The scale and quality of the baths suggest they were intended for public use and are situated approximately 15 metres south of the Hot

Bath Spring. Irvine also recorded a number of walls to the east of the baths including part of the structure within which the hoard was discovered in November 2007. Altars found close to the Hot Bath Spring and the nearby Cross Bath Spring may indicate the presence of a religious focus in the south-west corner of the town.

Further to the east, along the west side of Bilbury Lane and south of Bellott's Building, Irvine recorded additional building remains which include a heated room with a well-preserved geometric mosaic dated to the 4th century (Cosh & Neal, 2005, 192). This building was separated from the baths and the hoard site by a north – south metalled street approximately 3m wide. Further walls on the same alignment and probably part of this structure, were recorded by AC Archaeology under the former Bellott's Building in 2012 (Figure 1). East of Bilbury Lane part of a Roman street with a building on its east side was investigated under Bellott's Building in 1999 (Davenport et al, 2007).

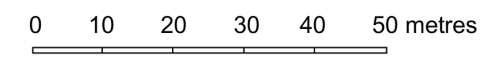
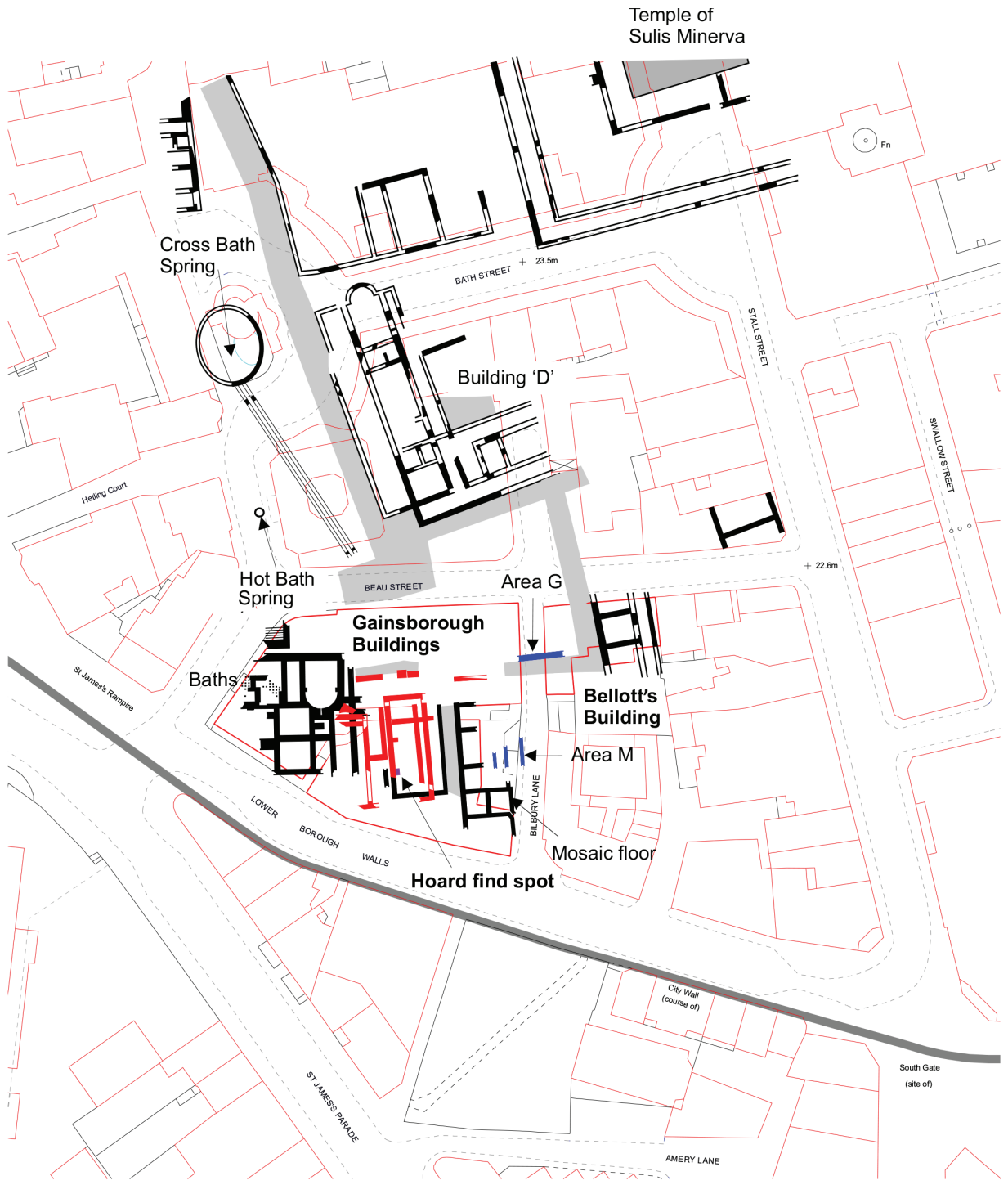
Twenty metres to the north of the hoard findspot a large courtyard building was erected in the mid to late second century and this has been interpreted as a public building, possibly a mansio (Davenport et al, 2007; 'Building D'). The western range lay alongside a well-made, cambered street aligned approximately north – south and 3.3m wide. All of the rooms in the west range contained hypocausts and there was an apsidal chamber at the north end (Figure 1).

