

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
XIVth INTERNATIONAL NUMISMATIC CONGRESS
GLASGOW 2009

II

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
XIVth INTERNATIONAL NUMISMATIC CONGRESS

GLASGOW 2009

Edited by
Nicholas Holmes



GLASGOW 2011



International Numismatic Council



British Academy



University of Glasgow | The Hunterian

All rights reserved by
The International Numismatic Council

ISBN 978-1-907427-17-6

Distributed by Spink & Son Ltd, 69 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4ET
Printed and bound in Malta by Gutenberg Press Ltd.

NEW COIN FINDS FROM THE TWO LATE IRON AGE SETTLEMENTS OF ALTENBURG (GERMANY) AND RHEINAU (SWITZERLAND): A MILITARY COIN SERIES ON THE GERMAN-SWISS BORDER?

MICHAEL NICK

Introduction*

The so-called ‘twin-oppidum’ of Altenburg and Rheinau is situated on both banks of a tight meander of the river Rhine near the Falls of Schaffhausen. In this region the Rhine marks the national border, so that one part of the settlement lies in Germany, the other in Switzerland (Fig. 1).

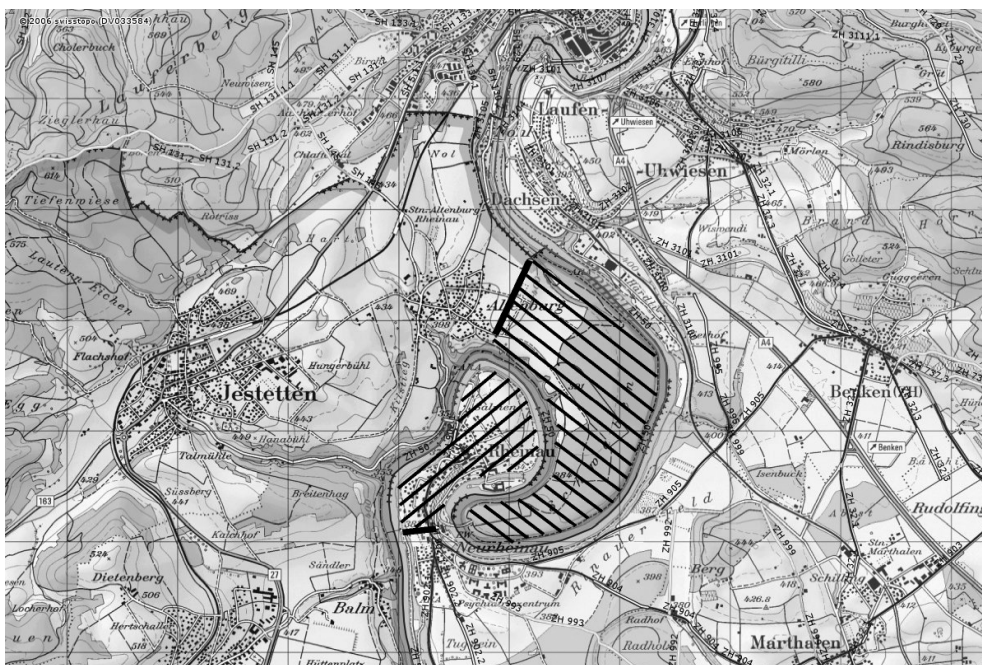


Fig. 1. The two iron age settlements of Altenburg, ‘Schwaben’ (D) and Rheinau, ‘Au’ (CH). Hachures: area of occupation.

Archaeological excavations took place from 1972 to 1977, and again in 1985, at Altenburg along the rampart and in the adjacent area within the settlement.¹ Most of the coin finds were published by Derek F. Allen in 1978.² Thirteen of the 39 coins found were of the so-called bushel type, and Allen took the opportunity to establish a classification for this group of coins. The first excavations at Rheinau along the rampart were conducted by Emil Vogt in 1935,³ but only in the 1990s were the

*I want to thank David G. Wigg-Wolf, Frankfurt a. M., for proof-reading this text.

