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THE HOUSSEN HOARD AT COLMAR

(Plates III to V)

A recent article in these pages makes reference to the Houssen hoard (†). The facts about this hoard are not well known, but they are unambiguous. I have delayed putting them on record before, in the hope that I would be able to give the weights, but in the series concerned they are unlikely to be significant. The time has come when an account of the hoard will be useful to readers of this journal even without them.

The Houssen hoard was discovered at Thiergarten, Ober Mittle, near the village of Houssen, canton of Andolsheim, arrondissement of Colmar, Haut-Rhin, early in 1849. The find was reported in the *Journal de Colmar* for 25 February, 1849, when it was stated to have contained about 15 bronze and 150 silver coins. It was then mentioned in the *Annuaire de la Société numismatique*, III, 1868-1872, p. 400, when it was stated to have contained 144 *Kaleledou* quinarii, but no mention was made of bronze coins. It was this notice which was reported in A. Blanchet, *Traité des monnaies gauloises*, 1905, p. 605, t. 278, on which most subsequent references to the hoard depend. In F. X. Kraus, *Kunst und Alterthum in*

(1) J.-B. COLBERT DE BEAULIEU, *Chronologie des bronzes gaulois et British Potin Coins*, in *RBN*, 109, 1973, p. 5-41, esp. 38-39, n. 82.

It has never been my practice to enter into controversy on articles I have written, and I do not propose to do so now. The facts recorded and what I have said about them are there for all to criticise.

I agree with much, but not all that my friend Dr Colbert de Beaulieu has written; I draw a more fundamental distinction than he does between struck bronze coins and the cast potin which in some cases, I believe, preceded them. I could have wished that he had also taken account of my paper referred to in footnote 5 below, which is relevant to the argument, and I would suggest that he has not given the weight it deserves either to the important mixed hoard from Snettisham, Norfolk, or to *BG*, V, 12, 'Utuntur aut aere aut nummo aureo'.

Elsass-Lothringen, the number of coins found is given as 125. R. Forrer, in *Les monnaies gauloises ou celtiques trouvées en Alsace*, 1925, p. 38-42, records that, when he saw what remained of the hoard in the Musée de Colmar, it contained 128 coins in all, of which 12 were cast potin coins and 116 *Kaletedou* quinarii. He also mentions, what the extant tickets confirm, that there were other coins placed on exhibition. Forrer also saw the terracotta pot in which the coins were found, which he says was orange yellow in colour and about 9 cm. high, very bulbous and reaching its maximum width about a third of the way up.

In view of this circumstantial record there is no reason to doubt that a hoard was found at Houssen in 1849, containing between 12 and 15 potin coins and between 125 and 150 silver coins, mixed together in a pot. Moreover despite the vicissitudes of two wars, no less than 95 coins from it survive intact on their original tickets in the Bibliothèque Municipale at Colmar, and there are tickets to indicate that a further 7 coins were once there also. These may, indeed, still be in the collection, which contains other *Kaletedou* coins, but, if so, they have become confused with those from other sources. The 12 potin coins seen by Forrer are still there, and 83 of his 116 quinarii. By the kindness of Monsieur Francis Gueth, the Librarian, I have been able to obtain photographs of what remains of the hoard (see Plates III-V, nos. 1-95). Since no hoard of coins of *Kaletedou* type has ever been published in full, let alone a hoard mixed with potin coins, it seems desirable that the record should be as full as possible.

The *Kaletedou* coins of the Houssen hoard form a compact sector out of a longer sequence. So much has been written on coins of this type in recent years that it would be superfluous to attempt another full study here ⁽²⁾. Nevertheless, to indicate the context

(2) Recent literature includes the following :

M. DAYET, *Les monnaies de ΚΑΛΕΤΕΔΟΥ*, in *RAE*, 11, 1960, 134-154.

J.-B. COLBERT DE BEAULIEU, *Les monnaies de Caletedu et le système du denier en Gaule*, in *CN*, 6, 1965, p. 163-180.

