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Carausius, Virgil and the marks RSR and INPCDA

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When the 4th-century Mildenhall treasure was brought to public attention in 1946 there subsisted a belief in some scholarly circles that such material, decorated with a variety of pagan and mythological scenes, could not conceivably have been owned and used in Roman Britain. One extreme view was that it might have been brought to England by members of the US Eighth Air Force, who had acquired it on a sojourn to North Africa. The last 60 years have put such views firmly to rest, with discoveries like the Thetford and Hoxne treasures. It has become plain that the elite of late Roman Britain had access to goods of the highest quality and decorated with imagery drawn from a wide range of classical and mythological topics.

The influence of classicism on Romano-British society, and the impact of Romano-British traits on classicism in Roman Britain, have been well-established themes in the published works of Catherine Johns. The Snettisham jeweller's hoard was described as a story that was a 'telling one of the interaction of Celtic and Graeco-Roman traditions and of Romanisation in 2nd-century Britannia' (Johns 1997, 74). The revival of the god Faunus in the astonishing Thetford Treasure was a reminder that even in the last few years of Roman Britain there may have been men and women whose religious affiliations harked back to the world of Augustan Rome (Johns & Potter 1983, 70-1; Johns 1996, 217). It is also now widely recognized that classical and pagan imagery was part of the everyday repertoire of symbol and allusion in the Christianized society of the 4th century, reflected in contemporary literature and mosaic iconography as well as plate.

The present paper was originally published in the *Numismatic Chronicle* (158, 1998, 79-88) but it seems appropriate to present a revised version of it here to a wider readership. It was given a very generous reception and marked a turning point in the study of a rebel emperor in Britain whose mastery of classical allusion had been noted before, but its extent unappreciated. Since the paper's appearance, the readings suggested here for the Carausian coin legends have been widely accepted. The revelation that Carausius had made unequivocal use of classical literature in his propaganda campaign, and was able to rely on detailed familiarity of that literature amongst his public, places late 3rd-century and 4th-century elite Romano-British culture in a new context. For Britain to challenge the Roman world by declaring itself to be the guardian of traditional Roman virtues in this way marked a turning point in native sensibilities and aspirations.

Carausius

Carausius, commander of the Roman fleet in the English Channel, usurped imperial power in Britain and part of Gaul in the year AD 286 or 287. He was one of a succession of opportunistic soldiers who usurped regional power in various parts of the Empire during the 3rd century. Carausius remained in control of Britain until c. 293, when his associate Allectus murdered him.

Allectus himself ruled only until late 295 or early 296 when he was defeated and killed by the army of Constantius Chlorus. Throughout his reign Carausius posed relentlessly as a thoroughly conservative protagonist of Roman virtues and traditions, most conspicuously on his coinage. He did this perhaps because he sincerely believed in these qualities, but he must also have identified them as key aspirations amongst the Romano-British and exploited that to good effect.

The reign of Carausius coincided with a time when the wealthiest families in Roman Britain started to invest heavily in their rural villas. Many of these were embellished with mosaic floors whose themes drew heavily from classical myth. The extant contemporary literary sources were almost exclusively written in support of the official Empire. Only a single inscription bearing the name of

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Fig. 1 — Silver *denarius* of Carausius (BM 1900-11-5-10). Diameter approximately 21 mm. Image courtesy of The British Museum.

Carausius survives, on a milestone found near Carlisle (*RIB* I, 2291). Consequently, some of the most important evidence for the rule of Carausius and Allectus is their extensive coinage. It has long been recognized that Carausius used coins to promote his ideals. He issued silver coins at a standard of purity unknown for centuries and which bore legends evoking traditional 'Roman' virtues. Two exergue 'mint-marks', RSR, and INPCDA, have never been satisfactorily resolved. Expansions for both can now be suggested which offer a compelling insight into the awareness of classical literature in Roman Britain, with dramatic implications for how we interpret the nature of 4th-century elite culture in Roman Britain.

The RSR 'mint' and Virgil

One of the better-known Carausian coin legends is *Expectate Veni*, 'Come, long-awaited one' (Fig. 1). This is normally assumed to be an allusion to the line from the *Aeneid: quibus Hector ab oris exspectate venis?* 'From what shores do you come Hector, the long-awaited one?'[2] There are several minor variations in the spelling on the various coins, and there is a problem with the Virgilian context which will be discussed below. No other such apparent verbal reference to Virgil's texts has hitherto been known on Roman coinage anywhere in the Empire. A very few visual references to Virgilian material have been identified. Under Hadrian a medallion depicting three scenes from the Aeneid was struck (Jenkins 1988). The medallion was copied under Antoninus Pius and one of the scenes, depicting Aeneas carrying Anchises, was used for a scarce issue of circulating *sestertii* (*RIC* 627). The Anchises scene may also have been used on a Republican *denarius* of 42 BC though this has now been called into question (Zarrow 2003). The accompanying legend on the coins of Pius is a simple statement of imperial titles but in general, even such visual references to mythological characters and events are extremely unusual. The purpose of the medallion design was a visual narrative depiction of events central to the ethos of Rome, and in this respect is quite unlike the subtler and more demanding Carausian use of phrases abstracted from the actual literature.

