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IRON AGE COINAGE IN KENT: A REVIEW OF CURRENT KNOWLEDGE

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Over the past few years, Iron Age Kent has seen increasing research on settlements, cemeteries, ceramics and numismatics. As part of this research, efforts to improve the general level of co-operation between Kentish archaeologists and responsible metal-detector users has led to a very significant increase in our knowledge of several classes of metal artefact. Perhaps most important has been the dramatic rise in the number of Iron Age coins recorded, particularly from the east of the county. In 1976, Allen commented that Iron Age coinage in Kent was as yet poorly understood and that there must be many more coins to be found and recorded (Allen 1976, 100). In September 1991, an independent (part-time, unfunded) research project - the Kent Iron Age Coin Project - was established by the writer in an attempt to make a record of all new finds. By the end of 1999 a total of 1,318 previously unreported Celtic coin finds from the county had been recorded, tripling the number to 1,974. Recording is continuing as new finds are made. Full details have been forwarded to the Celtic Coin Index, held at the Institute of Archaeology, Oxford.

The work of the Project has not only greatly increased the number of coins known, but has also significantly altered the distribution pattern of certain types, whilst confirming the previously mapped distribution of others; many gaps have now been filled. As noted by Haselgrove (1987, 213), single coin finds are of particular value in understanding coin circulation patterns and these patterns have provided perhaps the most beneficial results of the current study, allowing new ideas and interpretations to be put forward.

AN OVERVIEW OF IRON AGE COINAGE IN KENT

An attempt at reconstructing something of the political history of late Iron Age Kent can be made by using the coin evidence (Mack 1975;

Van Arsdell 1989 – also abbreviated to VA). The large number of additional coins now recorded might be expected to clarify matters, but if anything the situation appears to be far more complex than previously thought. The lack of any other contemporary evidence for most of those individual rulers named on the coins means that any attempt to establish the political history of late Iron Age Kent from the numismatic evidence will always be open to question. Even the names themselves are not always certain.

The general sequence of Iron Age coinage in Kent was established by Mack (1953) and has been further refined by Rodwell (1976), Haselgrove (1987) and Van Arsdell (1989). The most recent review is that by Hobbs (1996, 9). The following overview is based on all the numismatic evidence now available. All dates given are subject to an error range of plus or minus ten years. Kentish coin types are found scattered across much of South-East England, and occasionally beyond, but they concentrate in Kent and can be seen as originating in the County.

The development of Iron Age coinage in Britain can be sub-divided into phases. Haselgrove has studied the subject in some detail (1987, 75-101). The phasing used in this paper, which is in general usage for Iron Age coin studies, is based on Haselgrove's work, but includes an additional category for the Kentish Primary Series *potins* and some minor amendments to the other phases to take account of recent research. Although in part contemporary, non-gold Continental imports and *potin* coinages are kept separate from phases 1-5 as they appear to have had a different function. The same applies to the individual *potin* coinages.

Potin coinage – a total of 789 coin finds from Kent (British types only), comprising:

Kentish Primary Series ('Thurrock type')[446 coin finds]
The French term *potin* is used to describe high tin content, cast bronze coinages in both Britain and Gaul. The earliest coinage to be produced in Kent, and indeed in Britain, was the series of *potin* coins now commonly referred to as the 'Thurrock' type following the discovery of a large hoard of these coins at Corringham, near Thurrock, Essex in 1987, but which is described here as the 'Kentish Primary Series' in order to more accurately reflect its apparent area of origin. The only other hoards of this type are both from Kent: Folkestone (Holman, forthcoming) and possibly Gravesend. Once very rare, these coins are now by far the commonest Iron Age coins found in Kent. On archaeological evidence (e.g. Haselgrove 1988,

TABLE 1. COINAGE PHASES USED

Phase	Notes	Date (+/-10 yrs)
P:KP	Earliest British potin coinage (Kentish Primary)	2nd century BC
P:FLI	First potin coinage of 'flat' module (Flat Linear I)	Late 2nd – 1st century BC
P:FLII	Latest British potin coinage (Flat Linear II)	Mid 1st century BC
C (Potin, AE, AR)	Imported base metal and silver coinage	Mostly *c.* 60-30 BC
1-5 (AV)	All imported gold coinage and earliest British types	Late 3rd century – *c.* 50 BC
6	Kentish Uninscribed Series, other uninscribed British types	*c.* 50 – 25 BC
7	Dubnovellaunos; Sam--; Vosenos; Tasciovanus	*c.* 25 – 1 BC
8E (early)	Eppillus, early Cunobelin types	*c.* AD 1- 25
8L (late)	Later Cunobelin types; Amminus	*c.* AD 25 – 40
9	Latest British coinage	c. AD 40 - Conquest

103), they are likely to be of mid-later second century BC date and copy Southern and Central Gaulish prototypes. The precise prototype is uncertain (Haselgrove 1993, 37), but most likely is a medium size bronze of Massalia (Marseilles) or a close copy.

Flat Linear I [231 coin finds]

The Kentish Primary Series was superseded by a new series of *potin* coins referred to here as 'Flat Linear I'; these had probably appeared by 100 BC and may be connected with the imported gold coinages known as Gallo-Belgic A and B (Haselgrove 1995, 6) (see below). A rare transitional type (VA 102) exists with features from both the Kentish Primary and Flat Linear I series. Both Flat Linear I and II *potins* (see below) have been classified chronologically by Allen as classes A to L (I) and M to P (II) (Allen 1971). The Flat Linear I coins were cast with thinner flans and a linear design, the earliest of which

show a stylistic affinity with the early *potin* coinage attributed to the Sequani tribe of Eastern Gaul (Haselgrove 1993, 37), imported examples of which are known from Kent. Of the earlier classes of Flat Linear I, the commonest type in east Kent is Allen type D although type B is fairly well represented. Allen type L, which it has been suggested may be concurrent with Caesar's activities in Britain and Gaul (Haselgrove 1995, 5) is still the commonest of the later types. Previous tentative suggestions that these coins originated in the Medway valley (Haselgrove 1987, 151-157), based on the proportion of early Flat Linear I types there, no longer bear scrutiny and origins further east must now be postulated. Flat Linear I *potins* were frequently hoarded. In Kent, hoards are known from Birchington, Broadstairs and Lenham Heath.

Flat Linear II [112 coin finds]

The design of the Flat Linear I *potins* became progressively simplistic until their final degradation around the middle of the first century BC by which time they had become smaller with childlike designs. This latest *potin* series is referred to as 'Flat Linear II' and is generally scarce in east Kent, except at Canterbury and Folkestone. Their overall distribution seems to indicate an origin primarily in west Kent and beyond, with an increasing number coming from the northern Home Counties. Evidence from excavations in Canterbury seems to indicate that the later Flat Linear I and Flat Linear II *potins* circulated for many years, perhaps even until after the Roman Conquest (Blockley *et al.* 1995). In contrast, there is some evidence that the Kentish Primary Series and earlier Flat Linear I types had largely ceased to circulate before the end of the first century BC.

