
DAILY COIN RELIEF!

A BLOG FOR ANCIENT COINS ON THE PAS
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Copies of Claudian *dupondii* and *asses*



In the decades following the Claudian invasion in AD 43, bronze *aes* coinage issued under Claudius (AD 41-54) was an important component of the currency pool in Britannia, used by the military and in the forts and *vici* that sprang up around them. A variety of bronze types were issued by Claudius, both in his name and for members of his family including his parents, Nero Drusus Claudius and Antonia, his wife Agrippina, and adopted son, Nero. By far the most common types seen in Britain are *dupondii* with a reverse type depicting a seated Ceres (**RIC I, nos. 94, 110**) and *asses* with a reverse type depicting a standing Minerva holding shield and javelin (**RIC I, nos. 100, 116**). Typically, British finds have been recorded either as official Rome mint issues from the early years of Claudius' reign in the AD 40s, which are rare in Britain, or contemporary British copies that are prolific and date as late as the Neronian or Flavian periods of the c.AD 50s-70s.¹

Recent work by French scholars P-A. Besombes and M. Bompaire², as well as Robert Kenyon³ has dramatically changed our interpretation of Claudian copies. Rome mint issues are always rare in Britain, but many of the 'copies' now appear to be the products of semi-official subsidiary or auxiliary mints in Gaul and Iberia. Coins from these mints are then subject to imitation in Britain, resulting in the appearance of often quite crude so-called 'native' copies that continue to circulate well into the second half of the 1st century AD.

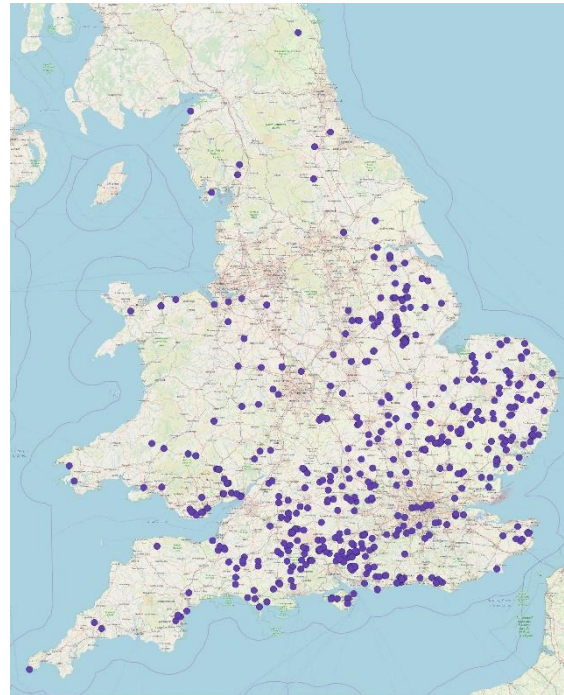
¹ See R. Kenyon 'The Claudian Coinage' in N. Crummy *Colchester Archaeological Report 4: The coins from excavations in Colchester 1971-9* (Colchester, 1987): pp.24-41; G. Boon 'Counterfeit Coins in Roman Britain' in P. J. Casey and R. Reece eds. *Coins and the Archaeologist* (London, 1988).

² P-A. Besombes and M. Bompaire *Trésor Monétaires, XXI, Le Dépôt de 22,438 Monnaies du Gué de Saint-Léonard (Mayenne)* (BNF, 2005).

³ Robert is currently conducting extensive research into Claudian coinage in Britain; forthcoming publication focussed on Roman Exeter.

Claudian *dupondii* and *asses* on the PAS

Claudian bronze coins and their local copies are comparatively common on the PAS, with c.820 recorded examples. Robert Kenyon has been through all of the PAS examples up to September 2019 to reclassify them based on the new mint attributions. This information is being added to database records by Kitty Cooke, a volunteer with Sam and Andrew at the British Museum. This will allow Robert to interpret the distribution of mints and types in Britain. If you see any edits on your Claudian bronze coinage by Kitty, please do not edit or delete them! They should all be adjusted for the new mint attributions, with additional data to be added soon. The majority of the examples you see will be from the regional mints or local copies rather than the mint of Rome.