The 2006 to 2008 excavations at the Gainsborough Building undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology recorded a number of walls and other features relating to the bathing establishment and the adjacent structures first encountered by Irvine in 1864 and confirmed the accuracy of his observations and recording.

## Summary account of the 2006-2008 and 2012 investigations

The 2006-8 investigations undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology comprised three stages and involved two phases of watching brief and one of mitigation excavation involving a large central block, Area 1 (Figure 2). The 2012 investigations by AC Archaeology comprised watching briefs and excavation including the site of a new tunnel link between the Gainsborough





- Street or metalling
- Previously recorded walls
- Walls recorded 2007-2008 (Cotswold Archaeology)
- Walls recorded 2012 (AC Archaeology)

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Figure 1. Site location.

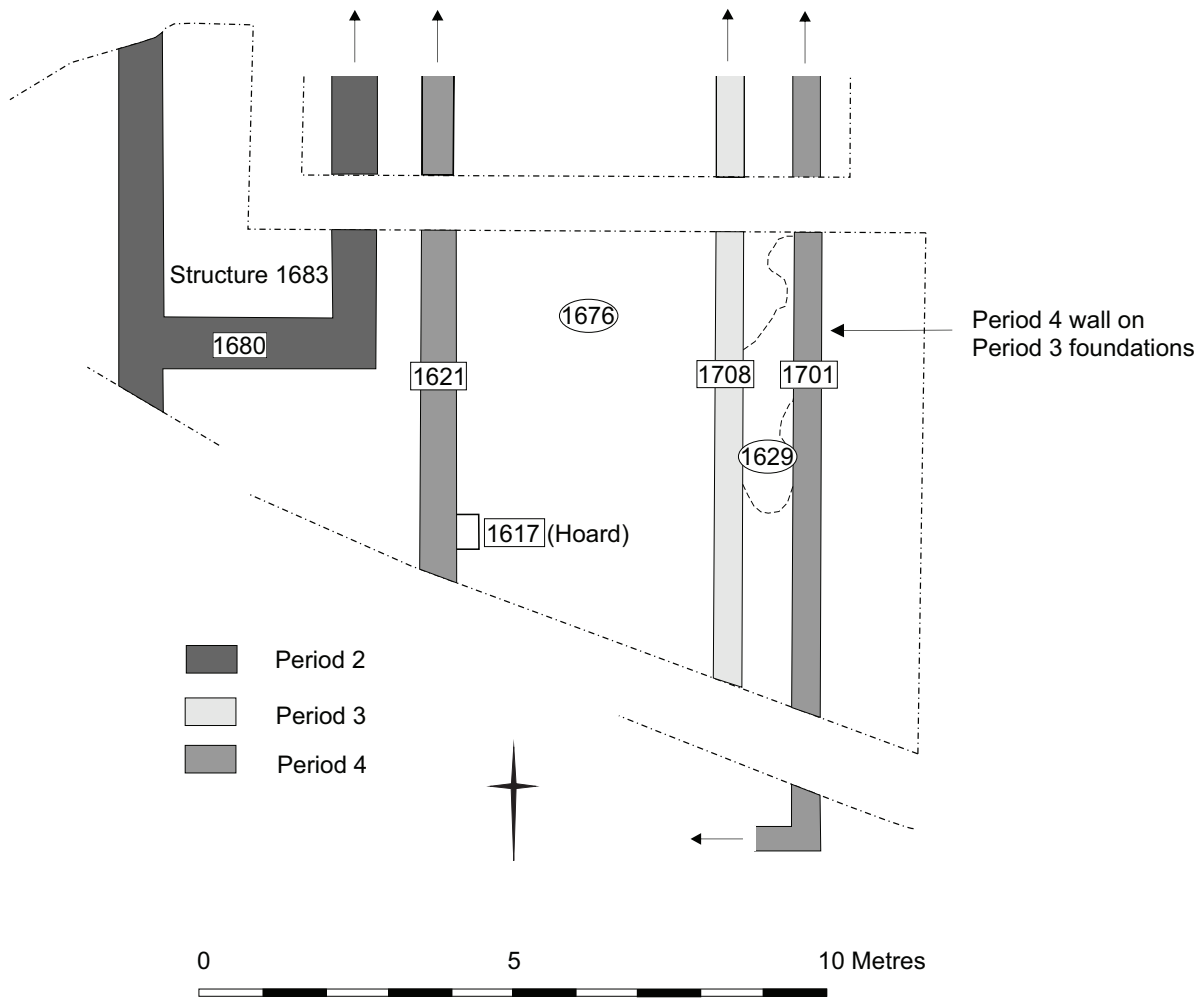


Figure 2. Detail plan of Area 1 showing hoard location



Figure 3. Roman wall 1621 under excavation

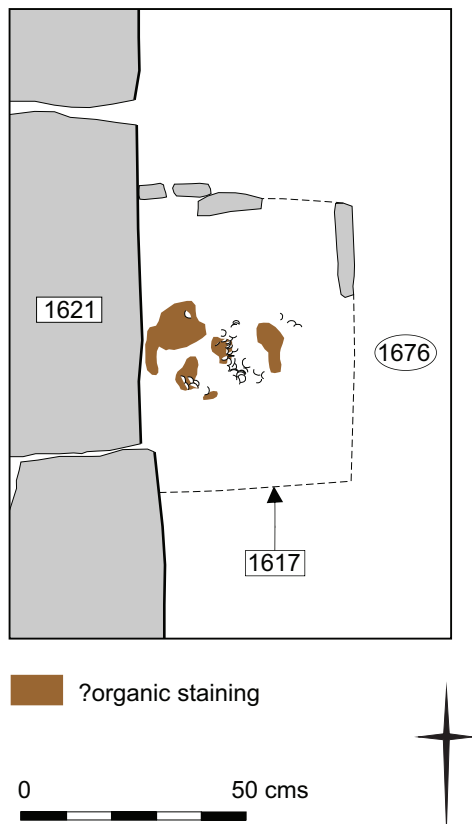


Figure 4. Plan of the hoard as first exposed

and Bellott's Buildings known as Area G (Figure 1). Nine phases of activity were identified across both sites:

- 1 Prehistoric, primarily Mesolithic. Deposits
- 2 Early Roman cAD50-150. Deposits and structures
- 3 Middle Roman cAD150-250. Deposits and structures
- 4 Later Roman cAD250-410. Deposits and structures