Potin coins probably ceased to be produced in the third quarter of the first century BC, at which time struck, rather than cast, bronze coinage started to make an appearance in Kent. This period may be illustrated by a hoard reportedly found near Deal containing late Class I and early Class II *potins*, supposedly with clay moulds, and a

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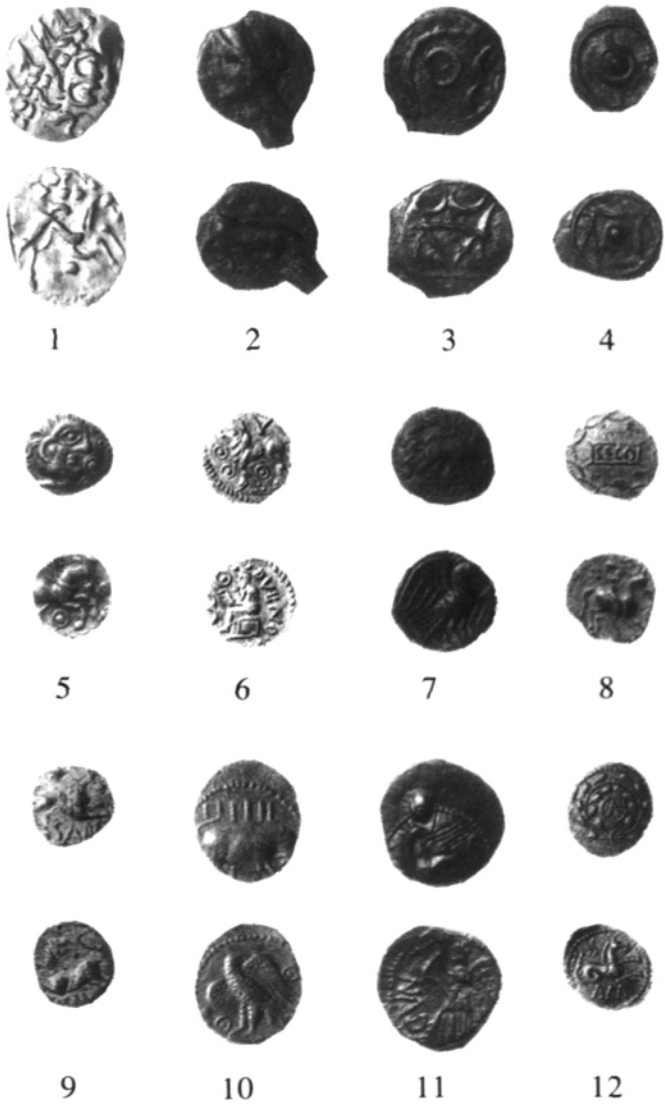
Caption for Plate I opposite

1) AV *Stater*, Gallo-Belgic C (VA 48)
2) *Potin*, Kentish Primary series (VA 1406)
3) *Potin*, Flat Linear I series (VA 129)
4) *Potin*, Flat Linear II series (VA 139)
5) AR Unit, Kentish Uninsc. series (Uncatalogued type)
6) AR unit, Dubnovellaunos (VA 178)
7) AE unit, Dubnovellaunos (VA 180)
8) AR unit, Tasciovanus/Sego (VA 1851)
9) AE ½ unit, Sam--- (Uncatalogued type)
10) AE unit, Eppillus (VA 451)
11) AE unit, Cunobelin (VA 1973-1)
12) AR unit, Amminus (VA 194)

PLATE I



Some examples of Kentish Iron Age Coins

Kentish Uninscribed struck bronze coin (Haselgrove 1995, 6); however, this discovery has not been verified and is not included in the statistics owing to its dubious authenticity.

Early Gold (206 coin finds: all British and Continental, phases 1-5)

Circulating at the same time as the *potin* coins were a large number of imported gold coins and their insular derivatives (Haselgrove 1987, 78-92). The very earliest imports are gold *staters* dating from the third century BC which imitate coins of Philip II of Macedon (359-336 BC); three such imports have been recorded from east Kent, at Ringwould (two) and Alkham. There are also a few half *staters* of a type known as Gallo-Belgic XA, of late third or early second century BC date. None of these presumably valuable coins are likely to have been intended for circulation use.

It is only from the mid-late second century BC that gold coinage, principally consisting of several series of coins classified as Gallo-Belgic A to F (Allen 1960, 99-131), was imported in any quantity. This has previously been considered to be the result of immigration (Allen 1960, 98) although this idea has met with less favour in recent years, with trade, mercenary activities and political alliances being other possibilities (Fitzpatrick 1992, 16; Hobbs 1996, 9). According to Caesar, there was immigration from Gaul, and this was probably the period when the high king Diviciacus ruled Britain and Gaul (DBG II, 4). Gallo-Belgic A and B types are scarce finds in east Kent and are more commonly found along the north coast and in the west of the County. Imports into east Kent only begin to increase with Gallo-Belgic C in the early first century BC. Some of the Gallo-Belgic C *staters* may be British in origin (Fitzpatrick 1992, 8, note 27) and forgeries are also known. The following *stater* series, Gallo-Belgic E, is very common and coins of this type were imported into Britain in substantial numbers, with many examples known from Kent. Again, some may be British copies (Haselgrove 1993, 39). Gallo-Belgic F is unknown from Kent, although a single example of the late Gallo-Belgic XF series inscribed 'CRICIRU' is recorded from Tonbridge. There is also a large series of quarter *staters* known as Gallo-Belgic DB and DC; dating from the early-mid first century BC, these are also common finds in Kent and were subsequently copied. Caesar (DBG V, 12) mentions the use of gold and bronze coins in Britain and these are presumed to have been the Gallo-Belgic gold imports and the *potin* coinages.

Following the Roman conquest of Gaul, native gold coinage was largely suppressed and gold imports into Britain consequently ceased.

Interestingly, the distribution of imported gold coinages differs greatly from the (mostly later) imported base metal coinage, suggesting that they served different purposes, the gold perhaps primarily used as bullion and wealth storage and the bronze as small change for daily trade.

Kentish Uninscribed Series (181 coin finds)

From early in the second half of the first century BC, coinage struck from dies rather than cast from moulds began to be produced in Kent, the inspiration for this change coming from Gaul. The earliest of these coins, lacking any attempt at inscriptions, are referred to collectively as the Kentish Uninscribed Series, and they are known in gold, silver and bronze. The large number of imports in circulation had obviated the need for much native Kentish coinage prior to this, apart from the *potins*. Early Kentish gold is generally very rare with the exception of a series of quarter-*staters* with several varieties based on Gallo-Belgic D (VA 147) and a slightly later, more debased, type (VA 151).

Contemporary with these gold coins are the first native struck bronzes. Probably starting around 40 BC, this is a large and varied group with close affinities to the coinages of Northern Gaul commonly found in east Kent, particularly those coins from the Ambiani and Morini tribal areas which were closest to Kent and which provide many of the prototypes for the Kentish bronzes (Haselgrove 1993, 43). The Kentish coins are considered to have been issued over a period of perhaps 15 to 20 years, ending *c.* 25 BC, but their relative chronology is difficult to determine and remains a matter of contention. Some types may yet prove to be Gaulish, the lack of a detailed study (and the non-recording of detector finds) in the relevant areas of France (the Pas-de-Calais/Nord region) leaving many unanswered questions. As an example of the difficulties of this period, one type (VA 154-11) attributed to the Kentish Uninscribed Series on the basis of a solitary specimen with an illegible reverse can now be shown to be almost certainly later. Other examples are now known which show that the reverse design is a capricorn, probably copied from a coin of the Roman emperor Augustus and thereby post-dating the Kentish Uninscribed Series. A clear specimen is still awaited, but this type is likely to turn out to belong to the later inscribed series, perhaps of Eppillus.

Silver coinage of the Kentish Uninscribed Series is very rare. Although three or four different types have now been recognised, they are all known from only a few examples. One uncatalogued type in

particular shows close links to the bronze coinage, both in style and in the use of common symbols in the field. The range of types, both in silver and bronze, is now rather greater than those listed by Mack (1975) and Van Arsdell (1989).