ID., *Les monnaies de Caletedu sont-elles vraiment éduennes?* in *RAE*, 16, 1966, p. 285-294.

ID., *La légende ΚΑΛΕΤΕΔΟΥ et ses variétés*, in *EC*, 11, 1966-67, p. 327-340.

ID., *Traité de numismatique celtique*, I, *Méthodologie des ensembles*, Paris, 1973, esp. p. 137-140, 273-6, figs. 37-8.

S. SCHEERS, *Les monnaies de la Gaule inspirées de celles de la République romaine*, Louvain, 1969, 87-94, carte 2-2a.

of the Houssen coins in an intelligible manner, it is necessary to give a brief summary of the series as a whole. As readers of this journal will know, all *Kaletedou* coins have on the obverse a head derived from the helmeted Roma on Roman denarii of the late 2nd or early 1st century B.C. and on the reverse a single horse, normally to the left, surrounded by a legend which, at its fullest, reads in Greek characters ΚΑΛΕΤΕΔΟΥ, for which *Caletedu* may be a more correct Latin rendering. The coinage can be divided into six main classes, as follows :

A. The series starts with rare coins which betray their close dependence on Roman denarii, not least by the borrowing on a few dies, in addition to the normal full legend, of a monogram of Sulla from a denarius of c. 150 B.C. (Plate III A) (3).

B. The coinage then settles down to a regular pattern with head left and horse left. The horse is surrounded by the Greek legend in full, without the monogram ; at first it stands well away from the horse (Plate V, B 1), but gradually encroaches on the legs (Plate V, B 2, 3). The horse is shown stepping and the O of the legend is between the two forelegs.

C. After this legend becomes increasingly corrupt ; the engravers were doubtless illiterate copiers, and the coins assume characteristics customary in 'immobilised' types. The letters ΚΑΑ remain legible at the beginning, though the forms are distorted, as do the ΟΥ at the end, but the letters ΕΤΕΔ in the middle go to pieces. Either Ε or Δ is always present, but the other letters may be anywhere or omitted ; where there is a Δ, however, it normally remains correctly placed in relation to the rest of the legend, i.e. it appears to the observer as Δ (Plate V, C 1, 2).

K. CASTELIN, *Die Kreuzmünzen bei den Rültern und den Alaunen*, in *SNR*, 50, 1971, esp. p. 96-106.

(3) The coin imitated is the denarius of P. Cornelius Sulla, *RRC* 386 (*Sydenham* 155-122 B.C., *Crawford* 165-150 B.C., Rome). It is usual today to treat the Sulla monogram on the coins of *Kaletedou* as a reference to the dictator, and therefore to date the first of these coins to the period 83-78 B.C. But this is not the only imitation of a Roman coin legend, see for instance *NC*, 1971, 354-35, fig. 1. To this may be added the fact that the legend on BN 9580, AMMI/SEC is clearly a reproduction of the ligatured A. MANLIVS Q.F/SER on *RRC* 543, from which the type is borrowed. Although the date for commencement of the *Kaletedou* coins which the Sulla interpretation would suggest may well be about right, the monogram falls short of proof.

D. In the next stage a galloping or prancing horse replaces the stepping horse, and the O of the legend is finally dropped. At first the Δ is as in stage C (Plate V, D 1), but later it is inverted so that it appears to the observer as ∇ (Plate III, 3, 4). There are a few coins with mixed characteristics (Plate V, D 2). The ϵ survives prone below the ϵ .

E. The remaining stages have a wheel in place of the by now totally meaningless Δ , but the prone ϵ still survives below the wheel (Plate V, E 1, 2).

F. Finally there are obverses of distinctive style on which a symbol has been added in front of or behind the head, while the prancing horse with wheel remains on the reverse (Plate V, F 1, 2).

Concomitant with these changes, there is a distinct evolution of style, broadly from better to worse, which is less easily described. For instance, the two small lines joining the pair of beaded circles in front of the face on stages B and C disappear from stage D onwards. During stage D the three lines forming the visor of the helmet start from a small circle, instead of the curve, representing the beginning of a wing, on previous types. These and many other minor variations within this vast series may be disregarded here as they do not affect the broad scheme of the coinage.