The *Expectate Veni* legend usually appears on the silver coinage, associated with the exergue mark RSR which occurs on most of the silver, and some of the gold, coins of Carausius (Shiel 1977, 97). A very small number of bronze radiates also carry the RSR mark. The exergue at this date was usually reserved for a statement of value and its use to carry information about the mint was still something of a novelty. Some of the Carausian radiates carry the most innovatory exergue-marks. In their most complex form these include a statement of value, the city of origin, and details of the workshop (Carson 1971).

The Carausian exergue variants with L have been long identified as the marks of London, while those with C (or G) have been variously attributed to *Camulodunum* (Colchester), *Cataractonium* (Catterick), *Clausentum* (Bitterne), *Corinium* (Cirencester), or *Glevum* (Gloucester). The L mark remained in use until the closing of the London mint in c. AD 326 (Askew 1980, 66). Although the C mint has not been firmly identified, its distinctive style suggests it was a separate location. Another series of coins, distinguished by style and distribution has been attributed to *Rotomagus* (Rouen). They usually bear the mint-marks R or OPR. All these conventional mint-marks occur predominantly on Carausius' radiates.

The enigmatic RSR exergue-mark has not been identifiable with any town in Britain or Gaul under Carausius' control. It was traditionally interpreted as *Rationalis Summae Rei*, 'financial minister', and was first suggested by Webb (1906). This is an attested office and accords with the description by Aurelius Victor of Allectus as a high official under Carausius: *Allectus... Qui cum eius permissu summae rei praeesset*, 'Allectus... who by his [Carausius'] leave had been placed in charge of the "financial department"' (Casey 1994, 76)[3]. In his recent work on the Carausian and Allectan episode Casey describes this as an 'elegant solution... which is accepted by all workers today'. Nevertheless, there are two problems with this expansion of RSR. Firstly, the normal abbreviated epigraphic form of Rationalis Summae Rei office is RAT.S.R[4]. Secondly, and more importantly, it does not appear on any other Roman coins at any other time. Thirdly, the phrase has a number of possible meanings. 'Finance officer' is just one of them[5].

Casey notes that 'the types of the high-value silver

[2] The silver *denarius* illustrated is BM 1900-11-5-10; see also *RIC* nos 554-8, and 439-40, and *Aeneid* ii, 283 (*exspectate* is also at viii, 38). It should, however, be emphasised that the pairing of *exspectatus* and *venio* is not unusual in Latin, for example Cicero, *Epistulae ad Familiares* xvi, 7. See N. Shiel, 'A "Quotation" from the Aeneid on the coinage of Carausius', *Proceedings of the Vergil Society* xii (1972-3), 51-3, where Shiel concludes nevertheless that the *Aeneid* passage 'must have had some influence on this choice of words.'

[3] *De Caesaribus* xxxix.41 - *summa res* here is believed to be the financial office.

[4] Pers. comm. R.S.O. Tomlin: *CIL* VI, 1132 (cf. 1133), VI, 1145, and VI, 1701. See also Shiel 1977, 98, who notes these inscriptions.

[5] For example, Cicero, *de Re Publica* I.xxvi, 42, *summa rerum*, meaning 'supreme authority'.

Fig. 2 — *Aes* medallion of Carausius depicting the emperor in consular garb, and on the reverse Victory in a chariot (BM 1967 9-1-1). Diameter 36 mm. Image courtesy of The British Museum.

Fig. 3. *Aes* medallion of Carausius depicting the emperor in consular garb, and on the reverse Victory crowns Carausius (BM 1972-7-17-1). Diameter 35 mm. Image courtesy of The British Museum.

coins are very allusive and demand a high level of Roman literary education for their full impact to be appreciated', and argues that 'the object of the [Carausian] revolt is to renew Rome' (Casey 1994, 58, 59, 77-8). This observation places Carausius beyond the ranks of the conventional Roman military opportunists who seized power when it came their way, and suggests that his regime was founded on a clearly-defined ideology.