Dubnovellaunos (127 coin finds : Kentish issues only)

From around 25 BC, inscriptions started to appear on the Kentish coinage, suggesting that there were at least some people capable of reading the names of those rulers who issued coins and wanted to emphasise their rule. Even with names, the absolute and relative dating of these coins is difficult and the problems and ramifications are discussed by Fitzpatrick (1992, 25-26). The first chieftain in Kent to issue coinage in his name was Dubnovellaunos (*c.* 25 - *c.* 5 BC) who probably also held power in Essex for a time (see below). Some of the later Kentish Uninscribed issues were probably also produced in the early years of his reign and there is clear evidence of the same die-cutters producing both uninscribed and inscribed issues. Dubnovellaunos produced gold, silver and bronze coins, until a few years ago all extremely rare but which are now far more widely known.

Opinions on whether the Dubnovellaunos who issued coins in Kent was the same Dubnovellaunos who issued coins in Essex have differed over the years. Mack (1975) regarded them as the same person, but Van Arsdell (1989) disagreed. De Jersey (1996) also considered them to be different while Hobbs (1996) indicated a preference for them being the same. This discussion shows no sign of coming to an agreed conclusion, but a pointer in favour of them having been one person is provided by an uncatalogued bronze type which, although apparently uninscribed, is stylistically attributable to Dubnovellaunos; this type has been found in similar numbers in both Kent and Essex and includes features of both series. A case for there being only one Dubnovellaunos has also been put forward in a study of the gold coinage (Kretz 1998).

Dubnovellaunos has often been considered to be the refugee Dumnobellaunos named in the *Res Gestae* as a suppliant to Augustus (Brunt & Moore 1967, 32), which would give a *terminus ante quem* of AD 14. However, this is conjectural and the person named may equally as well be the Dumnovellaunus named on certain coins of the Corieltauvi (cf. Hobbs 1996, 28) or someone not connected with any coinage series. Nor is there any way to date this event within Augustus' long reign (27 BC - AD 14). The tenuous link with the *Res Gestae* can be put in further perspective with the recent discovery of two hoards found at Alton in Hampshire, which showed that the

Atrebatic (West Sussex, Hampshire area) chieftain known as Tincommius, usually assumed to be the Tim--- mentioned therein, was in fact named Tincomarus. This clearly illustrates the difficulty in extrapolating the full form of personal names from shortened versions (Cheesman 1998). Apart from the tentative Augustus connection, Dubnovellaunos is unknown to history with the exception of his coinage, although the quantity and range of this suggests that he was a ruler of some importance. He may have been one of the 'friendly British kings' recognised by Augustus before 7 BC.

SAM--- and Vosenos (48 coin finds)

The next coinage to appear in Kent was a series of silver and bronze coins inscribed SA. The silver coins have so far been found in west Kent only but the bronzes have a county-wide distribution. An uncatalogued bronze half unit extends the legend to Sam---, still only an abbreviation of a longer, probably personal, name. Contemporary with these are the extremely rare coins of Vosenos (or Vodenos), known from only a handful of examples in gold and silver, mostly from east Kent. Both Sam--- and Vosenos can be dated to the very end of the first century BC, perhaps overlapping with the latter stages of Dubnovellaunos' reign. However, apart from their coinage, these individuals are again unknown.

Sego (Tasciovanus) (22 coin finds)

Another inscribed series to appear in east Kent at the very end of the first century BC or start of the first century AD was that bearing the name Sego, known in gold, silver and bronze. Clearly associated stylistically with the coinage of the north Thames (i.e. the area including Hertfordshire and Essex) chieftain Tasciovanus and the Verulamium (St Albans) mint, the appearance of these coins in Kent is difficult to explain. The gold *stater* names both Tasciovanus and Sego. Perhaps the most likely explanation is that Tasciovanus attempted to gain a foothold in east Kent with its attendant advantages of closer Continental trading links and these coins were minted for use here, either at Verulamium or in Kent by an itinerant moneyer. Finds of gold coins of Tasciovanus in west Kent have previously been considered a sign of political dependence (Haselgrove 1988, 159). Sego may be an abbreviated personal name, but an alternative interpretation is that it was a title meaning 'the powerful one' (Celtic *sego* = powerful) as a direct reference to Tasciovanus himself. This view takes into account comparable inscriptions found on certain coins of Cunobelin and Amminus (see below) which probably have the same meaning (Hol-

man 1999). There can be no question of any connection with the Segovax mentioned by Caesar, who ruled much earlier.

Eppillus (101 coin finds : Kentish issues only)

The next ruler to issue coins in Kent was Eppillus (*c.* AD 1-15). The prototypes for his coins appear to be mostly near-contemporary Roman issues of the emperor Augustus. Associated with the northern Atrebatic centre of Calleva (Silchester) by a separate coin series produced there, on which he styled himself '*rex Calleva*', Eppillus may have held both seats of power simultaneously for a time before losing Calleva (Bean 1991). Eppillus described himself as a son of Commius, a (presumably) Atrebatic chieftain possibly descended from the Gaulish Commius, 'the Atrebatian' mentioned by Caesar. At one point during his reign, Eppillus appears to have formed an alliance with Tincomarus and Verica, who also describe themselves as sons of Commius, to judge from silver coins (VA 442, 443) apparently naming them in addition to Eppillus (Bean 1991). Eppillus is again unknown to history except from his coinage. The comments of Caesar (DBG V, 14) on polyandry may be of some relevance in any discussion of dynastic issues.

The Kentish series of Eppillus is varied, with gold, silver and bronze issues known, but it is distinct from his Calleva series which did not circulate in Kent. The gold and silver coins are still very rare, but the bronzes are now known in some quantity. There are four catalogued types of bronze for Eppillus with three or four other extremely rare uncatalogued types including half-units. A number of types were produced showing a Victory figure which has been interpreted by Nash (1987, 137) as an indication of a political success. The same would perhaps appear appropriate for Cunobelin (see below).

Cunobelin (201 coin finds : all types)

Sometime around AD 15, Eppillus appears to have been replaced by Cunobelin (*c.* AD 10-40), a leader of the north Thames tribes based at Camulodunum (Colchester) and probably the most powerful man in Britain at the time. He is attested by Roman sources as '*Britannorum Rex*' (Suetonius, Gaius, xliv). Cunobelin, who described himself as a son of Tasciovanus, was apparently successful in his attempt to annex the whole of Kent to his kingdom and many interesting features are found in his Kentish coinage.

The coinage of Cunobelin has a wider and more even distribution across Kent than any other of the inscribed dynastic issues. For the first time, inscribed gold coins appeared in Kent in some quantity,

most bearing the well-known 'corn ear' obverse design (e.g. VA 2010, 2025). However, it is the silver coinage of Cunobelin which provides particular interest for Kentish coin studies. Rodwell (1976, 274) noted that no silver coins of Cunobelin were known from Kent at that time; this situation has now changed to such an extent that a probable east Kent mint can be deduced as producing silver (and bronze) coinage. One type (VA 2067) has a clear Kentish distribution and is far removed from the well-executed issues of the Camulodunum mint with its crude engraving, degenerating almost to 'matchstick' style. The same die-cutter was also responsible for an uncatalogued silver issue of similarly crude style, again with a clear Kentish distribution. Another silver issue of Cunobelin which may possibly, although less certainly, be associated with Kent is the late issue bearing the enigmatic legend 'SOLIDV'; this is found in east Kent but is extremely rare. 'SOLIDV', the meaning of which is unclear, could refer to a mint site (Rodwell 1976, 276), a local official, or even the name of the moneyer.