Photo credits: Fig. 1, Base map Swisstopo and Inventar historischer Verkehrswege der Schweiz; Figs. 2-4; 7-8; 11; 14-16 Regierungspräsidium

Freiburg, Referat Denkmalpflege (Ch. Krug); Figs. 5-6; 9 M. Nick.

¹ Fischer 2004. See also Fischer 1966.

² Allen 1978.

³ Fischer 2004, p. 124 with note 7.

first areas of the settlement itself excavated.⁴ The publication of these interventions is in preparation.

Continuing surveys in both parts of the oppidum have greatly increased our knowledge of the extent of the occupied area. They have yielded hundreds of coins and other archaeological artefacts, and the chronological evidence of the latter indicates that the two parts must be looked at separately.

Coin types

The surveys at Altenburg yielded 539 Celtic, 17 Republican and 42 Roman imperial coins. Besides these, some semi-finished products from the minting process as well as some residues of silver smelting were found. From Rheinau, 50 Celtic coins are recorded from the excavations and to date 75 from the surveys. Only one Republican denarius and a few imperial coins have been found, as well as one residue from silver smelting.

At Altenburg at least 13 'gold' coins were found,⁵ most of them plated or made of silver. Only one rainbow cup from southern Germany is made of solid gold. To date no gold pieces are known from Rheinau.

As the silver quinarii are the dominant component of the two coin series, only the main types can be presented here. The quinarii of the Kaletedou type are most frequent at Altenburg. Almost all known variants are represented, from specimens with the entire legend to the variants with a wheel under the horse.⁶ Until now we know of only eight coins of Kaletedou type from Rheinau.

Another important group are the quinarii of the bushel type. At Rheinau they represent the majority of all coin finds, while at Altenburg they take second place. When establishing his classification, in many cases Allen could not recognise all details of the image, because the flans of most pieces are too small to reproduce the complete die. Given the mass of new material it was now possible to improve his classification by combining the various die sections. Especially for the Swiss series D, F and H consistent types and variants could be defined.⁷

Among the coins from Altenburg and Rheinau there is one type which was classified as unrecorded by Allen.⁸ Thanks to the surveys and recent excavations, the number of these coins could be increased in Altenburg to six and in Rheinau meanwhile to 20. Because the type is known from only a few other sites, we call it the Altenburg-Rheinau type. The new material allows us to reconstruct its development. The prototype is a quinarius ascribed to the Arverni (Fig. 2) represented by four specimens at Altenburg and none at Rheinau. It is possible to distinguish two stages. The coins of the first stage are close to the prototype (Fig. 3), those of the second are of coarse style (Fig. 4). But thanks to the sideburns on the head on the obverse the latter can still be recognised as a derivative of the Altenburg-Rheinau type.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

⁴ Schreyer / Nagy 2005.

⁵ Coin types: Gallo-Belgic Ca cl. 6 (after Sills 2003, pp. 227-32), Arcs de cercle (after DT I, pl. IX, no. 180-87), Chenôves (Fischer 1982, p. 101, fig. 2, no. 3695), Philippou-imitations from eastern Gaul with wheel or cross (Castelin 1978, p. 180, no. 864-65; Burkhardt *et al.* 2003, p. 312, fig. c), Swiss silver-stater (Castelin 1978, p. 186, no. 940-42), rainbow cups

mainly of class II (after Kellner 1990).

⁶ For the classification of the Kaletedou type see Nick 2006 (vol. 1), p. 60, tab. 10.

⁷ For the classification of group D see for now Frey-Kupper / Nick 2009, p. 71, fig. 5.

⁸ Allen 1978, p. 205, no. 21.

Fig. 2. Quinarius of Arverni type from Altenburg.

Fig. 3. Quinarius of Altenburg-Rheinau type from Altenburg.

Fig. 4. Quinarius of the developed Altenburg-Rheinau type from Altenburg.

The classic Ninno type showing a boar and the legend NINNO/NINNO or NINNO/MAVC is well known from other sites. But here too the excavations at Rheinau in particular yielded new variants with a cross (Fig. 5) or a star (Fig. 6) above the boar. The new star symbol links them to some quinarii ascribed to the Aedui.⁹ The rare Ninno type with a horse (Fig. 7) is also quite common at the two settlements.¹⁰ In all there are five quinarii of Ninno type from Altenburg and 16 from Rheinau.



Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 5. Quinarius of Ninno type with cross above the boar from Rheinau.

Fig. 6. Quinarius of Ninno type with star above the boar from Rheinau.

Fig. 7. Quinarius of Ninno type with horse from Altenburg.

Until recently only one coin of the Viros type was known.¹¹ It was found in the nineteenth century in Switzerland, and because of its singularity there was no possibility of attributing or dating it. Meanwhile, the number of specimens from western Switzerland, and especially from Altenburg and Rheinau and their surroundings, has increased. Due to this we can now read the legend Viros, and state that this quinarius served as the prototype for the famous Vatico type.¹² Only one example of the Viros quinarius is known from Altenburg (Fig. 8), and it is of slightly different style from the three coins found at Rheinau (Fig. 9).



Fig. 8

Fig. 9

Fig. 8. Quinarius of Viros type from Altenburg.

Fig. 9. Quinarius of Viros type from Rheinau.

⁹ DT IV, pl. XI, no. S 3222 A.

¹⁰ DIT, pl. XXXVIII, no. 9345.

¹¹ Castelin 1978, p. 180, no. 875.

¹² Frey-Kupper 2008.

There are also potin coins of different types from the two settlements: 126 from Altenburg and 12 from Rheinau. That is some 23 % at Altenburg but only about 10 % at Rheinau. Another difference in the two coin series is quite obvious: while there is a much higher proportion of earlier potin coins at Altenburg, the number of later potin coins at Rheinau is larger (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Potin coins from Altenburg and from Rheinau. Grey: Later coin types. Classification of the Sequani type after Nick 2000. For the Long cou type see: Gentric 1981, pl. 15, nos. 425-435.

<i>Coin type</i>	<i>Altenburg n=126</i>	<i>Rheinau n=12</i>
Central Gaul, Long Cou	1	
Treveri, Scheers 199	1	
Remi, Scheers 191	4	1
Leuci, Scheers 186	17 (+2)	
Lingones, dIT 8319	4	
Sequani A1/1	7	1
Sequani A1/4	5	1
Sequani A1	1	
Sequani A2/1	2	1
Sequani A2/2	1	
Sequani A2/3	17	
Sequani A2/4	5	
Sequani A2/5	2	
Sequani A2/6	10	
Sequani A2	10 (+2?)	
Zurich type, dIT 9361	19	2
Lingones, dIT 8329	2	2
Sequani B2	8	1
Sequani B3	3	
Sequani B	1	
Sequani C	1	2
Suessiones, Scheers 198	1	
Not identified		1

Coins of the Roman Republic found at late Iron Age settlements always raise the question whether they belong to pre-Roman or Roman circulation. Fifteen out of 16 denarii found at Altenburg date from 211 to the end of the second century BC. Only one later denarius is recorded, a legionary denarius of Marcus Antonius minted in 32/31 BC. In contrast to the nearby early Roman sites of Augst and Dang-

stetten, coins of the 90s and 80s BC, when minting activity at Rome was quite intensive,¹³ are absent at Altenburg. Even silver coins of the Julio-Claudian period are missing. In contrast to the other denarii, which show only little traces of circulation, the coin of Marcus Antonius is quite worn and therefore might have been lost a long time after the abandonment of the oppidum. The other denarii, however, probably belonged to pre-Roman circulation. Many of them were plated and cut into pieces (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Plated and cut Roman denarius minted in 130 BC (RRC 256/1 or 257/1) from Altenburg.

The coin series

Both coin series consist mainly of silver coins: 74 % at Altenburg and 90 % at Rheinau. Such a high proportion of silver coins is quite unusual in settlements in eastern Gaul, irrespective of whether they date to LT D1 or D2. The majority of the coin series generally consist of potin coins (Table 2).¹⁴

TABLE 2. Proportions of metals and types in the Celtic coin series from Altenburg, Rheinau and Basle-Gasfabrik (in %). Q: quinarius. Altenburg: single finds from the recent surveys and published coins, without hoard and Republican coins. Rheinau: single finds from the excavations and the recent surveys (state August 2009), without the Republican coin. Basle-Gasfabrik: after the list published by Nick 2006 (vol. 2), pp. 24-26.