Within this sequence the coins of the Houssen hoard are drawn exclusively from the middle. There are no representatives of class A nor any early representative of class B. There are 14 coins belonging to the end of class B, where the legend appears to be still complete; these are in worn condition. There is fair representation, 11 examples, of class C, with various deformations of the legend. The strongest representation, including coins in fresh condition, is of class D, both with the Δ , 8 examples, and with the ∇ , 39 examples. Only 11 coins cannot be classified. It will be seen from this that classes E and F, which elsewhere are amongst the commonest of *Kaletedou* quinarii, are wholly absent at Houssen.

Ferrer also illustrates a drawing of a coin at the University Library of Strasbourg (fig. 36). On the basis of information given him by M. Müller, a former curator of the Strasbourg collection, he describes the coin as coming from the same hoard. The coin is still in the University library and the ticket, in an old hand, reads

as follows: *Mit vielen andern gleichen Exemplaren bei Colmar gefunden, bei Hausen, Cant. Andolsheim, 1849*. The coin is a typical example of stage E, with the wheel below the horse; it weighs 1.90 g and it is not worn. I have grave doubts, however, whether it really did come from the Houssen hoard, despite the ticket. In appearance it is unlike the coins in Colmar, which contain no examples of this stage. There are many other *Kaletedou* coins in Strasbourg with which it could have been confused before Forrer saw it. If it were a hoard coin, it must have been picked out because it was different from the others, but, if so, this belies the wording of the ticket, which says that it was similar to many others. What is much more likely is that there has been a muddle between the Houssen hoard of 1849 and the vastly greater Robache, St-Dié, hoard of 1844, which was broken up and scattered. There are examples from the St-Dié hoard both in Colmar and in Strasbourg, and a parcel in private hands has recently been published⁽⁴⁾. It is certain that the hoard contained many coins of class E; see for instance, E. Lambert, *Essai sur la numismatique gauloise du nord-ouest de la France*, 1844, II, p. 105-106, pl. XIV, 24-33. I have little doubt that the Houssen hoard passed to the Musée de Colmar intact.

The presence of potin coins with the *quinarii* in the Houssen hoard is of particular importance. The 12 surviving coins are all of the type traditionally ascribed to the 'Sequani', although the centre of a very wide distribution is nearer Basle than Besançon. These are of the large denomination which has on the obverse a head with a band of two straight lines holding the hair and on the reverse an animal best described as a horned horse prancing. On two of the coins there is a circle over the animal's tail.

Both types of coin in the Houssen hoard are characteristic of the finds at the site of La Tène. When I was working on the coins from La Tène, I became aware that the *Kaletedou* coins ceased at

(4) *Informations archéologiques, Circonscription de Lorraine*, in *Gallia*, 30, 1972, p. 377. By chance the coins in this lot do not include any of stage E, although this was certainly in the hoard. The types represented do not agree proportionately with those of the Houssen hoard, and there are two examples of the type with legend CONTE. The coins are clearly a selection, and not necessarily typical; they include one with the legend *Kaletedou* facing outwards and running anticlockwise, a rare variety of stage B, of which there was formerly an example in the Houssen hoard at Colmar, see FORRER fig. 38, 1.91 g.

a determined point in the sequence. I also observed that the bulk of the very numerous potin coins belonged to a single variety, from which point on the numbers tailed away. The question arose whether the cessation point of the *Kaletedou* coins and the floreat of the potin coins were simultaneous, or, as the then accepted chronology would have suggested, in succession. I formed the view, on the facts of the site and the coinage, that they were simultaneous, as I have explained in my paper on the coins from La Tène (5). This view received the strongest possible confirmation when I had the good fortune to encounter the bulk of the Houssen hoard surviving undisturbed at Colmar. It is impossible to disregard the evidence of the hoard that *Kaletedou* coins and potin coins of 'Sequani' type were in circulation alongside one another, and that the *Kaletedou* coins in question were not the latest in the sequence. Mixed metal hoards are rare in Celtic numismatics, but when they do occur the evidence they provide is particularly revealing.

