
DAILY COIN RELIEF!

A BLOG FOR ANCIENT COINS ON THE PAS BY SAM MOORHEAD & ANDREW BROWN

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Joint Reign of Valerian and Gallienus (AD 253-260; Reece Period 12)

Valerian I (*Publius Licinius Valerianus*, AD 253-260) came to power in October 253 following the death of Aemilian (AD 253), murdered by his own soldiers at the Pons Sanguinarius ('Bridge of Blood') in Spoleto (Italy). Valerian was from a distinguished Roman family and as a former consul was readily accepted as emperor by the Senate. However, he inherited an empire in crisis – ravaged by instability, civil war, multiple short-lived emperors (who invariably met with violent deaths), a resurgent Persia in the east, and the threat of Germanic tribes on the Rhine and Danube. He quickly elevated his son, Gallienus (*Publius Licinius Egnatius Gallienus* AD 253-268), to co-emperor with the empire effectively divided in half, Valerian to rule in the east and Gallienus in the west.



Coins of the Joint Reign are not rare finds in Britain but they are far less common than the issues of Gallienus' Sole Reign (AD 260-268)¹. The PAS records just over 3,000 coins for Reece Period 12 of which two thirds relate to the Joint Reign of Valerian and Gallienus: <https://finds.org.uk/database/search/results/objectType/COIN/broadperiod/ROMAN/reeceID/12>. It should be noted though that a large number of coins currently attributed to Gallienus for the Joint Reign are in fact Sole Reign coins and there are over 1,000 coins from the Welsh IARCW dataset from this period whose details cannot be fully verified at present. This figure is therefore liable to change.

The standard reference when recording coins from the Joint Reign of Valerian and Gallienus should be Cunetio², which has 10,559 coins of this period and essentially covers all of the

¹ We'll look at Gallienus' Sole Reign in a later blog post.

² E. Besly and R. Bland, *The Cunetio Treasure* (British Museum, 1983) – recently republished in a combined volume with the Normanby Hoard by Spink: R. Bland, E. Besley, and A. Burnett, *The Cunetio and Normanby*

main types seen through the PAS. A good indicator as to whether a coin is from the Joint or Sole Reign is the presence of AVGG in the reverse legend – two G's for the two Augusti, Valerian and Gallienus, usually means a Joint reign coin.

Valerian I

The PAS records almost 450 coins for Valerian I, although this number includes 211 records from the Welsh IARCW dataset whose details cannot be fully verified at present, so we are essentially dealing with c.240 coins.

Gold

Gold coinage of the 3rd century is rare, particularly for the first half of the century. A single gold *aureus* of Valerian is noted by Bland and Lorient³ from Canterbury but this is hugely rare and there are so far no PAS examples.

Radiates

With one or two exceptions (see below) radiates make up all of the coinage of Valerian recorded through the PAS. During the joint reign with Gallienus, Valerian issued extensive coinages from Rome but also a number of regional mints that appear during this period (see below). Many examples are still quite silvery in appearance but this is the beginning of the huge debasement of the radiate coinage over the next few decades. It is not unusual for coins struck in Rome from this point onwards to be of poorer quality or appear less silver than those of the other regional mints – by the end of the joint reign the radiates had perhaps only 15% silver content.

Mint of Rome

Valerian is almost always depicted **radiate**, **draped**, and **cuirassed** right. There are nearly 4,500 Rome mint coins of Valerian in Cunetio, the PAS has more than 120.



Fig.1: BH-EEE137

Obv.: IMP C P LIC VALERIANVS AVG
Rev.: APOLINI CONSERVA, Apollo
standing left holding branch and lyre
Cunetio no. 436; RIC V.1 no. 71



Fig.2: WAW-B10155

Obv.: IMP C P LIC VALERIANVS AVG
Rev.: APOLINI PROPVG, Apollo standing
right aiming bow and arrow
Cunetio no. 437; RIC V.1 no. 74.

Hoards (Spink, 2018). See also R. Göbl *Die Münzprägung der Kaiser Valerianus I./Gallienus/Saloninus (253/268), Regalianus (260) und Macrianus/Quintus (260/262)*. (MIR Bd. 36. Vienna, 2000)

³ R. Bland and X. Lorient, *Roman and Early Byzantine Gold Coins found in Britain and Ireland* (2010): p. 174, no. 265



Fig.3: HAMP-775A3C

Obv.: IMP C P LIC VALERIANVS AVG

Rev.: FIDES MILITVM, Fides standing left holding standards

Cunetio no. 441; RIC V.1 no. 89.



