The Roman Rural Settlement Project

Coins and ‘small finds’ from the south-east of England: preliminary results

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Structure of the Paper

Coins

Brooches

Other small finds
Roman coinage in the South East

• As in regions previously analysed, Roman coins far from ubiquitous
• Just 49% of sites produced coins

Wide intra-regional variation
Intra-regional variation explained?

E.g. Buckinghamshire and Berkshire

- Buckinghamshire – 85 sites, 54% with coins
- Berkshire – 56 sites, 31% with coins
Proportion of sites with coins against area of investigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of investigation</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;0.25ha</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.25-0.5ha</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5-1ha</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5ha</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>5ha+</td>
<td>68</td>
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Proportion of sites occupied >AD 250 and <AD 250 with coins

Sites occupied beyond AD 250
Sites abandoned before AD 250

Proportion of sites with coins
Occupation sites with activity beyond c. AD 260 *should* produce coins

- Reasonable area of excavation (0.5ha?)
- Controlled metal detector use on site
- Coins included in the site report(!)
What about early Roman coinage?

- 29% of sites produced coins up to AD 260
- Even with sample of sites with large excavated areas >5ha only 42% had coins (as opposed to 66% for coins of all periods)
So, which sites produce early coins?

**Presence/absence early Roman coins**

![Bar chart showing the percentage of different site types with early Roman coins]

**Presence/absence late Roman coins**

![Bar chart showing the percentage of different site types with late Roman coins]
Distribution of some particular types of brooch recorded by the Roman rural settlement project
Distribution of some particular types of brooch recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme
Aucissa/Bagendon brooches recorded by the Roman rural settlement project and PAS
2. Military sites of the Julio-Claudian period.
• Total of 31 brooches at 17 sites
Multiple examples from 5 sites
- 10 from Springhead *(roadside settlement and sanctuary complex)*
- 3 from Fishbourne *(villa)*
- 2 from Wavendon Gate, Bucks *(farm, funerary site)*
- 2 from Wilcote *(village)*
- 2 from Barton Court Farm *(farm/villa)*

12 single examples
- Thurnham *(villa/temple)*
- North Leigh *(villa)*
- Gatehampton Farm *(villa)*
- Thruxton *(villa/shrine/funerary site)*
- Shakenoak Farm *(villa)*
- Woodeaton *(temple)*
- Walton Court, Aylesbury *(village/shrine)*
- Swarling *(funerary site)*
- Mount Farm Berinsfield *(linear farm)*
- Northumberland Bottom *(linear farm)*,
- Northbrook, Micheldever *(enclosed farm)*
- Ructstalls Hill, Basingstoke *(enclosed farm)*

**Very strong association between Aucissa brooches and nucleated, ritual and villa sites – officialdom?**
Zoomorphic brooches
Multiple examples from 3 sites
- 2 from Weston Turville (hare and fly - funerary site)
- 2 from Campsfield, Kidlington (fly/bee and fly -farm – part of possible structured deposit in 4th century corn drier)
- 2 from Wiggonholt (duck and rearing horse and soldiers above eagle – villa)

9 single examples
- Springhead Sanctuary (hare-temple)
- Walton Court Aylesbury (cockerel -shrine/village)
- Slonk Hill, Shoreham (cockerel – shrine)
- Lancing Down (cockerel – temple/shrine – recovered from grave near temple)
- Muntham Court, Finden (fish – shrine)
- Ewell (stag -shrine/village)
- Brentford (hare - village/funerary site)
- The Mount, Maidstone(horse - villa)
- Ashtead (plate depicting dolphin - villa)

Overwhelming association between zoomorphic brooches and ritual/funerary sites
Other finds – presence of objects (proportion of sites)
Hairpins

Ear-rings

Finger rings

Hobnails

Dress – presence of objects with Mediterranean identity
Presence of objects associated with personal presentation and hygiene
Presence of paddocks/stock enclosures

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<td>Villas</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear Farms</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enclosed Farms</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unenclosed</td>
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Connectedness?

Presence of trackways/roads

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Objects associated with horses/transport

Sites with horse bones

Presence of juvenile horse bones

% of sites with horse ABGs (associated bone groups)
Conclusions

• Recovery of artefacts strongly influenced by investigation methodology, particularly size of excavation and whether metal detectors are used
• By late Roman period coins widespread across Roman sites, and should be expected at sites occupied beyond late 3rd century AD
• Early Roman coins less evenly distributed and appear less widespread at enclosed and unenclosed farms than linear farms, villas and nucleated sites
• Interesting brooch patterns beginning to emerge – have been able to show clear association for Aucissa brooches to follow the Roman road network, and to show a tendency towards non-farm sites. V clear relationship between zoomorphic brooches and ritual/funerary contexts– seem to occur rarely as casual losses on farm
• Developing patterns suggest the types of site we can expect finds to occur on – nucleated sites, religious sites and villas best represented by finds, though linear farms stand out as being far better represented by objects than the other farms
• Linear farms more commonly associated with a range of objects regarded as more ‘Roman’ than native, and also tend to exhibit better evidence for personal grooming and bodily display
• This is likely to be associated with cultural and social status, and the increased presence of paddocks, trackways and horse remains at linear farms are suggestive of better access to transport, travel, and social situations in which it is desirable to project one’s identity
• Building a better picture of a very nuanced socially stratified society that goes well beyond the traditional villa/farm dichotomy