The relative dating of Celtic coins is always simpler than the absolute dating. It is not the intention of this paper to reexamine either the attribution or the dating of the two series concerned, only to record the hoard itself. But if the *Kaletedou* sequence as a whole had ceased before the start of Caesar's campaigns in Gaul in 58 B.C., as seems probable, then a hoard which does not contain the latest *Kaletedou* coins should be placed some years before that. The likelihood is, therefore, that the Houssen hoard should be associated rather with the activities of Ariovistus and his Suevians amongst the Sequani, prior to Caesar's campaigns, rather than with those campaigns themselves. Indeed, the hoard could be earlier still, and this would not be inconsistent with the evidence from the site of La Tène, which appears to have been abandoned somewhere between 75 and 60 B.C. The clue to the absolute burial date of hoard lies less in itself than in the interpretation of the site of La Tène (6).

When one bears in mind the long-standing controversies over the dating of early Roman coins, despite the ample written history of the times, it is not to be wondered at if there are obscurities in the chronology of some Gaulish coins. More mixed hoards such as Houssen would go a long way towards solving them.

(5) D. F. ALLEN, *The Coins found at La Tène*, in *EC*, 13, 1973, p. 477-521, esp. p. 489, n. 5.

(6) See J. M. DE NAVARRO, *The Finds from the Site of La Tène*, I, London, 1972, esp. p. 320 f.

COINS ILLUSTRATED

- A. Quinarii of *Kaletedou* type in Municipal Library of Colmar.
 1-14. Stage B ; legend ΚΑΛΕΤΕΔΟΥ complete, but crowded in on legs of stepping horse.
 15-20. Stage C ; legend partly corrupt ; ϰ below stepping horse.
 21-24. Stage C ; legend now Δ ϰ or Δ below stepping horse.
 25-32. Stage D ; similar but instead prancing horse and O omitted.
 33. Stage C/D hybrid ; stepping horse, but Δ ϰ of following group.
 34-58. Stage D ; with Δ ϰ below prancing horse.
 59-72. Stage D ; similar but with ring at junction with visor.
 73-83. Unclassified, mainly, if not all, of stage D.
 B. Cast potin coins of 'Sequani' type in Municipal Library of Colmar.
 84-93. Horned horse prancing.
 94-95. Similar but with circle added on reverse.
 C. Quinarius of *Kaletedou* type in University Library of Strasbourg.
 96. Stage E ; 1.90 g.

RECONCILIATION WITH COINS ILLUSTRATED
 BY R. FORRER

9. = fig. 39, 1.74 g.
 24. = fig. 37, 1.88 g.
 30. = fig. 42, 1.97 g.
 35. = fig. 41, 1.97 g.
 80. = fig. 40, 1.93 g.
 Figs. 38 and 43 missing for fig. 38 see foot-note 4.
 84. = fig. 44, 6.06 g.
 85. = fig. 45, 4.43 g.
 87. = fig. 46, 3.70 g.
 92. = fig. 48, 5.51 g.
 95. = fig. 47, 6.70 g.
 96. = fig. 38, 1.90 g.

TYPE SERIES OF KALETEDOU COINS

- A. Glasgow, Hunter, Eastern and Central Gaul, 1 ; 1.85 g.
 B1. London, BM, 577 ; 1.74 g.
 B2. » » 579 ; 1.91 g.
 B3. Glasgow, Coats, 83 ; 1.86 g.
 C1. London, BM, 583 ; 1.84 g.
 C2. » » 584 ; 1.89 g.
 D1. Author, BMS, 531 ; 2.04 g.
 D2. » » 589 ; 1.94 g.
 D4. » » 588 ; 1.97 g.
 E1. » » 596 ; 1.84 g.
 E2. » » 600 ; 1.80 g.
 F1. » » 605 ; 1.85 g.
 F2. Glasgow, Hunter, Gaulish Uncertain, 15 ; 1.59 g.