Fig.4: SUSS-E3CF67

Obv.: IMP C P LIC VALERIANVS P F AVG

Rev.: FELICITAS AVGG, Felicitas standing left holding caduceus and cornucopiae

Cunetio no. 469; RIC V.1, no. 87



Fig.5: BM-CC5245

Obv.: IMP C P LIC VALERIANVS P F AVG

Rev.: LIBERALITAS AVGG III, Liberalitas standing left holding tessera and cornucopiae

Cunetio no. 479; RIC V.1, no. 104



Fig.6: LEIC-3F2DFA

Obv.: IMP C P LIC VALERIANVS P F AVG

Rev.: ORIENS AVGG, Sol standing left, right hand raised, holding whip in left

Cunetio no. 481; RIC V.1, no. 106

NOTE – there are various ORIENS AVGG / Sol reverse types, some depicting Sol holding a globe in left hand or walking/running left from both Rome and the Gallic Mint – see below.



Fig.7: LIN-C08884 – radiate of Valerian I

Obv.: IMP C P LIC VALERIANVS P F AVG

Rev.: RESTITVTOR ORBIS, Emperor standing left raising kneeling woman with turreted head, holding vertical sceptre

Cunetio no. 495; RIC V.1 no. 117



Fig.8: BM-BE0D77

Obv.: IMP C P LIC VALERIANVS P F AVG, radiate, draped, and cuirassed bust right

Rev.: VICTORIA AVGG, Victory standing left holding shield and palm

Cunetio no. 498; RIC V.1, no. 128

Gallic Mint (c.AD 257/258-260)

In c.AD 257/258 the mint at Viminacium was transferred to Gaul. The precise location of Valerian's mint here is unclear – Lugdunum (Lyon), Cologne, and Trier have all been suggested and the consensus is moving towards Cologne at present. There are c.30 examples on the PAS.

Valerian has the same bust type as Rome, but with obverse legend VALERIANVS.P.F.AVG



Fig.9: LEIC-386947

Rev.: DEO VOLKAN, Vulcan standing in tetrastyle temple holding hammer and pincers, an anvil at feet.

Cunetio no. 706; RIC V.1 no. 5



Fig.10: HAMP-072503

Rev.: ORIENS AVGG, Sol standing left raising right hand and holding globe

Cunetio no. 707; RIC V.1, cf.no. 13



Fig.11: IOW-A3B5A6

Rev.: ORIENS AVGG, Sol running left raising hand and holding whip

Cunetio no. 708; RIC V.1 no. 12

Milan (c.AD 259/260)



Fig.12: PUBLIC-1FDBF7

Obv.: IMP VALERIANVS AVG, Radiate bust right

Rev.: SECVRIT PERPET, Securitas standing left holding vertical sceptre and leaning on column

Cunetio cf. no. 747; RIC V.1 no. 256

A new mint was founded in Milan towards the end of Valerian's reign, c.AD 259/260. Examples are understandably rare for Valerian as he was in the east and only one issue was struck here for him. The PAS has just one identified example.

Viminacium

Coins were struck at the mint of Viminacium in Moesia Superior (modern Serbia) for Valerian although these rarely appear on the PAS. Two coins have been identified to date.

Fig.13: SF-88074C

Obv.: IMP C P LIC VALERIANO AVG, Radiate, draped, and cuirassed bust right viewed from behind

Rev.: VICTORIA GERMANICA, Victory left with shield and palm, captive at feet

Cunetio no. 760; RIC V.1 no. 264



Antioch and the 'Second Eastern Mint'

Large quantities of coinage were struck at Antioch (Syria) and in a 'Second Eastern Mint' whose coinage circulated in the same area but whose precise location is unclear – perhaps a separate mint or a special issue of the Antioch mint itself. Coins from both are marginally more common on the PAS than Milan or Viminacium, with more than 20 examples, and often appear quite silvery.

Reverse types from the eastern mint(s) often comprise two standing figures, notably in the RESTITVT ORIENTIS type (**Fig.14**).