The medallions and Virgil

In 1931 an *aes* medallion of Carausius was brought to the British Museum by a schoolboy. He had been given it from his grandfather's collection. It was believed the medallion had been found in northern England but this is unverifiable. The medallion was discussed by Toynbee (1944, n° 5) and subsequently loaned to the British Museum, which acquired it in 1967[6]. The medallion (Fig. 2) depicts, on the obverse, Carausius facing left in consular garb wearing a mantle and holding an eagle-tipped sceptre in his right hand, with the legend IMP C M CARAVSIVS P F AVG; and, on the reverse, Victory in a chariot galloping right, with the legend VICTORIA CARAVSI AVG, and in the exergue, the initials INPCDA.

These letters confounded generations of scholars. Carson recognized that they could not represent a mint signature, suggesting they were 'some formula of dedication or greeting' (1973, nos 1-2). Shiel (1977, 165, note 31) records the suggestion *In Nomine Principis Carausi Donavit Allectus*, 'Allectus presented [this medal] in the name of the Emperor Carausius'. This has never gained acceptance because it has no precedent. Shiel also points out that the intended meaning must have been obvious at the time, and thus could be reliably abbreviated, but warned that 'any expansion must be pure conjecture' (*ibid*., 162). Casey merely observed that 'the meaning of the letters INPCDA is not known'[7].

Another unique *aes* medallion of Carausius (Fig. 3) came onto the open market in 1971 and was acquired by the British Museum in 1972[8]. Its condition is so similar to the other that it was suggested by Carson that they were found together at some unspecified date before 1931. On the obverse Carausius, left, again in consular garb, wears a mantle and holds an eagle-tipped sceptre in his right hand, with the legend IMP C [M A]VR CARAVSIVS P F AVG GER; on the reverse he stands facing left in military dress holding a globe in his right hand and a spear in his right. Behind him a winged Victory, bearing a palm in her left hand, crowns him with a laurel wreath in her right hand. The reverse legend reads VICTOR CARAVSIVS AVG GERM MAX, and in the exergue bears the initials RSR, the mark which also appears on most of Carausius' silver coins.

Despite the problems these exergue marks presented to scholars, a single expansion resolves both RSR and INPCDA and not only does it have the important qualification of being an established passage from classical literature, but also of coming from a work by Virgil. The clue is the allusion to Virgil made by the legend *Expectate Veni*. Virgil's messianic *Eclogues* iv, 6-7 reads:

…..Redeunt Saturnia Regna,

Iam Nova Progenies Caelo Demittitur Alto

This means 'The Saturnian kingdoms return (or 'The Golden Age returns'), now a new generation is let down from heaven above'. The two exergue marks correspond precisely to the sequence of initials, including the division between the phrases. This is unlikely to be merely coincidence.

The *Eclogue* text is entirely appropriate to the

[6] BM 1967 9-1-1. 36 mm.

[7] Casey 1994, caption for pl. 2.2.

[8] BM 1972-7-17-1. 35 mm.

Carausian myth of a reborn Rome, reflected in another of his coin types, *Renovat[or] Romano[rum],* 'Restorer of the Romans' (*RIC* 571). The Saturnian age was a stock theme of Roman literature and symbolized a lost bucolic paradise[9]. Virgil composed the fourth *Eclogue* in the aftermath of the Brundisium settlement of 40 BC, which ended the differences between the members of the Second Triumvirate: Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus. It was an allegory of hope for the future by celebrating the restoration of the good old days, and the birth of a child in whom the essence of the new age is founded. Carausius issued coins with the jugate busts of himself, Diocletian, and Maximianus, and individually in the names of Diocletian and Maximianus. All bear reverse legends ending AVGGG. Carausius thus apparently perceived himself as a member of a kind of new triumvirate[10]. That a passage from a work of Italian literature more than 300 years old should appear in this form in one of the remotest provinces of the Roman Empire is an astonishing revelation to us, but as will, seen it should occasion rather less surprise than it does at first sight.

The use and meaning of the phrase *Expectate Veni* in that form (as opposed to the Virgilian original) is consistent with the sentiments of *Redeunt Saturnia Regna, Iam Nova Progenies Caelo Demittitur Alto.* All three phrases express succinctly the mood of the Carausian revolt. Moreover, the imperial treasury in Rome itself was stored in the Temple of Saturn, the *aerarii Saturni,* 'treasury of Saturn'[11]; the allusion to *Saturnia Regna* was thus a convenient association of a mythical age and the repository of state wealth. Since the original version of this paper was published Lyne (2003, 149-50) has linked the Carausian Virgilian myth with the later legend recorded in Nennius that the Trojans had colonized Britain. Although this perhaps stretches the evidence to an extreme, it is now clear that Carausius deliberately and explicitly associated his regime with Virgilian myth. Carausius may have been tapping into, or instigating, a Romano-British fantasy that survived well into later centuries.

