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# DAILY COIN RELIEF!

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

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## The Coinage of Plautilla, c. AD 202-205



Plautilla was the daughter of *Gaius Flavius Plautianus* who was made Praetorian Prefect by Septimius Severus in AD 197. In the summer or autumn of 202, Septimius arranged for his eldest son Caracalla to marry Plautilla. It was not a happy marriage and Caracalla would not eat or sleep with Plautilla and even threatened to murder her when he became sole emperor. Accounts differ, but either Caracalla framed Plautianus, or Plautianus was plotting to murder Severus and Caracalla. Either way, on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 202 Plautianus was executed. Plautilla was sent into exile on the island of Lipari and, good to his word, Caracalla had her murdered in AD 212, once he had become sole emperor.

Plautilla's coinage would probably have been struck from the end of AD 202 until the very beginning of AD 205, giving a maximum period of just over two years. Her coins are scarce with only 65 found in England (including some plated *denarius* copies) on the PAS Database. All but one of these coins are silver *denarii*, there being a single *as* (**Fig. 9**). Also, all but two of the coins are from the Mint of Rome, there being two coins which were definitely struck at an Eastern Mint (sometime named as Laodicea in Syria).

The coins at **Rome** are divided into two issues in RIC IV, pt 1 (pp. 269-70, nos. 359-69): **Issue I** has the obverse legend PLAVTILLAE AVGVSTAE ('To our Augusta, Plautilla') (**Figs. 1-3**); **Issue II** has the obverse legend PLAVTILLA AVGVSTA ('Plautilla Augusta') (**Figs 4-6**).

The coins struck at the **Eastern Mint** also fall into two issues in RIC (p. 270, nos. 370-2): **Issue I** also has the obverse legend PLAVTILLAE AVGVSTAE (**Fig. 7**); **Issue II** has the obverse legend PLAVTILLA AVG.

The PAS Database has records for most of the 15 or so RIC entries<sup>1</sup> and examples are illustrated below. RIC 364 is only recorded for a gold *aureus* and RIC 368 for a silver *quinarius* (half-denarius). Therefore, the PAS Database does not have examples of the *denarii* RIC 365 (CONCORDIA FELIX) and 366 (DIANA LVCIFERA) from Rome, and RIC 370 (CONCORDIAE) and 371 (HILARITAS) from the Eastern Mint. However, most of the coins which you will see are listed below.

#### Rome Issue I: PLAVTILLAE AVGVSTAE



**Fig.1.** Silver *denarius* of Plautilla  
Mint of Rome  
Obv. PLAVTILLAE  
AVGVSTAE, Draped bust right  
Rev. CONCORDIA AVGG;  
Concordia standing left  
**RIC IV, pt 1, p. 269, no. 359.**  
*SOMDOR-6BF2F7*

**Fig. 2.** Silver *denarius* of Plautilla  
Mint of Rome  
Obv. PLAVTILLAE  
AVGVSTAE, Draped bust right  
Rev. CONCORDIAE  
AETERNAE; Caracalla standing  
left, clasping hands with Plautilla  
standing right  
**RIC IV, pt 1, p. 269, no 361**  
*DENO-C35B22*



**Fig. 3.** Silver *denarius* of Plautilla  
Mint of Rome  
Obv. PLAVTILLAE  
AVGVSTAE, Draped bust right  
Rev. PROPAGANDAE IMPERII;  
Caracalla standing left, clasping  
hands with Plautilla standing  
right  
**RIC IV, pt 1, p. 269, no 362**  
*LIN-493661*

<sup>1</sup> There are some a and b numbers, so there are more entries than the sequence of numbers suggest.

## Rome Issue II: PLAVTILLA AVGVSTA



**Fig. 4.** Silver *denarius* of Plautilla  
Mint of Rome  
Obv. PLAVTILLA AVGVSTA;  
Draped bust right  
Rev. CONCORDIA AVGG;  
Concordia standing left, holding  
patera and vertical sceptre  
**RIC IV, pt 1, p. 269, no. 363a**  
*PUBLIC-1DF83B*

**Fig. 5.** Silver *denarius* of Plautilla  
Mint of Rome  
Obv. PLAVTILLA AVGVSTA; Draped bust right  
Rev. PIETAS AVGG, Pietas standing left holding  
sceptre  
**RIC IV, pt 1, p. 270, no. 367**  
*DUR-3CB598*



**Fig. 6.** Silver *denarius* of Plautilla  
Mint of Rome  
Obv. PLAVTILLA AVGVSTA;  
Draped bust right  
Rev. VENVS VICTRIX; Venus  
standing left, holding apple and  
palm, and resting left elbow on  
shield; at her feet to left, Cupid.  
**RIC IV, pt 1, p. 270, no. 369**  
*BUC-803AEA*