Fitzpatrick (1992, 26) has suggested, based on distributions, that certain coins of Cunobelin were struck for use in particular regions, such as those inscribed CVNO/TASCI F found in Hertfordshire. It now appears that certain bronze issues of Cunobelin were probably struck in Kent and were primarily used there. As with the Kentish silver coins, these bear the legend CVN or CVNO on both sides and make no reference to the mint at Camulodunum (CAM). The bronze type VA 1981 is a strong candidate as a Kentish mint product. Another type (VA 1989), bearing on its obverse a stylised ship design, may also be a Kentish issue with the reverse legend SE meaning 'powerful' (Holman 1999). One obverse die of this type shows that the legend was originally intended to read 'CAMV', but this was changed to 'CVNO' (Muckelroy *et al.* 1978, 439-444), suggesting that although this die was cut by someone familiar with the Camulodunum mint, that was not the intended mint for this type. Some other coin types of Cunobelin were minted at Camulodunum primarily for use in Kent to judge from their distribution, and these probably date from soon after his acquisition of Kent; the most common of all struck bronze Iron Age coins found in Kent, VA 1973-1, one specimen of which appears to bear a CAM mintmark, is a clear example. There is some evidence that this type was mass-produced within a short time span with one die showing signs of having been crudely repaired and the striking frequently being off-centre. All of the bronze coins mentioned here feature a Victory figure in the design and it is possible that this is a reference to Cunobelin gaining power in Kent. Rodwell (1976, 274-276) has previously suggested 'wreath'

and 'Victory' types were produced following the annexation of the Verulamium region and there is no reason why this should not apply to Kent also. A possible parallel for this under Eppillus has been mentioned above.

It has been noted previously (Fitzpatrick 1992, 27) that late issues of Cunobelin heavily outnumber his earlier issues, a situation found on the majority of sites in the north Thames region and clearly illustrated for Northamptonshire (Curteis 1996, 27). It appears however that the situation in Kent is very different, the early issues forming the bulk of Cunobelin's coinage in the region. Possible explanations for this will be discussed elsewhere including the possibility that some of the Kentish mint products are later than generally supposed (Holman & Parfitt, forthcoming).

Amminus (25 coin finds)

The final Iron Age coins to be produced in Kent were those bearing the name Amminus, probably Adminius, a son of Cunobelin who fled Britain to seek refuge under the Roman emperor Gaius about AD 39 (Suetonius, Gaius, xliv). These are known only in silver and bronze and are still very rare. They bear some comparison with the later issues of Cunobelin, in particular the silver unit VA 192, the obverse of which copies a silver issue of Cunobelin. One silver type of Amminus bears the legend SEC, again probably meaning 'powerful' (Holman 1999).

However, it is the appearance of an apparent mint signature, DVNO, which provides the main interest of Amminus' coinage. This has been attributed to Canterbury (Haselgrove 1987, 143), but there must be strong objections to this since Canterbury was known as Durovernum (fort by the alder-swamp) and is unlikely to have ever incorporated a DVNO- element. DVNO would seem to refer to a site on a hill (Celtic *dun*; Rivet & Smith 1979, 344) and the principal distribution of these coins lies to the east of Canterbury. The site of DVNO must therefore remain a matter of conjecture (Holman 1999); Bigbury is a possibility, but there is no evidence of late occupation here from the limited excavations undertaken to date.

Post-Conquest

Following the Roman Conquest, native Iron Age coinage in South-East England ceased to be produced, but it continued in circulation for perhaps another generation (Haselgrove 1993, 62) before probably being totally replaced by the new Roman coinage when the coin supply increased after AD 64 although, as noted by Curteis

(1996, 33), conclusive evidence is elusive. An analogous situation existed in Gaul for many years after its conquest (Nash 1978, 13-14, 27), as reflected at Chilly and Digeon although these sites were probably sanctuaries (Allen 1995, 33). The displacement of Iron Age coin types, particularly later issues, is primarily attributed to the Roman army (Haselgrove 1993, 50, n.66). One likely reason for the continued use of native coinage for several years after the conquest is that the supply of Roman coinage was initially very restricted owing to the failure of the Roman authorities to supply the quantity required in either Britain or Gaul. Copies of Claudian *aes* were produced in some quantity on an unofficial basis, but it is unlikely that they alone would have filled the void (Boon 1988, 118-124). The native coins would have been expected to continue to circulate in this situation, perhaps as an emergency coinage until the newly conquered province could be properly organised and supplied.

Claudian coinage has been found at a number of sites across Kent. Many of these are contemporary copies, as is usual. Although of larger size than Iron Age coins, they appear to be scarcer as metal-detector finds. Pre-Claudian Roman coins are also present but none can be shown to have derived from a pre-Conquest context and their frequently extremely worn condition suggests a long life for many of them. Apart from the Richborough conquest period losses, the only certain Claudian coin deposit from Kent is the Bredgar hoard containing a number of *aurei* and dated to AD 43.

Other pre-Conquest coins (217 coin finds)

Apart from the many Gaulish imports and coins minted by other British tribes, e.g. Iceni, Corieltauvi, etc., a small number of early coins manufactured and used in the Mediterranean region are known from Kent. Although some may be connected with the Roman Conquest, brought in by the army, the numbers are such, particularly for certain types, that the possibility of a much earlier importation date cannot be discounted. In particular, a bronze issue of Carthaginian Sicily and a bronze issue of Ebusus (Ibiza), both of fourth to second century BC date, occur fairly regularly (ten and three respectively). The reason for such coins appearing in Kent is uncertain, as is the date of their importation, but mercenary activity and trade are both possibilities. The idea that they may have been lost in the eighteenth century (Laing 1968, 15) can safely be discounted in the case of the Kentish finds.

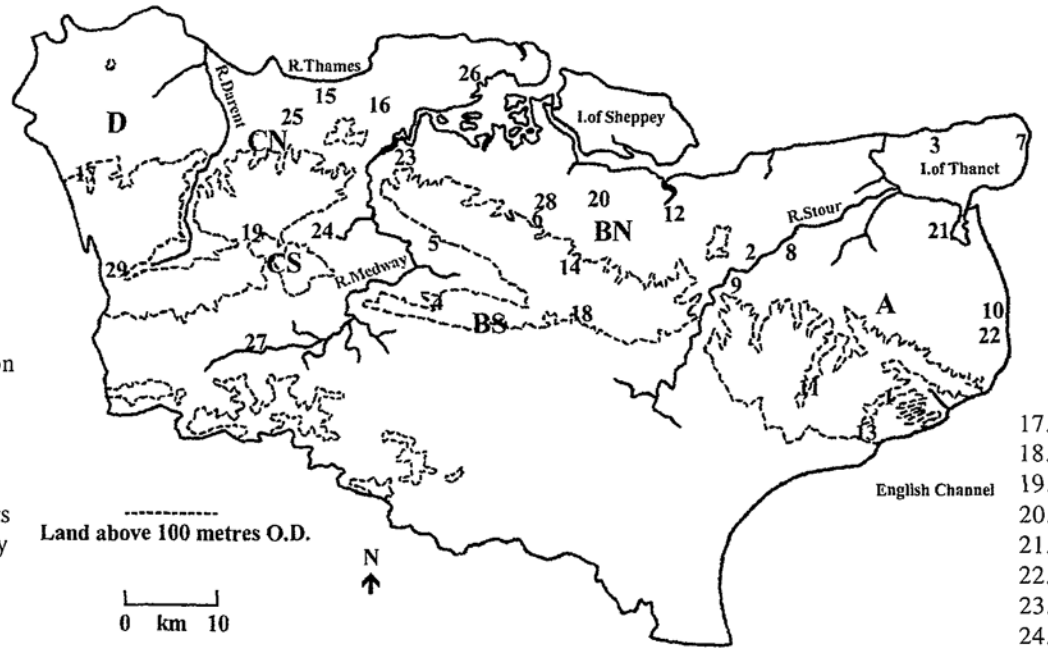
DAVID HOLMAN

THE DISTRIBUTION OF IRON AGE COINAGE IN KENT

Kent is a well defined geographical area, being a large county with a long peninsular coastline. Its closeness to mainland Europe makes it a likely place to find evidence of Continental influence. The name of Kent derives from the Celtic *Cantion*, later Romanised to *Cantium*, which translates as rim or border, i.e. the rim of the land (Rivet & Smith 1979, 300). Topographically, the elevation of Kent ranges from marshland around the coast to chalk downland reaching in excess of 250m above OD in the extreme west. The spine of the North Downs cuts across the central part of the county, separating the north from the south. The Downs are cut by the three major rivers, the Darent, Medway and Stour, and numerous smaller watercourses give rise to downland valleys. There is a broad range of soil types and the countryside is productive, both for woodland and farming. Everitt (1986) has classified Kent into a number of distinct landscapes. It has been found that the vast majority of Iron Age coins come from his 'Foothills' and 'Downland' areas although an attempt to isolate separate regions of coin circulation by this method failed to produce any convincing results. Nevertheless, the geography of Kent provides a useful basis for a division based on the rivers.