Poetical allusion and the panegyrics

Roman inscriptions and coin legends are characterized by extensive use of abbreviated titles and epithets. The abbreviation of poetical phrases to initials was not unknown. For example, S.T.T.L., often found on tombstones, represents *sit tibi terra levis,* and is an adaptation, or vice-versa, of Tibullus (*terraque securae sit super ossa levis,* 'Let the earth be light above your unworried remains')[12].

Poetical allusion was also used to political effect in the Latin panegyrics, especially characteristic of the period of Carausius. It was expedient to associate a ruler with the mythical foundations of Rome and divine antecedents, a subject familiar to all in the works of Virgil, Ovid, and others[13]. These examples paraphrase or allude to passages in literature. One of the contemporary panegyrics seems to contain an answer, perhaps deliberate, to the Carausian use of *Redeunt Saturnia Regna*. It refers to the fact that only under the Tetrarchy has the golden age of Saturn been restored: *Adeo, ut res est, aurea illa saecula, quae non diu quondam Saturno rege vigerunt, nunc aeternis auspiciis Iovis et Herculis renascuntur,* 'Indeed, as the fact is, those bygone golden ages, which have not long flourished from the times of Saturn's reign, are now reborn under the perpetual guidance of Jove and Hercules', i.e. Diocletian and Maximianus (Mynors 1964, ix.18, 5)[14]. Another, for Maximianus, borrows from the third *Eclogue: Jovis omnia esse <plena>,* 'All are full of Jove' (*ibid*., xi.14, 2 (supplying plena); *Eclogues* iii, 60). The panegyric for Constantine quotes from the Georgics with *Et curvae... rigidum falces [conflantur in ensem],* 'Curved pruning hooks are forged into rigid swords' (*ibid.*, xii.12, 3; *Georgic*s 1, 508).

We are dependent on the panegyrics composed for the Tetrarchy for much of our understanding of the Carausian and Allectan episode. None of the equivalent Carausian panegyrics have survived. We may be sure that they existed, perhaps being presented to their subject on the state visits recorded in the *Adventus Aug[usti],* 'The arrival of Augustus', coin issues[15]. It may even be suggested that the RSR and INPCDA slogans are all that survive of texts of these panegyrics, and perhaps featured as ritual declamations by Carausian troops.

The abbreviations used by Carausius must have been significant to the Romano-British élite. Amongst these we might include military officials and the members of the cantonal councils. The most efficient means of communicating in this way was to tap into existing knowledge. Poetic texts were routine parts of the ancient world's teaching curriculum. Augustine made this clear when discussing his own schooling in Virgil in north Africa, some seventy years after the Carausian episode (*Confessions* 1, 13). Suetonius records three instances in

9 See also, for example, Tibullus, I.iii, 35 ff. (and II.v, 9) where the poet contrasts the pacific and trouble-free world of Saturn with the age of Jupiter which is characterised by war.

10 For example, *RIC* 551. These coins are generally regarded as belonging to the period AD 289-93, following the failed attempt by Maximianus to recover Britain in 289.