## Eastern Mint (possibly Laodicea)



**Fig. 7.** Silver *denarius* of  
Plautilla  
Eastern Mint (sometimes claimed  
to be Laodicea)  
Obv. PLAVTILLAE  
AVGVSTAE, Draped bust right  
Rev. CONCORDIAE;  
Concordia seated left, holding  
patera and cornucopiae  
**RIC IV, pt 1, p. 271, no. 370**  
*LANCUM-690436*



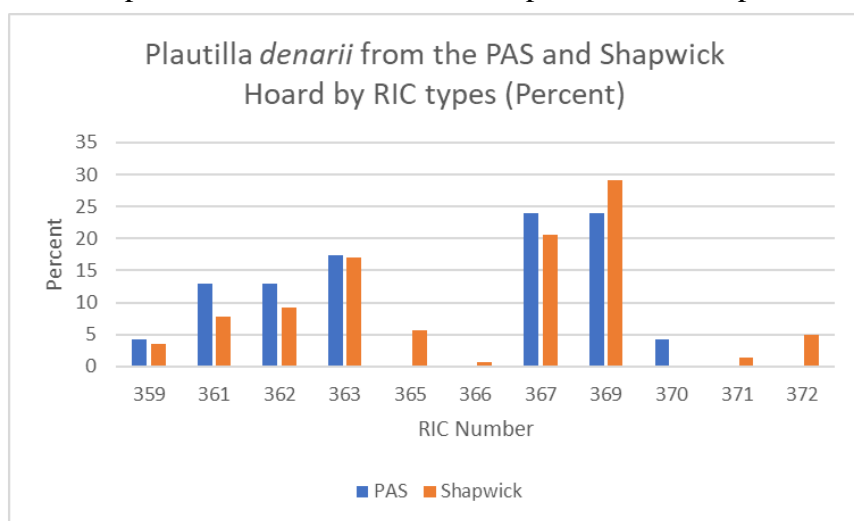
## Range of Types recorded

**Table 1** shows the range of types recorded by RIC number. As for Clodius Albinus (see Daily Coin Relief 5), we can compare the range of PAS types against coins in the Shapwick Hoard of 9,238 *denarii* to AD 224.<sup>2</sup> Shapwick contains 132 pieces for Plautilla from the mint of Rome and 9 from the Eastern Mint.

RIC no.	Frequency on PAS Dbase	% <sup>3</sup>	Frequency in Shapwick Hoard	%
<b>Rome</b>				
359	2	4.3	5	3.5
361	6 (1?)	13	11	7.8
362	6	13	13	9.2
363 <sup>4</sup>	8 (1?) (2 Wales; 1 Copy)	17.4	24	17
365	-	-	8	5.7
366	-	-	1	0.7
367	11 (2 Copies)	23.9	29	20.6
369	11 (1?) (2 Wales; 1 Copy)	23.9	41	29.1
<b>Eastern Mint</b>				
370	2	4.3	-	-
371	-	-	2	1.4
372	-	-	7	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>46 (5?) (4 Wales) (4 Copies)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 1.** Frequency and percentages of Plautilla *denarii* on the PAS Database and in the Shapwick Hoard.

Looking at **Table 1** and **Figure 8**, it is clear that for most of the issues, the percentages are quite similar for the PAS and Shapwick material. The main divergence is that Shapwick has examples for RIC nos. 365, 366, 371 and 372 which are not present on the PAS Database; it might be surprising that the PAS has no examples of RIC 365 and 372 which have eight and seven examples, respectively, in the Shapwick Hoard. On the other hand, the PAS does have two examples of RIC 370 which is not represented in Shapwick.



**Fig. 8.** Percentages for *denarius* types recorded on the PAS Database and in the Shapwick Hoard (see **Table 1** for data)

<sup>2</sup> R. Abdy and S. Minnitt, 'Shapwick Villa, Somerset', in *CHRB* XI, pp. 169-233; PAS: IARCH-EF8813

<sup>3</sup> For PAS Data, only the coins identified with certainty are included in percentages.

<sup>4</sup> Shapwick does not differentiate between 363a and 363b. Only 363a is definitely represented in the PAS data.