A general description of Kent is given by Caesar who wrote that it was by far the most civilised part of Britain with a lifestyle little different from that in Gaul. In the archaeological record, many details of the late Iron Age in Kent are still unclear. There were apparently few hillforts in the county, the most well known being Oldbury and Bigbury, and valley *oppida* are presumed, on archaeological and etymological evidence, to have existed at Canterbury, Rochester and Loose/Boughton Monchelsea. Much of Kent was densely populated and covered with homesteads according to Caesar (DBG V, 12). It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that there were a number of other major settlements whose names are now lost, some of which have only come to light since the advent of metal detecting.

Archaeologically, Kent falls within the region covered by the core area of the late Iron Age Aylesford-Swarling culture (Cunliffe 1991, 133). It was inhabited by the tribes known collectively as the Cantiaci (Rivet & Smith 1979, 299), although this name is not attested by Caesar. Caesar (DBG V, 22) mentions four kings in Kent in 54 BC, namely Carvilius, Cingetorix, Segovax and Taximagulus, but does not link them to any specific tribe; from this, it has long been postulated that the county was in some way sub-divided into four separate kingdoms (Cunliffe 1991, 146). The possible boundaries of these kingdoms have seldom been considered in detail. Cunliffe



1. Alkham
2. Bigbury
3. Birchington
4. Boughton Monchelsea
5. Boxley
6. Bredgar
7. Broadstairs
8. Canterbury
9. Chilham
10. Deal
11. Elham
12. Faversham
13. Folkestone
14. Frinsted
15. Gravesend
16. Higham
17. Keston
18. Lenham Heath
19. Oldbury
20. Radfield
21. Richborough
22. Ringwould
23. Rochester
24. Ryarsh
25. Springhead
26. Stoke
27. Tonbridge
28. Tunstall
29. Westerham

Fig. 1 Regions and Zones of Kent (showing places mentioned in the text)

(1982, 48) has suggested that the principal rivers of Kent, the Stour, Medway, Darent and Thames served as central routeways with kingdoms extending on either side of them. An obvious alternative is that rivers and other topographical features served as the boundaries (Rodwell 1976, 279; Haselgrove 1987, 137). Canterbury and Rochester, both major late Iron Age settlements, are situated on the principal rivers. For the purposes of this study, Kent has been divided into four topographical regions using the sea and principal rivers as the boundaries. These provide convenient units within which the observed differences in coin distribution can be studied. These regions are as follows:

Region A : east of the River Stour, including the Isle of Thanet;
Region B : between the Rivers Stour and Medway, with a possible sub-division along the line of the North Downs escarpment (north and south zones);
Region C : between the Rivers Medway and Darent, subdivided as Region B
Region D : west of the Darent.

The coin distributions in each of these regions show some reasonably well defined, although not numismatically distinct, differences. Since the number of coin finds from east Kent (Region A) is greater than the combined total of the other three regions, this area has been examined in greater depth and a detailed study is currently under preparation. A summary of the numbers of coin finds from the four regions of Kent for each phase is shown in **Table 2** and in histogram form below (**Figs 2 & 3**). The numbers of coins of each metal are also shown, as proposed by Rodwell (1976, 314); plated coins, i.e. contemporary forgeries, have been treated as being of the metal they purport to be. The phases have been explained in Table 1 above.

It is instructive to compare Regions A, B and C in their entirety, for a number of differences are apparent. Firstly, the ratio of Kentish Primary *potins* falls sharply west of the Stour Valley until they account for only 7 per cent of the recorded Iron Age coinage west of the Medway in Region C. Recent detector finds confirm this pattern. In Region A, Kentish Primary *potins* are still the most frequent finds; in Region B, they are also evident, principally immediately to the south of the North Downs escarpment, but less frequent; in Region C, they continue to be markedly scarce compared with further east. This strongly suggests that east Kent was the area of origin of these coins.

In contrast, Flat Linear I *potins* are more frequent in Region B than in Region A, but they reduce to the Region A level west of the River

TABLE 2. COIN FINDS FROM KENT BY REGION, ZONE, PHASE AND METAL

Phase	A	B	BN	BS	C	CN	CS	D	Total
P:KP	406	25	2	23	13	9	4	2	446
P:FLI	157	45	16	29	20	17	3	9	231
P:FLII	82	14	12	2	4	2	2	12	112
C	116	8	2	6	2	2	0	1	127
1-5	86	63	31	32	46	21	25	11	206
6	132	30	11	19	28	22	6	6	196
7	155	37	21	16	41	31	10	10	243
8E	199	36	15	21	28	19	9	5	268
8L	54	4	1	3	8	8	0	2	68
9	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	3
Un-ph	57	9	3	6	7	4	3	1	74
Totals	*1445*	*271*	*114*	*157*	*199*	*137*	*62*	*59*	*1974*
Potin	685	87	31	56	38	29	9	23	833
AE	524	60	18	42	76	59	17	7	667
AR	101	17	5	12	19	16	3	7	144
AV	135	107	60	47	66	33	33	22	330

Notes. AE=struck bronze: AR=Silver: AV=Gold. The Mediterranean coins discussed on page 217 are not counted above, not being Celtic. Individual coins are each counted as a single coin find. Hoards have generally been counted as one coin find; hoards including several coins from more than one phase have been counted as having one coin find for each of those phases, on the basis that such a hoard may be a deposit over a long period of time, e.g. Stoke. The figures relate to Kent finds only and do not include Kentish coins found elsewhere.

Medway in Region C. West of the Stour Valley, they exceed by some margin the number of Kentish Primary *potins*, a fact not immediately evident on the ground because of the lack of recorded finds in the large Blean Forest area west of Canterbury, but increasingly clear around the Medway Valley.

