

# An Anonymous Radiate with the Bust of Carausius

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Occasionally one is faced with a new type of coin which cannot be predicted from the existing corpus of material. Such a coin recently came into my possession and although the previous owner assures me that it was examined at the British Museum the piece itself remains unpublished to my knowledge.

The coin, illustrated as figure 1, is apparently a late third century radiate and may be described as follows:

Obverse: VIRTVS AVG

Helmeted radiate bust left holding a shield in left hand and spear over right shoulder

Reverse: VIRTVS AVG

Figure (Mars?) standing right (resting on shield?) and holding a vertical spear in the right hand

Die axis:  $\uparrow \downarrow$ ; Weight: 3.2 grammes, die diameter 22mm.

The fabric, appearance, bust and style of lettering with squared A's and V's suggest that this is an issue of Carausius<sup>1,2</sup>.

An example of the left facing helmeted bust with the legend VIRTVS AVG occurs on the bronze coinage of Postumus, but then only as a reverse type on the sestertii and double sestertii. There are identified links between the Gallic Empire coinage types and those of Carausius<sup>3</sup>.

There are no clear field marks or mint marks on the coin to place it in context however there is a smudge to the left of the figure on the reverse which may tantalisingly be an S. Similarly in the left of the exergue there the trace of an M. One is left to speculate whether these are the remnants of the marks S/P//MLXXI which would place the issue around 292<sup>4</sup>.

## Notes

- 1 An e-mail response to a brief enquiry at the Ashmolean Museum suggests that the portrait is that of Carausius.
- 2 I am indebted to Dr Craig Barclay of the Yorkshire Museum for examining and weighing the coin and agreeing that the coin does resemble the issues of Carausius. Furthermore Dr Barclay showed the coin to Dr Jonathan Williams at the British Museum who confirmed that this was an issue of Carausius and that there was no direct parallel within the trays of that institution.
- 3 Bastien, P. *Le Monnayage de Bronze de Postume* (1967), plate XXIV, nos 106-107b
- 4 Casey, op. cit. pp. 88.