- 5 Saxon c500-1000. Deposits
- 6 Early medieval c1000-1200. Deposits, pits and robbing of Roman walls
- 7 Later medieval c1200-1550. Pits
- 8 Post medieval c1550-1725. Pits
- 9 Modern, 1725+, principally 19th century structures and deposits

The coin hoard was discovered during the full excavation of Area 1.

#### Area 1

Area 1 was investigated after the demolition of structures at the centre of the Gainsborough Buildings complex. Following excavation of the post-medieval and the underlying medieval deposits (largely represented by pits and soil accumulations) the remains of a number of stone built Roman buildings were

exposed. Post-Roman truncation of the Roman deposits meant that the structural remains were fragmentary and largely survived only as robber trenches or Bath Stone rubble foundations. Where any masonry survived it was localised and usually only stood to two or three courses, usually of neatly dressed small Bath Stone blocks (Figure 3).

All of the Roman walls are aligned east-west or north-south; alignments they share with structures recorded in the nineteenth century. At the southern end and along the western edge of Area 1 the Roman walls could be tied in to those first noted by Irvine and are clearly part of the complex seen by him in 1864.

The excavation established that there were three main phases of Roman masonry structures in Area 1, although robbing and later disturbance make the sequence difficult to interpret and secure dating evidence is frustratingly limited.