Fig.14: BERK-8C354A

Obv.: IMP C P LIC VALERIANVS P F AVG, Radiate draped, and cuirassed right

Rev.: RESTITVT ORIENTIS, Oriens standing right holding a wreath, Emperor standing left holding vertical sceptre

Cunetio no. 850; RIC V.1 no. 287

Fig.15: BUC- 2C5E48

Obv.: IMP C P LIC VALERIANVS P F AVG, Radiate, draped, and cuirassed right

Rev.: PIETAS AVGG, Two Emperors sacrificing over an altar.

Cunetio no. 848; RIC V.1 no. 285

Bronze Coinage

The bronze denominations that appeared in the 1st century – *sestertii*, *dupondii*, and *asses* – continue into the 3rd century, but the last big issues of these coins fall in the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus (and Postumus). These are not common as British finds through the PAS. Two copper-alloy *asses* are recorded on the PAS, one (SUR-A5FCF6) possibly a copy and both with the same VIRTVS AVGG reverse type (**Fig. 16**)



Fig.16: SUR-A5FCF6 and NCL-6FEDD7: Copper-alloy *asses* of Valerian I, c.AD 253-260 (Reece Period 12). Rev.: VIRTVS AVGG, Soldier standing left holding shield and spear. Mint of Rome, RIC V.1, p. 53, no. 204.

Diva Mariniana

Radiates were also struck at Rome in the name of Egnatia Mariniana, the wife of Valerian and mother of Gallienus. These are all posthumous types bearing the obverse legend DIVAE MARINIANAE, indicating that Mariniana had probably died before Valerian came to power in 253. Seven examples are recorded through the PAS that can be securely identified, with two main reverse types.



Fig.17: SUSS-B1BF70
Obv.: DIVAE MARINIANAE, Diademed bust right on crescent
Rev.: CONSECRATIO, Peacock in splendour looking left
Cunetio no. 646; RIC V.1 no. 3



Fig.18: PUBLIC-BA1557
Obv.: DIVAE MARINIANAE, Diademed bust right on crescent
Rev.: CONSECRATIO, A peacock flying right carrying the Empress who is seated left with her right arm outstretched, left hand holding a transverse sceptre.
Cunetio no. 643; RIC V.1 no. 6

Gallienus (Joint Reign, AD 253-260)⁴

While Valerian campaigned in the east, his son Gallienus took control of the Western Empire in the face of conflict with the Germanic tribes here. As with Valerian, an extensive series of coinages are issued from Rome (1523 in Cunetio) and all of the regional mints operating during the Joint Reign. His coinage from this period on the PAS database needs extensive work. Over 1,000 coins are recorded, however 235 relate to the IARCW Welsh data with the same difficulties as Valerian's coinage, and a significant number of the remainder actually belong in his Sole Reign. The total is likely closer to c.200 coins.

Gold

As with Valerian, gold coinage of Gallienus in Britain is hugely rare. One stunning example of an *aureus* from the Joint Reign was recorded from York (**Fig.**), but the only other single gold coin for the entire early-3rd century on the PAS is of Gordian III (AD 238-244; LEIC-196037)



Fig.19: LVPL-BCE783
Aureus, mint of Rome, c.AD 255-258
Obv.: IMP GALLIENVS P F AVG GERM, Laureate and cuirassed bust right
Rev.: VIRTVS AVGG, Mars walking right holding spear and carrying trophy over shoulder.
RIC V.1 no. 102

Radiates

The majority of Gallienus' Joint Reign coinage on the PAS are radiates (although see below). Many of the reverse types are similar to those of Valerian and there is some crossover between both Emperors, with hybrid types sharing obverses of one with reverses of the other. Gallienus typically is depicted as just **radiate** and **cuirassed**, lacking the drapery seen on Valerian's bust types.

Rome – Fewer types on the PAS than for Valerian



Fig.20: WILT-6D59F4
Obv.: IMP C P LIC GALLIENVS AVG, Radiate and cuirassed bust right
Rev.: VIRTVS AVGG, Virtus standing left resting shield on ground and holding spear
Cunetio no. 549; RIC V.1 no. 181

NOTE – the format/formula for the obverse legend is almost identical to Valerian, just with Gallienus' name instead.

⁴ The details of Gallienus' life as Emperor will be dealt with in a separate blog that looks at his Sole Reign

Fig. 21: NLM-B64332

Obv.: IMP C P LIC GALLIENVS P F AVG, Radiate and cuirassed bust right
Rev. PROVIDENTIA AVGG, Providentia standing left holding baton over globe and cornucopiae.