Claudian *dupondii* and *asses* on the PAS

Claudian *aes* types



LEIC-536101

A rare mint of Rome *as* in the name of Germanicus, c.AD 50-54 (Reece Period 2)

Obv.: GERMANICVS CAESAR TI AVG F DIVI AVG N, Bare head right

Rev.: TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GERM P M TR P IMP P P around large SC

RIC I, no. 106.

This is the only Rome mint coin of the smaller denomination bronze issues that Robert has securely identified in the PAS material!

Auxiliary mint coins



HAMP-2B300E - Dupondius

Obv.: [TI CL]AVDIVS CAESAR AVG P M TR[...], Bare head left

Rev.: CERES-AVGVSTA, S C, Ceres veiled and draped, seated left on ornamental throne, holding corn-ears and long torch

Lugdunum auxiliary mint

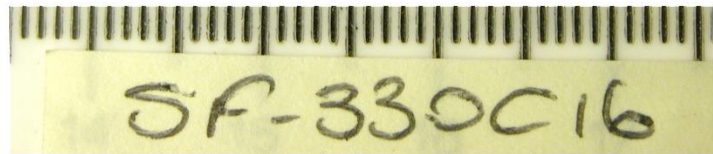


CAM-44DE77 - Dupondius

Obv.: [TI CLAVD]IVS CAESAR AVG PM TR P [IMP...], Bare head left

Rev.: CERE[S AVGV]STA, S C, Ceres veiled and draped, seated left on ornamental throne, holding corn-ears and long torch

Lugdunum auxiliary mint



SF-330C16 - As

Obv.: TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG P M TR P IMP [P P], Bare head left

Rev.: S C, Minerva advancing right holding javelin and round shield

Iberian auxiliary mint



BH-BB9EC1 - As

Obv.: [...], Bare head left

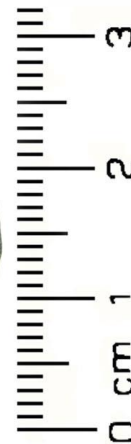
Rev.: S C, Minerva advancing right holding javelin and round shield

Local or 'Native' Copies

Local copies of Claudian *dupondii* and *asses* range from relatively good examples to very clearly irregular and poorly executed types. Those that are very irregular are easy to identify! Others can be difficult to separate from coins of the auxiliary mints. We hope that in the future Robert's work will give us the foundations that will allow us to better attribute PAS examples to their mints. The majority of Claudian *aes* on the database are local copies.



HAMP-1672F1 – copying Iberian mint coin



HESH-53D908 – copying Lyon mint



LON-F80D08 and HAMP-CB1836 – 'Native' copies

Note – the *asses* are easily identifiable thanks to the Minerva reverse type. Look out for the raised arm and shield, which almost always remain visible.

Rarer types from auxiliary mints issued by Claudius in his name and those of his family



SOM-689915 - As
 Obv.: TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG P M
 TR P IMP [P P], Bare head left
 Rev.: LIBERTAS AVGVSTA, S C,
 Libertas standing holding pileus
 Iberian auxiliary mint



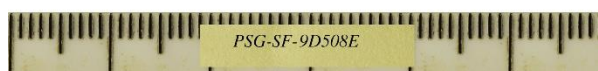
LVPL-2854B1 – As
 Obv.: [...] CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG P
 M T[...], Bare head left
 Rev.: CONSTANTIAE AVGVSTI, S C,
 Constantia, helmeted, in military dress,
 standing left, holding spear in left hand
 and raising right
 Lugdunum auxiliary mint

SOMDOR-16E8A5 – Dupondius of Antonia Minor

Obv.: ANTONIA AVGVSTA, Draped
 bust right
 Rev.: TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR
 A[VG P M T]R P IMP, Claudius,
 veiled and togate, standing left, right
 hand holding simpulum
 Iberian auxiliary mint



Asses of Agrippa



SF-9D508E and WILT-D1C61D

Copies of *asses* of Agrippa (†12 BC) struck under Caligula (AD 37-41; Reece Period 1) also appear in Britain and circulate alongside the Claudian bronzes. Keep an eye out for them!

Obv.: M AGRIPPA L F COS III, Laureate bust left
 Rev.: S C, Neptune standing facing, head left, cloak draped over shoulders, holding dolphin and trident

Prototype of Mint of Rome, RIC I, p. 112, no. 58. See Boon, 1988: pl. III, no. 36 for copies.