11 For example, *Scriptores Historiae Augustae,* Marcus Aurelius ix.7.

12 Tibullus ii.4, 50; see C.T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, various) under 1. levis, I.

13 See, for example the *Latin Panegyric* x.13, 1 ff (for Maximianus), in Mynors 1964, 253-4, cited by Casey 1994, 194.

14 I am grateful to R.S.O. Tomlin for drawing my attention to this passage.

15 For example, *RIC* 598.

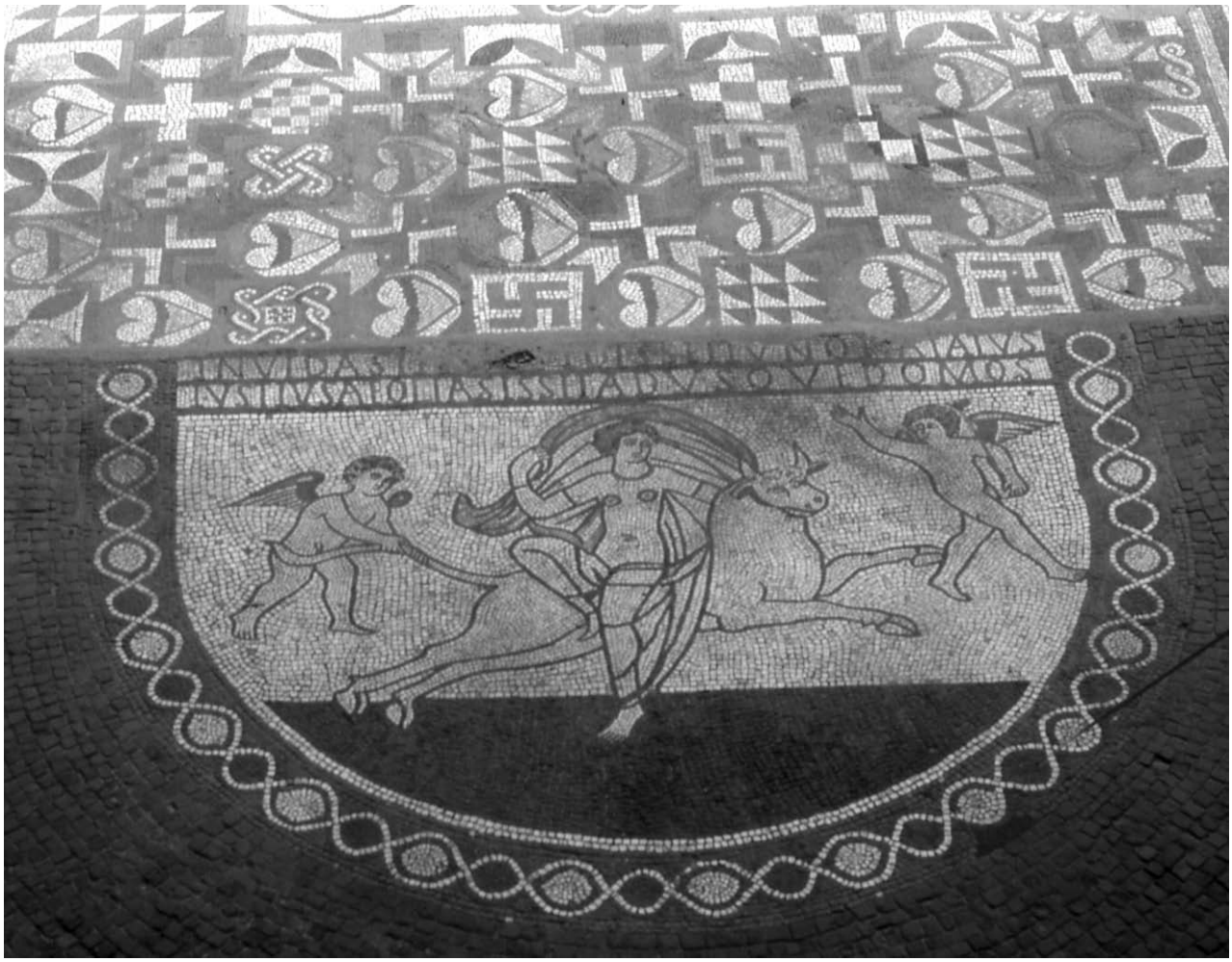

Fig. 4 — The mosaic at Lullingstone (Kent), depicting the abduction of Europa by Jupiter in the guise of a bull. The Latin couplet is a direct allusion to the events described in the first book of the *Aeneid*, but is composed in the style of Ovid. Photo: author.

which emperors, and even a centurion of Nero's guard, used lines from Virgil in exclamations[16]. The 4th-century author(s) of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* show that Virgil was familiar enough for use of his texts to be routinely reported[17]. The 4th-century poet Ausonius composed his notoriously lewd poem *Cento Nuptialis* very largely of carefully-selected lines and phrases extracted from Virgil (*Ausonius*, xvii). The joke would have been wasted if he had not been been able to rely on a readership raised on Virgil. It is worth remembering that although Ausonius moved in exalted imperial circles, he was Gallo-Roman and provincial in origin. Even the early church fathers were unable to tear themselves away from their own classical literary education[18].

Education in Latin had been established for the provincial British ruling class by the 70s AD (Tacitus, *Agricola* xxi, 2). Evidence for instruction in Virgil in Britain has been found in, for example, in a late 1st-century written exercise at Vindolanda quoting *Aeneid* ix, 473 (Bowman 2003, 88-9), the scratched inscription *conticuere omnes*, 'all fell silent', from *Aeneid* ii, 1 on a flue-tile found at Silchester (*RIB* II.5, 2491.14), the 4th-century mosaic at Lullingstone bearing an allusion to the content only of Aeneid i, 50 ff (*RIB* II.4, 2448.6) (Fig. 4), the 4th-century

16 Augustus, xl, 5 (*Aeneid* i, 282); Nero, xlvii, 2 (*Aeneid* xii, 646); Domitian, ix, 1 (*Georgics* ii, 537). Only in the latter instance does Suetonius give the author of the quotation.