Cunetio no. 570; RIC V.1 no. 162



Notable are types that commemorate his successes in the Western Empire against the Germanic tribes, with the addition of the title GERM (or GM) in his obverse legends and reverse types that overtly reference his victories:



Fig. 22: WILT-DACB5C

Obv.: IMP GALLIENVS P F AVG
GERM, Radiate and cuirassed bust right

Rev.: VICTORIA GERM, Victory left holding wreath and palm, captive at feet

Cunetio no. 597; RIC V.1 no. 175

Gallic Mint

The theme of Victory over the Germanic tribes continues in the coinage on the PAS from the Gallic Mint, with several varieties of similar types seen.



Fig.23: NMGW-66F2B6

Obv.: GALLIENVS.P.F.AVG, Radiate and cuirassed bust left, spear over right shoulder, shield on left arm

Rev.: GERMANICVS MAX V, Trophy of arms, at each side a bound captive

Cunetio no. 716; RIC V.1 no. 40.



Fig.24: BM-088E44

Obv.: GALLIENVS.P.F.AVG, Radiate and cuirassed bust right

Rev.: VICT GERMANICA, Victory right on globe between two captives/

Cunetio no. 722; RIC V.1 no. 49



Fig.25: SF-32C14E

Obv.: GALLIEMVS.P.F.AVG, Radiate and cuirassed bust right

Rev.: VIRTVS AVGG, Virtus right holding transverse spear and trophy

Cunetio no. 730; RIC V.1 no. 56

Milan, Viminacium, and the Eastern Mints

All coins from these mints are rare as PAS finds, with just a handful of examples



Fig.26: PUBLIC-C95EB6

Obv.: IMP GALLIENVVS P AVG, Radiate, draped, and cuirassed bust right from behind
Rev.: SALVS AVGG, Salus standing left feeding snake rising from altar

Viminacium

Cunetio no. 767; RIC V.1 no. 397



Fig.27: CORN-4AEC17

Obv.: IMP C P LIC GALLIENVVS P F AVG, Radiate, draped, and cuirassed right
Rev.: VIRTVS AVGG, Two Emperors facing each other

Second Eastern Mint

Cunetio no. 852; RIC V.1 no. 456

Bronze coinage

As with Valerian, bronze coinage is struck for Gallienus but it is rare on the PAS.

Interestingly the only verified example is an *as* with the same reverse type as the Valerian examples



Fig.28: HAMP-9655BD

As of Gallienus, mint of Rome, AD 253-260

Obv.: IMP C P LIC GALLIENVVS AVG, Laureate and cuirassed bust right
Rev.: VIRTVS AVGG, S C, Virtus left holding spear and shield.

RIC V.1 no. 286

Salonina

Alongside Mariniana, wife of Valerian, coinage was also struck for Gallienus' wife Cornelia Salonina. There are difficulties with some of her coin issues, particularly the IVNO REGINA type (see below; **Cunetio no. 651** – there are 1779 examples in Cunetio), which may have been struck in both reigns. Coins for her appear in all mints, but Rome and the Gallic mint are most commonly seen. The PAS records fewer than 100 coins during the Joint Reign.



Fig.29: BERK-237020

Radiate of Salonina

Obv.: SALONINA AVG, Draped bust on crescent right

Rev.: IVNO REGINA, Juno standing left holding patera and vertical sceptre.

Rome

Cunetio no. 651; RIC V.1 no. 29



Fig.30: SOM-B7B073
Obv.: SALONINA AVG,
Draped bust right
Rev.: PIETAS AVGG,
Pietas seated left holding
sceptre, arm outstretched to
small children
Rome
Cunetio no. 655; RIC 35



Fig.31: SUR-11A349
Obv.: SALONINA AVG,
Draped bust right
Rev.: VENVS VICTRIX,
Venus standing left holding
helmet in right hand, spear
and shield in left
Rome
Cunetio no. 657; RIC 37



Fig.32: LVPL335
Obv.: SALONINA AVG,
Draped bust right
Rev.: DEAE SEGETIAE,
Ceres standing facing in
temple, both arms raised
Gallic Mint
Cunetio no. 731; RIC 96



Valerian II and Saloninus

Coins were also struck in the Joint Reign for the two elder sons of Gallienus and Salonina, Valerian II (AD 256-258) and Saloninus (AD 258-260). Valerian II had been given the rank of Caesar in 256 but was killed on the Rhine frontier in 258, with both lifetime and posthumous coin issues known. Saloninus was elevated to Caesar on his brother's death, but was murdered by the usurper Postumus' army at Colonia Agrippina (Cologne) in AD 260.