Flat Linear II *potins* show little variation between regions east of the River Darent, always remaining at a low level. The Region A figure is exaggerated by the large number of finds at Canterbury and Folkestone which account for the majority of Flat Linear II *potins* in that region. This may be seen to lend weight to the possibility that Flat Linear II *potins* were, at least in part, a north Thames coinage

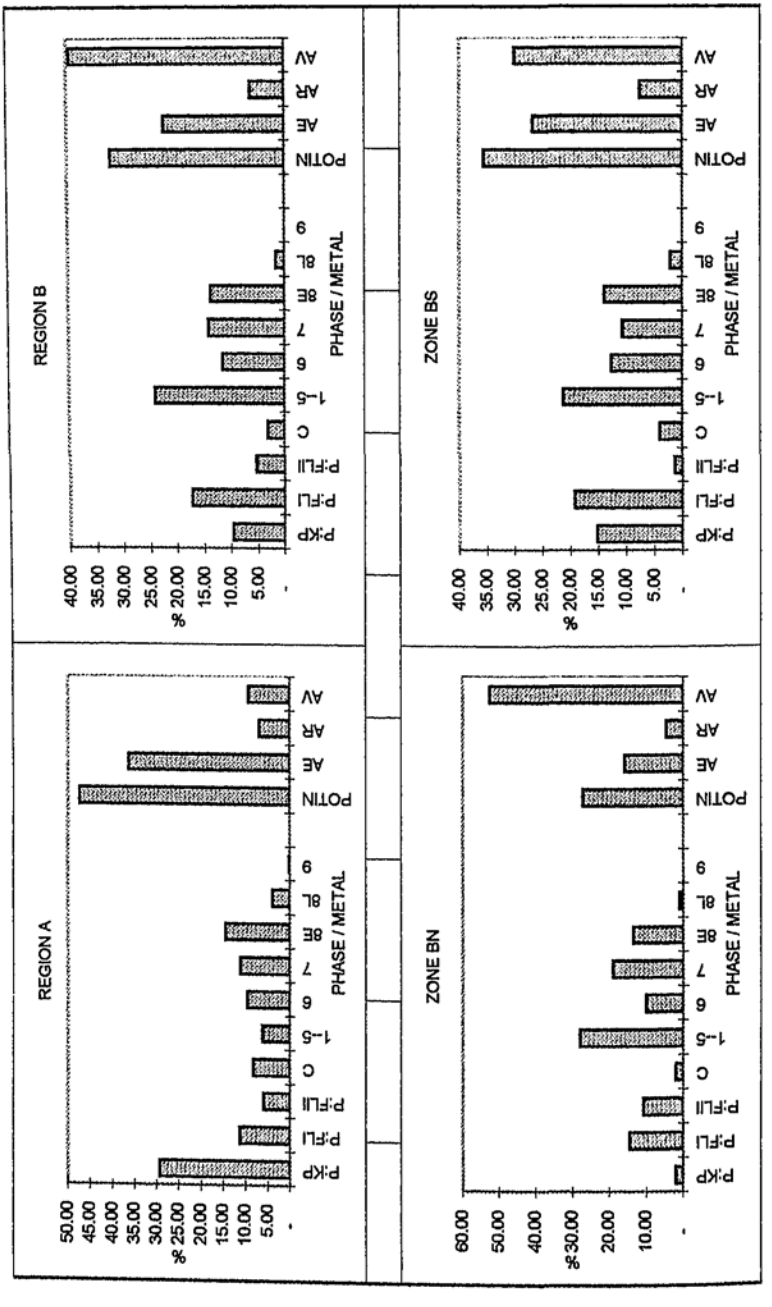


Fig. 2. Illustration of Table 2: Regions A and B, zones BN and BS

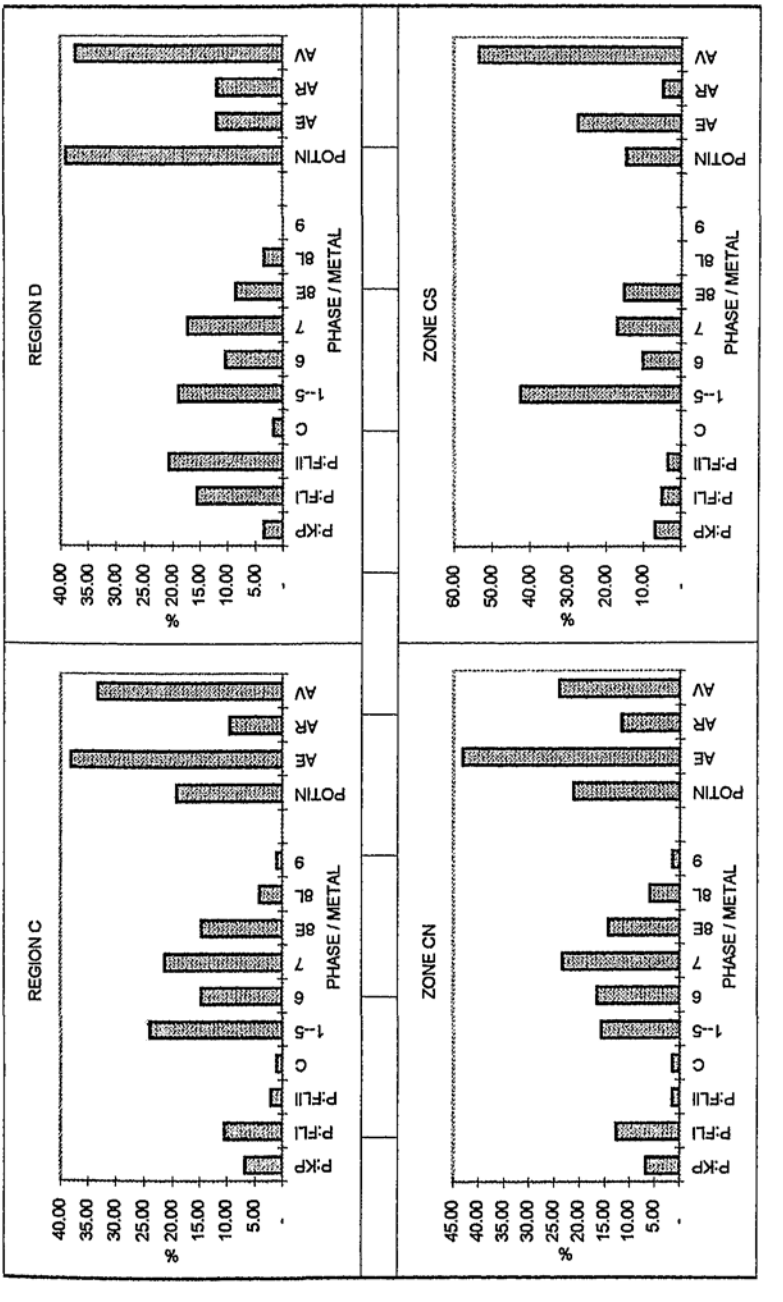


Fig. 3. Illustration of Table 2: Regions C and D, zones CN and CS

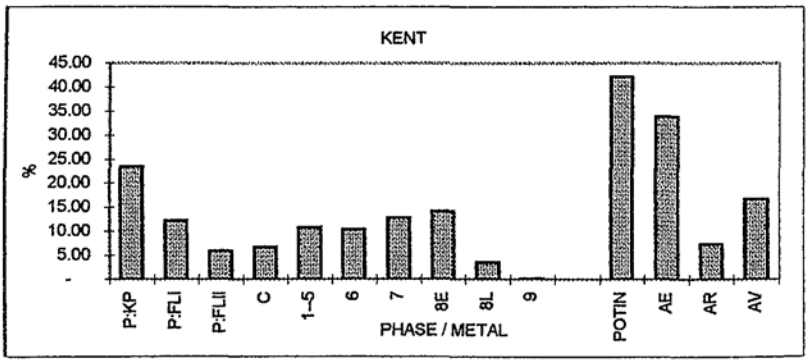


Fig. 4. Illustration of Table 2: All Kent

influenced by Flat Linear I issues (G. Cottam, pers. comm.) although they were clearly acceptable in Kent for some purposes.

Imported coinage in Kent shows considerable and significant differences across the county, both in terms of the percentage of the total number of coin finds and the ratio of gold to 'lesser' metals, principally *potin* and bronze. In Region A Continental base metal and very occasional silver coins comprise 8 per cent of the recorded coinage compared to 5 per cent for gold imports. However, base metal imports fall off dramatically west of the Stour Valley, while gold imports show a sharp increase. Indeed, west of the River Medway, Continental base metal issues are notable only for their scarcity. The distribution of base metal imports clearly demonstrates that their heaviest use was in the 'channel border' area of east Kent where they seem to have been widely accepted. Much of the imported gold, which accounts for 20 per cent of the total coinage in Region B and 21 per cent in Region C, has been found in the northern parts of those regions along the Thames corridor, although gold also forms a large percentage of the finds from the southern part of Region C. The north coast of Kent, particularly from Reculver westwards, continues to produce a much higher percentage of gold coinage in general, and imported gold in particular, than does Region A, thus reinforcing early distribution maps (Rodwell 1976), although no doubt an element of bias can be seen among the earlier discoveries, and poor preservation of base metal coins here has led to these being under-represented.