The first building had substantial walls over 1 metre wide (Figure 2, Structure 1683) and was of a rectangular plan. Stone drains and gutters were found to the north and west and it may be part of the earlier building recorded by Irvine and thought by Cunliffe to pre-date the baths (Cunliffe, 1969, 151-4). The structure could not be closely dated but may be of late first century date (Period 2). Finds associated with the demolition suggest the structure featured glazed windows, a ceramic tiled roof and painted plaster walls; the plaster included part of a corner moulding from either a window embrasure or a doorway. This building was demolished and replaced by larger, but less massively built, structures with walls averaging 0.65m in width (Figure 2, 1701, 1708) separated by a metallated alleyway 0.9m wide (1629). No floor levels survived although make-up deposits were investigated and produced pottery of early to mid- second century date.

In Period 4 these structures were in turn demolished and the footings of (1708) and the metallated surface (1629) was sealed by make-up deposits associated with the floor of a new building with walls 0.65m thick which included a rectangular room 7 metres wide and 12 metres long aligned north-south (Figure 2, 1621, 1701). The east wall of this structure re-used the footings of a phase 3 wall (1701). No floor surfaces survived within the latest building although floor make-up deposits were present. Fragments of window glass and painted wall-plaster in the overlying post-Roman deposits and robber trenches suggest that the room may have had glazed windows and was decorated with painted walls, including polychrome schemes. One fragment of red-painted plaster displays a slight curve and may be from a niche or small apse. Fragments of box-flue tiles, opus signinum, loose white tesserae and coal from the layers immediately overlying

the building suggests an association with the large bathing suite immediately to the west. The coin hoard was discovered in a cist within this room and abutted the west wall, 1621, and clearly falls within Period 4.

Further fragmentary walls and part of a possible stylobate, aligned east-west, recorded 5 metres to the north are probably part of this structure and the whole complex forms a suite of rooms along the east side of the baths (Figure 1). The area immediately to the north of the building appears to have been occupied by a road or an open metalled surface with a stone gutter.

The fate of the final Roman building is uncertain. The latest coin recovered from the excavations is a House of Valentinian issue dated AD 364-378 and the Roman pottery from Area 1 demonstrates activity into the late fourth or early fifth century. The buildings were eventually abandoned and the robber trenches for the Roman walls contained pottery of 12th-13th century date.

#### The discovery and context of the hoard

The hoard was excavated in November 2007 by Hazel O'Neill of Cotswold Archaeology. The first indications of the presence of the hoard were provided by a scatter

of loose coins in an early medieval context (1608) which produced pottery of 11th – 12th century date as well as residual Roman material. A subsequent metal detector scan produced a signal suggestive of further coins. The hoard had been placed in a stone-lined, rectangular pit (1617), measuring 0.65m by 0.48m and approximately 0.50m deep, dug against the west wall of a room within the latest Roman building on the site (1621). One of the stones used to line the cist was part of a reused pennant sandstone floor flag. Upon discovery the upper surface featured numerous coins and dark staining possibly representing decayed organic material (Figures 4, 5 and 6). To allow detailed analysis of the hoard, the deposit was lifted as a block (Figure 7). There was no evidence for a wooden box or other type of container and it appears that the hoard was placed into the cist as a series of bagged deposits. Although no Roman floor levels within the room survived, the pit in which the hoard was deposited had been cut through a floor make-up deposit (1676) which produced a small assemblage of pottery dated to the mid second to early third century. The building had suffered from extensive medieval disturbance and stone robbing. As already mentioned above, the hoard deposit was sealed by a series of deposits of early medieval date (1608, 1469). The presence of stray coins of mid-third century