17 Hadrian ii, 8 (*Aeneid* vi, 808-12); Aelius iv, 1-3 (*Aeneid* vi, 869 ff, 870 ff, and 883 ff), attributed to Hadrian as his comments on Aelius (at least one ms. of the *Scriptores* adds at v, 9 that Aelius knew Ovid's *Amores* by heart); Macrinus xii, 9 (*Aeneid* xii, 275 and vii, 654, where a crowd acclamation is recorded made up of two lines from Virgil); Diadumenian viii, 7 (where Diadumenian quotes *Aeneid* iv, 272-6 in a letter to his father).

18 Augustine, Confessions i, 13 discusses how he was entranced by the *Aeneid* as a schoolboy but learned that this was futile. See also Tertullian (c. AD 160-220), *De Spectaculis* ix.1, quoting *Georgics* iii, 113-14; and St. Jerome (c. AD 345-420), *Epistulae* xiv, 3 referring to *Aeneid* iv, 366 and xii, 59. Jerome agonised over the dilemma of reading the 'barbarous' language of the prophets for the sake of his soul but infinitely preferring the style of pagan authors (*Epistulae* xxii, 29-30, referring to his own library).

Fig. 5 — Low Ham (Somerset). Part of the mosaic floor depicting events described in the fourth book of the *Aeneid;* here Aeneas and Dido embrace. Photo: author.

mosaic at Low Ham, Somerset, which depicts scenes from the fourth book of the *Aeneid* (Fig. 5; Henig 1995, 120-1), and an inscription from the Aeneid painted on wall-plaster at Otford (*RIB* II.4, 2447.9). Henig also notes that the iconography at Low Ham may have been derived from the villa owner's personal manuscript copy of the *Aeneid*, citing the resemblance in treatment of faces with the extant *Vergilius Romanus* manuscript in the Vatican. Bowman (1994, 89) discusses the recovery of fragments of Virgilian texts from Vindolanda, Masada in Judaea, and Egypt.

It is not possible to demonstrate from any of these instances, however, that those responsible were familiar with the whole texts instead of isolated phrases and excerpts, and whether the persons responsible for commissioning the artwork were indigenous Romano-British or immigrants. It would, for example, have been quite feasible for a Romano-British villa owner to have hired an immigrant mosaicist, or that an immigrant villa owner hired mosaicists from Gaul or even North Africa. Barrett (1978, 307-13) has suggested that some of these examples may indicate no more than familiarity with a language that had absorbed words and phrases from Virgil, much in the way that colloquial English has absorbed phrases and words from Shakespeare. On the other hand, the sum of Virgilian literature is a small fraction of Shakespeare's work, let alone other 16th - and 17th -century literature, much of which was widely available in print. It therefore seems more likely that the educated and literate provincial Roman public knew the key Virgilian texts well, even if ordinary people had only a command of stock phrases whose source was unknown to them. As Henig (1995, 42) has observed, an education in the literary classics for the children of a prefect commanding an auxiliary unit at Vindolanda was part of a culture that was bound to 'percolate' through to the rest of the community.

We do not know how, and to whom, the Carausian silver coins were distributed. If the RSR silver, and the medallions, represent an accession donative, as Casey suggests (1994, 76), or episodic donatives later in the reign, it is possible to envisage distribution on occasions when the military units were addressed, and swore allegiance to the Carausian regime. The issue of radiates bearing the names of several legions, and others mentioning army loyalty, suggest that they were part of Carausius' campaign of soliciting or rewarding support[19].

For Carausius the use of Virgilian references, and perhaps more oblique allusions to traditional Roman values, was an economic way of using existing know-

[19] For example, *RIC* 58 (*Legio II Augusta*), 62 (*Legio II Parthica*).

ledge to establish a theme for his regime. The only real problem for us is the Virgilian context of *Exspectate Venis* (as opposed to the Carausian *Expectate Veni*) involving the appearance of Hector's ghost, ravaged by war (*quantum mutatus,* 'so changed'), to Aeneas. This does seem inappropriate, though the meaning of the Carausian version does not. But there is no need to insist on precise association – quotations are frequently adapted, conflated, or paraphrased into a form suitable for the purpose required as, for instance, the crowd acclamation reported during the reign of Macrinus (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae,* Macrinus xii, 9).