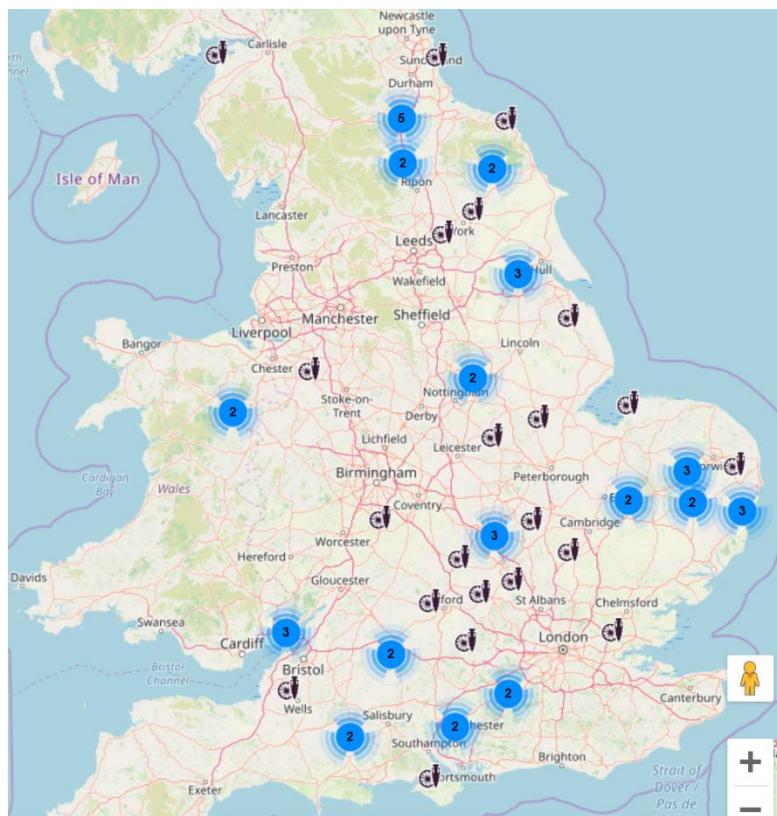
## Rome – Base metal issues

There are only two base-metal coins for Plautilla on the PAS Database. One is an *as* found in Surrey (**Fig. 9**) and the other a *dupondius* or *as* found on excavations at Caerwent in Wales (IARCW-63DAE7479). Base metal coins of Plautilla are rare and RIC only records three types of *sestertii* (RIC 578-9) and three types of *dupondius/as* (RIC580-2). However, we should also remember that after AD 196, base metal coins were struck in far fewer numbers by the Severan dynasty. In my piece on Clodius Albinus, who reigned AD 193-7, we noted 57 *denarii* and 16 base-metal coins; for Plautilla, we can present totals of 64 *denarii* and two base-metal coins, underlining the vast reduction in output of *aes* under the Severans.



**Fig. 9.** Copper-alloy *as* of Plautilla  
Mint of Rome  
Obv. PLAVTILLA  
AVGVSTA; Draped bust right  
Rev. PIETAS AVGG, S C;  
Pietas standing right holding  
sceptre and child  
**RIC IV, pt 1, p. 309, no. 581**  
*PUBLIC-C7238E*  
(note a similar coin in the  
Welsh data: IARCW-  
63DAE7479)

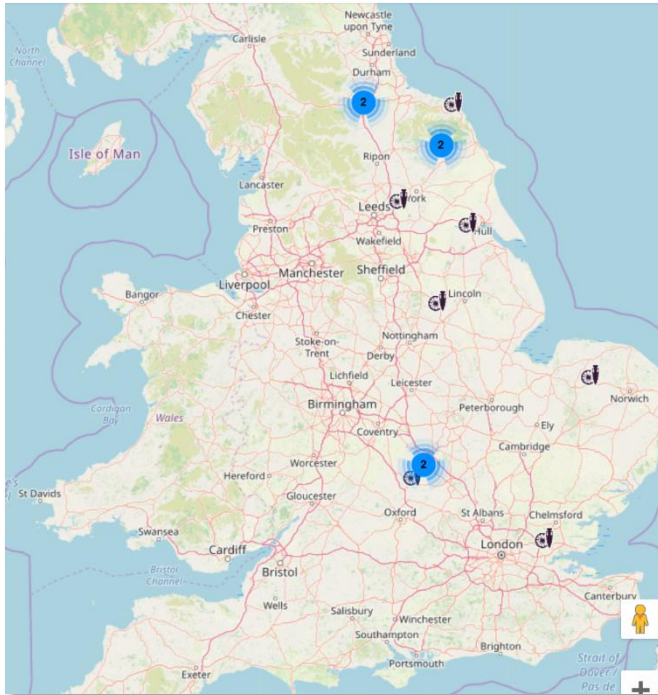
## Distribution of coins of Plautilla in England and Wales



**Figure 10** shows that Plautilla's coins have been found across the Province, extending up to the Hadrianic frontier. It is quite likely that a large number of these coins arrived with Septimius Severus and his family when he led an Imperial Expedition against the Caledonians and Maeatae in Scotland, from AD 208-11.

**Fig. 10.** Map showing distribution of Plautilla coins recorded on the PAS Database (31/3/2020)

Although it is quite likely to be entirely by chance, the distribution of the two most common PAS types, RIC 367 (**Fig. 11**) and RIC 369 (**Fig. 12**) are somewhat different: RIC 367 coins tend to be more northerly, 369 pieces more widespread across the province. With PAS data, researching the distribution of particular coin types is beginning to occur, notably by Andrew Brown with respects to Coins of British Association (see Daily Coin Relief 2). It might be that we will be able to identify different zones of supply and use over time, but research such as this is in its infancy.



**Fig. 11.** Distribution of Plautilla *denarius* RIC 367 (PIETAS AVGG) on the PAS Database.

**Fig. 12.** Distribution of Plautilla *denarius* RIC 369 (VENVS VICTRIX) on the PAS Database.