Figure 5. The hoard as first exposed

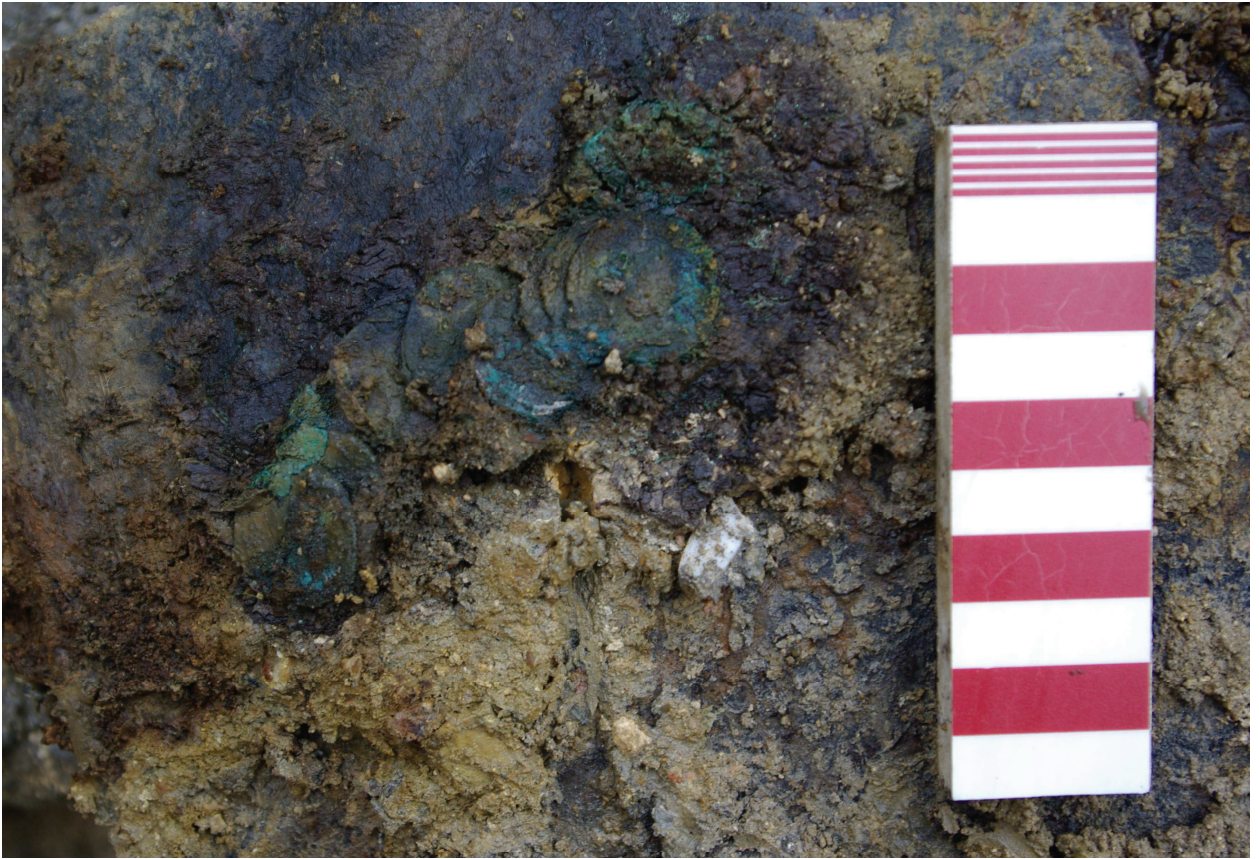


Figure 6. Detail view of the hoard showing areas of organic staining



Figure 7. Lifting the hoard

date in these overlying deposits could mean that the recovered hoard does not represent the full number of coins originally placed in the stone lined cist.

Two animal burials were also recorded within the building and were probably deposited as votive offerings during the construction.

The alignment of the building from which the hoard was recovered is parallel to a structure recorded by Irvine in 1864 which included a hypocaust and mosaic floor and situated 5m to the east. The close proximity of the building to the large baths immediately to the west, the evidence for decorated, painted walls, heated rooms and a mosaic would suggest that the hoard was deposited within a well-appointed building, probably public in character, forming part of an extensive bathing and religious complex within the south-west quadrant of the city.

### Investigations in 2012 by AC Archaeology

In 2012 a second phase of investigations was undertaken by AC Archaeology Ltd. These comprised 18 locations within the Gainsborough and Bellott's Buildings, to the north and east of the areas examined by Cotswold Archaeology. The majority of the locations were observed as watching briefs and included the removal of the modern flooring for drainage installation. Other observations recorded more substantial Roman remains. These include an east-west wall and extensive metalling immediately west of Bilbury Lane (Figure 1, Area M). The walls are of later Roman date (Period 4) and probably part of the building with a hypocaust and mosaic floor recorded by Irvine.

A deep stratigraphic sequence was recorded within the Bellott's Building boiler room and the east end of the Gainsborough Building corridor during the creation of a tunnel under Bilbury Lane to link both buildings (Area G).