The use of literary texts on a coin, particularly in abbreviated form in the exergue, was a numismatic novelty; but as the most consistent feature of Carausius' coinage is a vigorous creativity we need not express surprise. The regime seems to have been capable of devising frequent innovations while also providing a range of types based on 'standard' issues and those of earlier emperors such as Postumus. In addition to those already discussed there is, for example, the issue depicting Carausius with Diocletian and Maximianus and the optimistically conciliatory legend *Carausius et Fratres Sui,* 'Carausius and his Brothers' (*RIC,* 551). We know so little about Carausius, beyond the fact that he had modest origins, that we cannot draw conclusions about the state of his education. He may have been cultivated and literate, or merely intelligent enough to recognise the value of appearing so and having the wherewithal to employ assistants who could help him.

There are a few other possible literary references in Carausian coinage but they are less convincing. It is tempting, and perhaps far too easy, to see connections almost everywhere. Some of these have already been observed by Casey and others (1994, 58 ff.). In particular the UBERITAS, or UBERTAS, ('Plenty') issues, although a stock theme for Roman coinage, was sometimes depicted by Carausius on silver and radiates in association with a cow being milked (*RIC* 581). This plays on the similarity to (and of course derivation from) *uber,* 'udder'. Virgil exploits the image as one of plenty in *Georgics* ii, 524 and *Eclogues* iv, 22, using *uber,* but describing goats. Only at *Eclogues* iii, 30 does he talk about cattle in the same context but does not on this occasion use *uber.* None of these examples is thus entirely satisfactory. Nevertheless, in view of the Saturnian 'Golden Age' associations of the fourth *Eclogue* it may be noted that the second *Georgic* closes with an explicit reference to the bucolic idyll of the regime of 'golden Saturn' (*aureus Saturnus*).

Pacator Orbis, 'peace-bringer to the world', appears on some Carausian radiates and a new Carausian medallion which has surfaced more recently (BM accession n° 1997-6-6-1). It is applied to Hercules by Seneca in a context not inappropriate to the Carausian myth of a 'messianic' coming (*Hercules Oetaeus,* line 1990). Carausius' chief opponent was Maximianus, the Emperor in the West, and the latter was routinely associated with Hercules on 'official' coinage (Casey 1994, pl. 1, 10-12); it could be argued that *Pacator Orbis* was a Carausian answer, but any association with Seneca and Hercules is almost certainly fortuitous and simply indirect. The sentiment is reflected in the fourth *Eclogue* in the line *pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem,* 'and [the child] will guide a world made peaceful by the virtues of his father' (*Eclogues* iv, 17). *Pacator Orbis* is a role associated with Sol who appears as a bust both jugate with Carausius, and as a reverse, in some rare issues[20]. *Pacator Orbis* had an even longer tradition, appearing for example on coins under Septimius Severus and on an inscription of that reign (*RIC 282; CIL* II, 1969). It was thus also an established imperial theme, even if Carausius integrated it into a more sophisticated series of literary allusions.

The coins and medals

By AD 286 coinage in Britain, and almost everywhere else in the Empire, was made up almost exclusively of base-metal issues. Many of these were degenerate local copies of official coins, frequently of small size and crude in style. Gold was erratically struck and at reduced weight. The official 'silver' coins were made up of no more than five per cent silver, and in any case had minimal impact on the Romano-British currency pool. Coins with a significant proportion of silver had not existed for decades. The quality of coinage, especially gold and silver, symbolized the stability and *auctoritas* of the Roman government. The wretched state of both presented Carausius with a platform and an opportunity. He exploited coinage as a means to present himself, his regime, and his ideology, using some of his new gold and silver issues as the principal manifestation of his restoration of traditional standards and virtues.

The new Carausian silver coin was modelled on the old *denarius*, which had ceased production by the mid 3rd century. His new coins weighed about 3.75 g, matching the standard prevailing under Nero more than 200 years earlier (Casey 1994, 76). The RSR mark is largely confined to Carausian precious-metal issues; however, not all bear RSR even if most of the silver coins do. It is thus possible that the RSR coins represent a single issue struck for targeted distribution. A small number of radiates are known with the RSR mark, for example *RIC 598,* and some are stylistically so close to the silver coins that they were probably struck from dies engraved by the same mint-workers. Casey (1994, 76) suggests however that these radiates are 'unofficial' (possibly, unauthorised coins struck by corrupt mint workers). He also suggests that the silver coins represent the accession donative, and

[20] *RIC* 304, 341 (jugate), and 872-4 (reverse). The types were inspired by earlier examples, for example a radiate issue of Postumus (259-68), *RIC* 317, with Sol as a reverse bust and the legend *Pacator Orbis.*

were thus minted over a short period of time.