From phase 6 onwards, i.e. probably from shortly after 50 BC, coin find ratios in both regions east of the River Medway are very similar, perhaps hinting at some form of unity, certainly numismatic (and

therefore likely economic) and probably increasingly political, something previously less in evidence. Region C differs only in having a higher percentage of phase 7 coins. By early phase 8 (8E), the earlier first century AD, the impression gained is that Region C had also come under an overall control (of Cunobelin). Later coins of Cunobelin (phase 8L) are scarce across all of Kent, which perhaps indicates that they were not primarily intended for circulation in Kent although with the proviso that some of the Kentish mint issues of Cunobelin may yet be found to be later than the currently assigned 'early' date. Phase 9 coinage, principally consisting of the latest issues of outlying tribes such as the Corieltauvi and the Iceni, some probably post-dating the Roman conquest, can be regarded as statistically insignificant in Kent.

Comparison of the metal types reveals that the relative proportions for *potin*, bronze and silver in Regions A and B appear very similar, but there is a large discrepancy for gold which is far more frequent in Region B (39 per cent) than in Region A (9 per cent). The differences evident in the distribution of imported Gallo-Belgic gold have been discussed above, but the same comments can be applied to the generally very rare Kentish gold issues which again show a clustering towards the north coast. West of the River Medway in Region C, the incidence of gold is similar to Region B. For silver, Region C is similar to both regions further east, i.e. it is comparatively rare, but the frequency of *potin* to bronze is reversed with bronze being more common than *potin* (and gold) in Region C. Once again, this appears to locate the home of *potin* coinage east of the River Medway. The high ratio of bronze to gold in Region C is perhaps misleading to some extent as a number of gold coins provenanced to 'Rochester' may have come from this region but these have not been included in this study owing to the doubtful provenances.

For the purposes of this study, coin distributions to the north and south of the North Downs escarpment were compared to analyse the possibility of this being a boundary. The northern (BN) and southern (BS) zones of Region B show surprising variation. Gold is dominant in the north whereas bronze is far more in evidence in the south although *potin* heads the list there. The distribution of *potin* types is marked: although Flat Linear I *potins* are relatively constant in both zones, Kentish Primary *potins* are virtually absent in the north whereas Flat Linear II *potins* are unexpectedly frequent, but this situation is reversed in the south. This seems to suggest separate dispersal routes with Kentish Primary *potins* perhaps spreading from east Kent principally along a southerly route and Flat Linear II *potins* taking a coastal route along the Thames. From phase 5 onwards, there

is little difference between the zones apart from coins of phase 7 being more frequent in the north.

Similarly in Region C, the northern (CN) zone differs markedly from the south (CS) but both zones show higher levels of bronze than *potin*, reversing the situation seen in the other regions. Flat Linear I *potins* are more frequent in the north but the variation in Kentish Primary and Flat Linear II *potins* seen in Region B is not repeated.

The differences seen between the respective northern and southern zones of Regions B and C are such as to suggest that there is not a significant division along an east-west axis, i.e. the North Downs escarpment, for these regions, and that river boundaries, i.e. a north-south axis, appear more likely from the coin evidence. The zones appear less divergent after the mid first century BC, perhaps reflecting increased unity. The limited evidence available for Rochester shows a far closer fit to the northern zone distribution of Region B than it does for Region C although bias caused by the Flat Linear II *potins* at Rochester should be borne in mind.

Much of Region D is now built over with the spread of London suburbia and coin distributions are correspondingly difficult to ascertain with the enforced selectivity of areas available for searching. Coins from Region D show some considerable differences compared with regions further east. Kentish Primary *potins* are now very much in a minority and the most common *potins* are those of the Flat Linear II series, thus emphasising a westerly distribution for the latter. *Potin* forms the largest metal component, marginally exceeding gold. From phase 5 onwards, the ratios are very similar to Region C, although at lower levels, with phase 7 coinage again showing a peak. Perhaps the most noticeable feature of Region D, apart from the Flat Linear II *potins*, is that silver is on a par with bronze; although the sample is small and some bias may be suspected, this is surely significant in its obvious difference with the rest of Kent. The only coin type likely to have been produced in Region D which can be ascribed with certainty to the Kentish series is the silver issue of Sa---, which appears to have a concentration around the western boundary of modern Kent. Kentish influence on the coinage rapidly reduces towards the south-west.

A number of hoards are known from Kent. *Potin* hoards are known from Folkestone, Birchington, Broadstairs and possibly Deal (all Region A), Lenham Heath and Boxley (Region B) and possibly Gravesend (Region C). A bronze hoard may be represented by a number of similar Continental bronzes found near Faversham (B). Gold hoards are known from Folkestone, Chilham and possibly Elham (A), Tunstall and Frinsted (B), Ryarsh and Higham (C), Stoke

(C, but probably a ritual site) and Westerham (Region D). A forger's hoard is also known from Otford (D). A Roman hoard of 34 gold *aurei* probably buried in AD 43 and possibly connected with the pay of invading Roman soldiers, found at Bredgar in 1957 (Carson 1959), should perhaps also be mentioned. The Westerham hoard of 1927 lies to the west, beyond the main circulation area of Kentish coinage, and in an area which may not have come under the control of any Kentish ruler for any length of time. This hoard contains coins not typical of Kentish finds.

Across Kent, a number of sites have produced Iron Age coins in varying quantities. Haselgrove (1987, 151) discussed those known at the time. Many of these sites contained less than ten coins and nothing was known of their nature in the Iron Age. The most prominent of these were Canterbury, Richborough and Rochester, for which Haselgrove listed 104, 21 and 16 coins respectively (1987, 152). Outside of east Kent, smaller numbers have come from sites including Oldbury hillfort, Keston, Springhead, Loose/Boughton Monchelsea and Radfield, near Sittingbourne. A site at Stoke, near Rochester, should most likely be interpreted as ritual. Metal detecting has failed to produce any obvious new sites west of the Stour valley although the general scatter of coins hints at the possibility that they do exist but remain to be identified, e.g. along the marshland fringes of north Kent. However, it is in the east of the county that the most productive new sites have been found. This may be due in part to the writer being based in east Kent although coins have been recorded from across the whole county. Another contributory factor is the availability of land and indeed the distribution of metal-detector users who work the available land. Factors leading to recovery bias have been discussed by Curteis (1996, 19), and May (1994, 11) has warned against differential recovery efforts potentially leading to the identification of separate areas of coin distribution which did not necessarily exist. Rodwell (1976, 313) suggested that coin distributions do not reflect so much the original patterns of circulation and loss as the patterns of modern collection and identification; however, the numbers now recorded seem to suggest that the distributions should be viewed as a combination of both of these factors. The number of coins recorded from east Kent in particular is now so great that it can be accepted that they reflect a broadly accurate picture.

The great majority of the coins used in this study are, with the exception of those found in archaeological excavations across Kent, metal detector finds. Non-detector finds include those found by chance in the pre-detector era (heavily biased towards gold) and other

more recent casual discoveries from private gardens, etc., and small scale archaeological work including field-walking. It is considered that, overall, a high level of confidence in the metal detector work can be accepted; those detectorists who have contributed to this study by kindly making their coins available for recording are responsible and provide precise details of provenance. Unfortunately, there are others who still persist in activities detrimental not only to archaeology but also to the responsible detectorists; coins with dubious provenances, such as many of those provenanced to Rochester in recent years, have been excluded from the present study.