	<i>Altenburg (n=567)</i>	<i>Rheinau (n=125)</i>	<i>Basle-Gasfabrik (n=181)</i>
gold denominations	2,7	--	3,9
Q, Kaletedou	32,3	6,4	6,6
Q, Bushel	29,5	27,2	--
Q, Altenb.-Rheinau	1,1	16,0	--
Q, Ninno	0,9	12,8	--
oboles of Massalia type	--	--	8,3
quinarii quarters (southern Germany)	0,4	4,8	0,6
AR, other or not identified	10,2	23,2	0,6
earlier potin	19,4	4,8	79,0
later potin	2,8	4,0	--
potin, other or not identified	0,5	0,8	1,1
AE, other	0,4	--	--

The two coin series from Altenburg and Rheinau are also similar as regards the large propor-

¹³Backendorf 1998, p. 535, fig. 148-49.

¹⁴Nick 2006 (vol. 1), p. 115, tab. 22.

tion of bushel type quinarii. Also the presence of the rare Viros and Altenburg-Rheinau types in both series is notable. However, there are some differences. While the coin series from Altenburg does include a few gold pieces, there are none at Rheinau. But most significant is the composition of the potin coins: on the one hand the proportion of these coins is much higher at Altenburg, on the other hand the number of later potin coins – as already noted – increases at Rheinau.

Based on the archaeological dating of the two sites, we can propose two phases of coin circulation at Altenburg (Table 3): The first consists of gold, earlier potin coins and quinarii of the Kaletedou type. It can be dated from the last third of the second century BC. The second phase broadly corresponds to Rheinau, and is dominated by quinarii of the bushel, Ninno, Viros and Altenburg-Rheinau types. In this phase only a few potin coins were still in circulation. It can be dated from about 80 to 50/40 BC.¹⁵

TABLE 3. Phases of coin circulation at Altenburg and Rheinau.
The number of ‘plus’-signs marks the frequency of a coin type.

	<i>Altenburg 1</i>	<i>Altenburg 2</i>	<i>Rheinau</i>
gold denominations	+		
Arverni type	(+)	(+)	
Kaletedou	++++	++	+
Bushel	(+)	+++++	++++
Alt.-Rheinau		++	++++
Ninno		+	++++
Viros		+	+
earlier potin	++++	+	+
later potin		+	+

The question of coin production

Some remains of coin moulds from the two sites raise the question of on-site coin production. There are four fragments with traces of tin from Altenburg and 16 fragments from one single pit at Rheinau.¹⁶ The latter show high levels of silver, copper and lead. A globular cast silver blank with a weight of 1.69 g. from Altenburg (Fig. 11) corresponds with the quinarii in circulation. Finally, at Altenburg several residues from silver smelting were found. The most spectacular one was not completely melted and the remains of some Celtic quinarii are recognisable (Fig. 12).

¹⁵Schreyer / Nagy 2005, p. 142.

¹⁶Altenburg: Maier / Neth 1987, p. 154, no. 1. The moulds from Rheinau are unpublished.



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

Fig. 11. Silver blank in the weight of 1.69 g from Altenburg.

Fig. 12. Clump of smelted Celtic quinarii from Altenburg. The weight of 37.45 g corresponds with 21 to 29 specimens with an individual weight between 1.3 and 1.8 g.

Many silver coins that are heavier than the common quinarii, such as tetradrachms or denarii, had been cut into pieces (Fig. 13). Possibly these coins, as well as some heavy quinarii, served as raw material to produce new quinarii. Moreover, a number of quinarii found at Altenburg have a visibly high copper content. They could have been produced from melted down earlier silver coins, with copper added to debase the alloy.



Fig. 13. Plated and cut Norican Tetradrachm of Copo type from Altenburg.