The exergue legend RSR may therefore have served as a convenient means to distinguish an issue of high-quality Carausian silver and gold from the debased precious-metal coinage of the official Empire. It would have been appropriate, albeit imaginative and unconventional, to use a poetic tag which combined the more philosophical concept of a restoration of general values with the more prosaic statement that the silver was of a restored standard, using the Saturnian connection also to hint at the authenticity of this new Roman treasury.

It is not clear what relationship the *aes* medallions had to the silver and conventional radiates of Carausian coinage. They were probably donatives forming part of the same issue as the RSR-marked silver, as the marks RSR and INPCDA on two of the three extant medallions suggest (the third has no visible exergue mark). But with so few known it is impossible to draw any inferences from a distribution pattern or an analysis of types. The INPCDA mark is, for example, not known on any other coin. It has been suggested that the medallions were practice strikes for gold (Toynbee 1944; Askew 1980, 34). No such gold medallions are known; but, if they existed, then after the defeat of Allectus in 295 or 296 it may have been expedient for those who held them to have melted them down. Alternatively, they may have been confiscated.

The well-known Arras gold medallion, issued by Constantius Chlorus to mark the restoration of Britannia to the Empire in 296, has the explicit legend *Redditor Lucis Aeterna*, 'Restorer of the Eternal Light', and LON for *Londinium* to make the point even clearer (Fig. 4). *Redditor Lucis Aeternae* may be a literary allusion too. It is not Virgilian but the panegyric for Constantius Chlorus, celebrating his recovery of Britain, announces that the Britons have been 'revived at last by the true light of the Empire'[21]. This suggests that medallion and panegyric had been conceived as different expressions of the same theme.

Conclusion

It will, of course, remain the case that the expansions suggested here will be technically unproven until a new piece of corroborating evidence such as an inscription comes to light. However, there is now no serious doubt that the expansions are correct. Even so, it is a matter of interest why the expansion offered here has not been suggested before. The present writer made the leap of faith after several years of working on the manuscripts and books of the diarist John Evelyn (1620-1706). For Evelyn and his peers, references and allusions to Virgil were second nature, as they had been for his classical antecedents. It is worth recalling here Samuel Johnson's comment that 'Classical quotation is the parole of literary men all over the world', where 'parole' means the form or style of utterance. Johnson thought it a good thing because the custom was widely understood, and thought it represented a 'community of mind' (Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, 8th May 1781).

Appropriately, Evelyn recorded that he had suggested *decus et tutamen*, 'an ornament and protection', be engraved on the edge of the new struck silver coins of Charles II to discourage 'this injurious Practice of Clippers' (1697, 225). The line, which he had seen on the binding of one of Cardinal Richlieu's books in 1644, is from *Aeneid* v, 262. Evelyn took it for granted his readers knew exactly what was meant. No doubt Carausius made the same assumption about his contemporaries and their 'community of mind', or at least those who mattered. The RSR legend has been known on *denarii* of Carausius for centuries but is too brief for unequivocal identification with the Virgilian text on its own. Had both medallions surfaced in the 1600s, the INPCDA and RSR marks would probably have been recognized for what they are without hesitation. Indeed, a 1689 medallion of William and Mary issued to commemorate the restoration of the Church carries the reverse legend *Caelo delabitur alto* (he comes down from heaven above), a direct allusion to *Georgics* iv, 7 (Hawkins 1885, i, 659).

Measuring the extent of classical influence on Romano-British culture remains a challenge, not least because we have little means of identifying the personal origins of villa owners or the people who owned the Mildenhall, Thetford and Hoxne treasures. In the late 4th century Ausonius considered the Romano-British to be socially inferior in every respect (xix, 107-12). Conversely, more recently it has been suggested that some of the villa-owning class were so well-versed in classical literature that they engaged in complex word-games on their mosaics (Thomas 2003, 33 ff). What matters more is the certain existence of the conceit amongst certain of the Romano-British that they were members of classical society. Carausius appealed directly to that conceit through the very ethos of his rebellion, expressed conspicuously on his coinage and most explicitly in the RSR and INPCDA exergue legends. These may have once presented a challenge to modern scholarship but they must have been instantly recognizable to the Carausian public, or else they would have been worthless appeals. If nothing else, it is to be hoped that the present limited familiarity with Latin and classical literature amongst not a few scholars teaching Romano-British studies in Britain will one day be reversed.

[21] *Tandem vera imperii luce recreati* (Mynors 1964, viii.19, 2).

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