SUMMARY OF METAL TYPES

Gold coins, recorded from 330 coin finds including 25 plated pieces in Kent, 17 per cent of the total assemblage, are far more common as isolated discoveries and hoards in areas where no site is known than from actual sites themselves. Many of these coins are imports from Gaul. Such coins are unlikely to have been used in general circulation. It should be noted that a sizeable proportion of the gold coin finds is down to bias in reporting. Many of the isolated gold coins were found in the pre-detector era. Gold was easily spotted and most people would have had some idea that they had found something of value. Since the advent of metal detecting, the imbalance has been corrected to a large extent with the discovery and recording of considerable numbers of base metal coins.

Silver coins, recorded from 144 coin finds including 10 plated pieces, 7 per cent of the total, are rather scarcer than gold as isolated finds. These are smaller and more difficult to spot than the large gold *staters*, but nonetheless it seems clear that silver coinage played a relatively minor role in the Kentish monetary system where bronze provided the small change, particularly when compared with those tribes which used a silver coinage system in place of bronze, such as the Atrebates, Dobunni and Iceni. This is particularly evident during the reign of Eppillus, whose bronze coinage was produced to fit into the existing monetary system in Kent and whose Kentish silver coins are very rare, in direct contrast to his Atrebatic issues minted at Calleva.

Struck bronze coinage from Kent is represented by 667 coin finds, 34 per cent of the total. No doubt this percentage would be higher had bronze coins been recorded to the same standard as gold coins in the pre-detector era (when details of bronze coins were often not recorded). A wide range of types has now been recorded with a number

of new types and variants, particularly in the Kentish Uninscribed Series, being added to those listed by Mack and Van Arsdell. They cover the period from the mid first century BC to the Conquest.

Potin coins, recorded from 833 coin finds, 42 per cent of the total, are the most commonly found Iron Age coins in Kent. They occur all across Kent with the exception of Romney Marsh and the Weald, on major and minor sites, urban and rural, and as isolated finds. As with the struck bronze, Continental coins form a small but significant proportion. It is reasonable to assume that the *potins* filtered out from the major sites into their surrounding hinterland and were lost as their circulation increased. The major site finds and finds from elsewhere appear to generally complement one another as far as the *potins* (and bronze) are concerned.

DISCUSSION

Much of what has previously been written about Iron Age coinage in Kent and, by inference, other parts of South-East England should now be reviewed and amended accordingly. Cunliffe's view (1982, 40) that Kent had great potential for the Iron Age period has been borne out not only for the coinage but also for other classes of artefact and site. Although the coinage forms only part of the historical record (Allen 1960, 98), the quantity now recorded enables a more realistic attempt to be made at reconstructing the general political picture although, still, little can be said with certainty: the temptation to establish a chronology by assigning fixed events, and therefore dates, to hoards is fraught with pitfalls.

The question of why Iron Age coinage was produced and what it was used for should be addressed as the large number of finds, and their distribution, appear to suggest that previously held ideas need reconsideration, particularly with regard to the once extremely rare Kentish base metal coinages. Nash (1978, 20-24) commented on the lack of recorded findspots in France for *potin* and bronze, noting that they are chiefly found on town sites, temple/settlement areas and sometimes later villa sites, concluding that the bronze coinage was produced as currency to finance the day-to-day running of the towns during a period of increasing urbanisation. This view, however, does not reflect the likelihood, based on the Kentish evidence, that such coins were also extensively used in rural areas. One suspects that it is only the lack of metal detector use and recording in France which has led to the bias towards major sites, a situation which was certainly the case in Kent until 1991. Similarly, Haselgrove (1987, 184) regarded

a concentration of bronze coinage at major sites as indicating increasing trade and exchange. However, the Kentish distribution suggests a more general usage, although the major sites and more important rural sites (Haselgrove 1988, 116) must have played a principal role in the diffusion of the coinage (e.g. Haselgrove 1993, 57).

Potins of the Kentish Primary Series have seen by far the largest numerical increase in any Kentish coin type over recent years. Early Flat Linear I *potins*, in particular Allen types B and D, have also increased greatly in number. It is now clear that the earliest *potin* coinage began in east Kent and was produced in vast quantities. The apparently high ratio of early Flat Linear I *potins* in the Rochester area (Haselgrove 1987, 151) can now be paralleled in east Kent. The volume and distribution of the Kentish Primary *potins*, in particular, implies that they circulated on a local basis in much the same way as the later bronze coinage, although they may also have had some special purpose to judge from the increasing number of far-flung outliers, notably in Lincolnshire (May 1994), and occasional hoarding.

The absolute dating of Iron Age coins is difficult to determine and will always be liable to several interpretations owing to the lack of any fixed chronology. The prototypes are of little use, beyond providing a *terminus post quem*, as there is no way of knowing when they were actually used, as the possible prototypes discussed by Scheers demonstrate (1992, 33-46). The dating advanced by Van Arsdell (1989) is far too precise given the nature of the evidence and, realistically, most dates should be given a proviso of plus or minus 10 years at least. The relative dating of Iron Age coinage also poses considerable difficulties. For example, the Romanised issues of Cunobelin are clearly stylistically later than the native-inspired designs of Dubnovellaunos, but problems arise when trying to ascertain the internal chronology of a particular series. This is clearly shown in Kent by the coinage of Cunobelin, a topic which will be discussed in a future paper (Holman & Parfitt, forthcoming).

The volume of Iron Age coinage in Kent suggests a society using coinage in day-to-day trade and not only for specialised purposes such as religious offerings. Fitzpatrick (1992, 20) regarded it, in an overall context, as not being a general purpose coinage. This is true, as the differences in the distribution of gold compared with silver and bronze shows (e.g. Haselgrove 1993, 48), a situation seen in Kent with the high frequency of gold coinage along the north coast not being paralleled further east. However, the *potins* and the bronze have a distribution suggesting widespread use and acceptance, although no doubt bartering accounted for many transactions. It is

perhaps significant that Iron Age base metal coins in east Kent, as evidenced by total site lists of Iron Age and Roman coins, are found as frequently, overall, as most Roman coinage prior to AD 260. They also have an identical distribution to Roman coins in that they are found everywhere, from major sites to isolated casual discoveries. Iron Age coinage in Kent can no longer be regarded as particularly rare and thus unable to have been used for economic and trading purposes, albeit in a primitive form of economy. During the writing of this paper, considerable numbers of coins have continued to be found and the flow shows little sign of abating. One suspects that if concerted efforts were made to record as many detector finds as possible from Essex and Hertfordshire, in particular, in the same way as has been done for Kent, then the density and scale of the coinage would be seen to surpass anything previously expected (Rodwell 1981, 43) and lead to a vastly greater understanding of the late Iron Age economy and political situation. Large numbers of bronze coins of Cunobelin are being found in that region (G. Cottam, pers. comm.), which includes the major settlements at Colchester, St Albans and Braughing. The isolation of east Kent is less apparent in view of the large number of imported base metal Gaulish coins found there which suggest thriving cross-Channel trade in what must have been a strategically very important location for control of this trade. That Kent appears, on numismatic evidence, to have been a keenly contested region is evident and perhaps control of cross-Channel trade, and the wealth resulting from this, was a primary factor.

A more detailed report on Iron Age coinage and settlement in east Kent is currently under preparation. This will discuss the distribution of coinage on a range of sites in that region and compare and contrast these with one another and against the background 'rural' pattern. Some points touched on in this paper will be discussed in greater depth. At present, it is considered sufficient to state that the study of Iron Age coinage in Kent can now be significantly advanced, principally it must be said as a result of metal-detecting activity.

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