This area contained some of the most extensive and deepest stratigraphy surviving on the site (Figure 8). The upper levels of Bilbury Lane were machine-excavated to a depth of approximately 1m before archaeological remains were encountered. Despite significant truncation by nineteenth century drains and sewers in some areas, medieval deposits were encountered, mainly of 11th to 13th century date. These in turn sealed a deep sequence of Romano-British stratigraphy. The sequence of deposits spanned all three phases of the Roman activity dating from the later 1st century to early 5th century (Phases 2 - 4). This included floor levels, possible demolition deposits and the robbed foundations of a Period 4 wall up to 1m wide (Figure 8, 265). An area of large mortared stones (Figure 8, 310,

334) appears to represent part of an external surface such as a street or yard, first laid down in the Early Roman period (Period 2) with subsequent resurfacings continuing throughout Periods 3 and 4. The full extent of these surfaces is unknown but appears to continue beyond the western limit of excavation. The earliest phase of Roman activity (Phase 2) overlay Phase 1 alluvial deposits known to be present throughout this area of the town centre which frequently produce Mesolithic flints (Davenport et al, 2007).

Photographs reproduced here from the Cotswold Archaeology archive are used with the consent of Cotswold Archaeology, whose co-operation is acknowledged.

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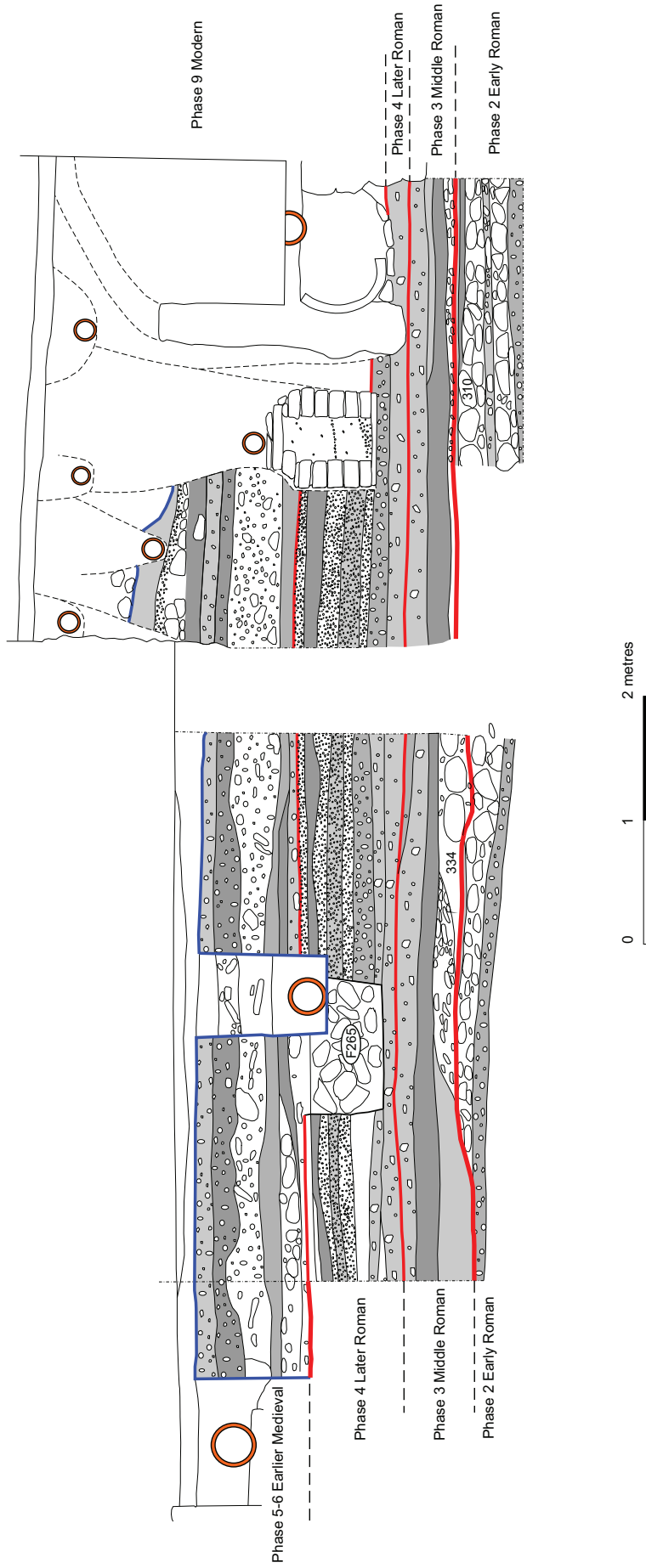


Figure 8. Section of deposits in Area G