At Altenburg a series of six quinarii of bushel type D1 was found.¹⁷ They were all minted from the same pair of dies, and so may well have been struck at Altenburg. Other coin types which might possibly have been produced at the sites are the Altenburg-Rheinau, the Ninno and the Viros types.

Conclusion

Apart from the predominance of silver, there are several other features which distinguish phase 2 of Altenburg and Rheinau from other settlements. First, there is a remarkable lack of small change in the form of obols or potin coins. In a developed monetised economy these coins would have been needed for payment in daily transactions. Coins from damaged and worn dies, coins struck off centre and on misshapen flans are the result of a hasty coin production in which the quality of workmanship does not seem to have been important. Also, the recycling of heavier coins and the addition of copper points to the necessity of short-term availability of large quantities of silver coins at a weight of about 1.6 to 1.7 g.

The predominance of silver in coin circulation coincides with the extension of settlement activity to Rheinau. Altenburg had already been settled in the last third of the second century BC,

¹⁷ *Kelten an Hoch-und Oberrhein. Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern in Baden-Württemberg* 24, Esslingen 2005, p. 77, fig. 84.

while settlement of the peninsula of Rheinau commenced about 80 BC. Possibly this was the result of an increase in population. Both parts of the settlement were abandoned around 50/40 BC. No Celtic coins of the last decades of the first century BC have been found.

The silver coins circulated in a time characterized by dramatic changes in settlement patterns in the entire region of southern Germany and Switzerland. The written sources report several migrations. They describe land in southern Germany deserted by the Helvetii, they mention the invasion of eastern Gaul under Ariovistus and also the emigration of the Helvetii in 58 BC towards Gaul. Without attempting to connect particular events with the archaeological data, we can nevertheless assume that this was the background for the abandonment of oppida across large areas of southern Germany, Switzerland and parts of eastern Gaul, and the establishment of new settlements.

In order to understand the predominance of silver coins in circulation Louis-Pol Delestrée's research on the settlement and the military camp of La Chaussée-Tirancourt in the department of Somme in France can be helpful.¹⁸ There he could distinguish between a civilian and a military coin series. The latter is mainly formed by silver quinarii from eastern Gaul, most of them of poor manufacture.

Also the high proportion of silver quinarii at Vindonissa, Switzerland, which have to be distinguished chronologically from the subsequent Augustan legionary fortress, could indicate a military tradition at the site. There we find exactly the same characteristic coin types as at Altenburg and Rheinau.¹⁹

It is a fact that the coin series of civilian late Iron Age settlements in Switzerland, southwestern Germany and eastern Gaul largely consist of potin coins. Against this background it is plausible that the silver coins of phase 2 from Altenburg and Rheinau are to be seen in a military context. Maybe there was a change from the former urban settlement of phase 1 at Altenburg to a place more characterized by a military presence in phase 2.

¹⁸Delestrée et al. 2006.

¹⁹Doppler 1977. The numerous finds made in the last few years will be published within the 'Celtic coin finds from Switzerland'-project, which is still in progress (see Frey-Kupper / Nick 2009).

ABBREVIATIONS

dIT: de la Tour, H. (1892), *Atlas de monnaies gauloises*, Paris.

DT I: Delestrée, L.-P. / Tache, M. (2002), *Nouvel Atlas des monnaies Gauloises. I. De la Seine au Rhin*, Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

DT IV: Delestrée, L.-P. / Tache, M. (2008), *Nouvel Atlas des monnaies gauloises. IV. Supplément aux tomes I – II – III*, Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

RRC: Crawford, M. H. (1974), *Roman Republican Coinage*, London.

Scheers: Scheers, S. (1977), *La Gaule Belgique. Traité de Numismatique Celtique II*, Paris.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, D. F. (1978), 'The coins from the Oppidum of Altenburg and the Bushel Series', *Germania* 56, pp. 190-229.

Backendorf, D. (1998), *Römische Münzschätze des zweiten und ersten Jahrhunderts v. Chr. vom italienischen Festland. Studien zu Fundmünzen der Antike* 13, Berlin.