Valerian II



Fig.33: SOM-F83AA0
Obv.: VALERIANVS CAES, Radiate
draped, and cuirassed bust right
Rev.: IOVI CRESCENTI, Infant Jupiter
seated facing on goat, head left, branch held
up in right hand, grasping goat's horn with
left.
Gallic Mint
Cunetio no. 738; RIC V.1 no. 63ff



Fig.34: SF-F11580
Obv.: DIVO VALERIANO CAES, Radiate,
draped, and cuirassed bust right
Rev.: CONSECRATIO, An eagle carrying
Valerian II right
Gallic Mint
Cunetio no. 740; RIC V.1 no. 9

Saloninus



Fig.35: YORYM-556113

Obv.: SALON VALERIANVS CAES,
Radiate, draped and cuirassed bust right
Rev.: PIETAS AVGG, Sacrificial
implements

Gallic Mint

Cunetio no. 744; RIC V.1 no. 9



Fig.36: SF-ACBDE7

Obv.: SALON VALERIANVS CAES,
Radiate, draped, and cuirassed bust right
Rev.: SPES PVBLICA, Spes walking left
holding flower and skirt

Gallic Mint

Cunetio no. 745; RIC V.1 no. 13var

End of the Joint Reign

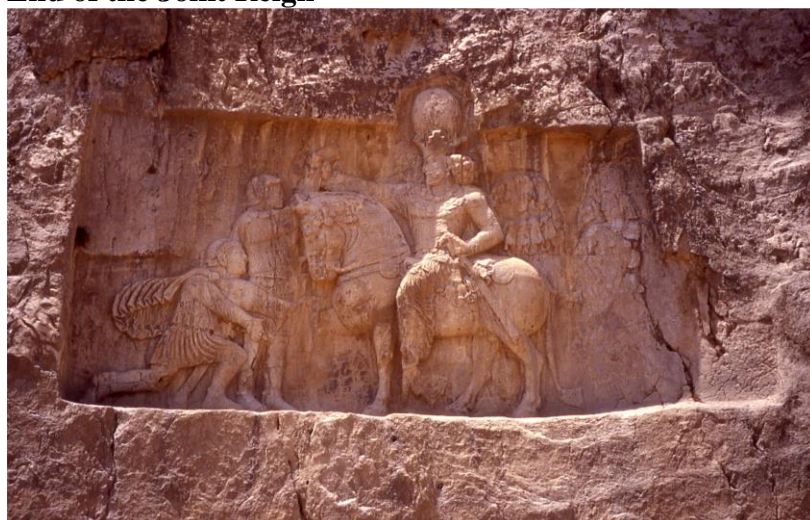


Fig.37: Nashq-i Rustam,
Iran: The Sasanian king
Shapur with the Roman
emperors Philip I (244-9)
and Valerian (253-60)
©Sam Moorhead, 2004

The Joint Reign of Valerian and Gallienus was one fraught with problems, which ultimately brought it to an abrupt end. Valerian, campaigning in the east against Persia, had some success notably earning titles such as ‘Restorer of the Orient’ (RESTITVT ORIENTIS) and ‘Restorer of the world’ (RESTITVTOR ORBIS), both of which appear on his coins (see above). But this was short-lived. In 260 Valerian was besieged by Shapur I in Edessa and his army was ravaged with plague. He rather foolishly met with Shapur with only a small retinue, which resulted in him being captured and held in captivity for the remainder of his life – the only Roman Emperor for this to have happened to. Supposedly, he was used as a footstool for Shapur to mount his horse and after his death had his skin removed, dyed red, and hung up in a Persian temple as a warning! Gallienus met with similar difficulties in the west. Here, Valerian’s capture weakened his position and rebellion in the east was followed by rebellion in the west, most notably by Postumus in AD 260 who, after the death of Saloninus seized control at Cologne and established a breakaway Gallic Empire. Gallienus’ rule continued in the central Empire until AD 268, but he was never able to fully re-establish the Roman world as it had been previously. We will look at both Gallienus’ Sole Reign and the breakaway Gallic Empire in later editions.