Burkhardt, A. / Bachmann, H.-G. / Dehn, R. / Stern, W. B. (2003), 'Keltische Münzen aus latènezeitlichen Siedlungen des Breisgaus. Numismatische, geochemische und archäometallurgische Untersuchungen', *Fundberichte aus Baden-Württemberg* 27, pp. 281-439.

Castelin, K. (1978), *Keltische Münzen. Katalog der Sammlung des Schweizerischen Landesmuseums Zürich*, vol. 1, Stäfa.

Delestrée, L.-P. / Boisard, C. / Boulenger, D. (2006), 'Les monnaies gauloises du site fortifié de La Chaussée-Tirancourt (Somme): coexistence d'un faciès militaire et d'un faciès indigène', in: Hollard, D. (ed.), *L'armée et la monnaie. Actes de la journée d'études du 10 décembre 2005 à la Monnaie de Paris*, Paris, pp. 7-25, pl. I-II.

Doppler, H. W. (1977), 'Die keltischen Münzen von Vindonissa', *Jahresbericht der Gesellschaft Pro Vindonissa*, pp. 37-61.

Fischer, B. (1982), 'Le trésor de Chenôves', *Revue Archéologique de l'Est et Centre-Est* 33, pp. 99-109.

Fischer, F. (1966), 'Das Oppidum Altenburg-Rheinau. Ein Vorbericht', *Germania* 44, pp. 286-312.

Fischer, F. (2004), 'Das Oppidum bei Altenburg-Rheinau und sein spälatènezeitliches Umfeld', in: Hüssen, C.-M. / Irlinger, W. / Zanier, W. (eds.), *Spälatènezeit und frühe römische Kaiserzeit zwischen Alpenrand und Donau. Akten Koll. Ingolstadt, 11./12. Okt. 2001* (Kolloquien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 8), Bonn, pp. 123-31.

Frey-Kupper, S. (2008), 'Viros – à propos d'un type monétaire celtique découvert à Avenches', *Bulletin de l'Association Pro Aventico* 50, pp. 177-86.

Frey-Kupper, S. / Nick, M. (2009), 'Les trouvailles monétaires celtiques de Suisse: corpus et étude. Un projet conjoint du FNS et de l'ITMS', *Schweizer Münzblätter* 59, pp. 67-76.

Gentric, G. (1981), *La circulation monétaire dans la basse vallée du Rhône (IIe-Ier s. av. J.-C.) d'après les monnaies de Bollène (Vaucluse)* (A.R.A.L.O., Cahier no. 9), Caveirac.

Kellner, H.-J. (1990), *Die Münzfunde von Manching und die keltischen Fundmünzen aus Südbayern* (Die Ausgrabungen in Manching 12), Stuttgart.

Maier, G. / Neth, A. (1987), 'Zu Schröttingsformen aus Gerlingen, Kr. Ludwigsburg', in: *Opuscula. Festschrift Franz Fischer* (Tübinger Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 2), Tübingen, pp. 129-63.

Nick, M. (2000), *Die keltischen Münzen vom Typ „Sequanerpotin“*. Eine Studie zu Typologie, Chronologie und geographischer Zuweisung eines ostgallischen Münztyps (Freiburger Beiträge zur Archäologie und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends vol. 2), Rahden/Westfalen.

Nick, M. (2006), *Gabe, Opfer, Zahlungsmittel – Strukturen keltischen Münzgebrauchs im westlichen Mitteleuropa* (Freiburger Beiträge zur Archäologie und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends 12, vol. 1 and 2), Rahden/Westfalen.

Schreyer, S. / Nagy, P. (2005), 'Das spätkeltische Doppel-Oppidum von Altenburg (D) – Rheinau ZH', in: Kaenel, G. / Martin-Kilcher, S. / Wild, D. (eds.), *Colloquium Turicense. Siedlungen, Baustrukturen und Funde im 1. Jh. v. Chr. zwischen oberer Donau und mittlerer Rhone (Kolloquium in Zürich, 17./18. Januar 2003)* (Cahiers d'archéologie romande 101), Lausanne, pp. 137-54.

Sills, J. (2003), *Gaulish and Early British Gold Coinage*, London.