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Same king in two places?

Or two kings with the same name?

DID the same Celtic king rule in East Anglia and the West Midlands? If so, when did he go west and why? Or were there two kings with the same name, ruling at roughly the same time? If so, why did they inscribe their names in the same way? Who copied whom? And who was Arviragus? Was he the same person as Antedrigus? Was he the second son of Cunobelinus? Or was the chronicler Geoffrey of Monmouth fibbing? I can't answer all these questions. But I can tell you a bit about the controversial coin which is causing them to be asked again.

In 1994/95 Terry Howard, a professional musician, went metal detecting and found an exceedingly rare gold coin near South Cerney, Gloucestershire, not far from where he also found an enamelled "horse brass" of regal quality. He reported his finds to the Corinium Museum in Cirencester. Terry's coin, which is coming up for auction in May this year, is a gold stater that was struck in the late Iron Age by Anted, a king of the Dobunni tribe in the West Midlands, some time around AD 20–45.



Anted Monogram gold stater of the Dobunni, c.AD 10–45, ABC 2069, found near South Cerney 1994–95. (Image Chris Rudd.)



Tree of Life symbolism occurs in most old religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Druidism, Christianity and Islam. (Christ on the Tree of Life, painting by Pacino da Bonaguidio, early 14th century, reproduced courtesy of Accademia, Florence.)

On the obverse there is a branched symbol sprouting from a ringed pellet, which I interpret as a druidic "Tree of Life" symbol growing out of the sun. Turn it upside down and it looks like a stylised skull and rib cage—a symbol of mortality. On the reverse we see a stylised and somewhat disjointed horse with three tails, not unlike the Uffington White Horse carved out of a chalk hillside over 2,500 years ago (only around 18 miles from where this coin was found). Under the horse we see the top half of a spoked chariot wheel, which suggests to me that it is a solar horse which, in ancient mythology, pulled the sun across the sky each day.

What makes this gold coin very special, very important and screamingly scarce is the monogram of the king's name above the horse, particularly the barred *Đ*, known in France as the "Tau Gallicum" and which in iron age Britain may have been pronounced as a sibilant *ts* rather than a hard *d*. When Terry discovered this Anted Monogram stater only one other specimen was known and that's the one in the British Museum (BMC [British Museum Catalogue of coins] 3031), which was formerly in the collection of Sir John Evans (1823–1908), the father of ancient British numismatics and a multi-faceted diamond of a man whose brilliance shone in three worlds—commerce, science and public service.

Evans is the key figure in this story because it was Evans who first realised that the monogram on his Anted gold stater of the Dobunni (BMC 3031, ABC [Ancient British Coins] 2069) was very similar to the monogram on his Anted gold stater of the Iceni (BMC 3790), found at Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, in 1883. Evans was also aware that other Dobunnian staters in his collection (BMC 3023, 3024, 3027) were inscribed ANTEDRIGOV or ANTEDRIGV, so he concluded that both kings—the Iceni Anted as well as the Dobunni Anted—were called Antedrigus (wrongly, as it happens, because we now know that the fullest rendering of Icenian inscriptions, ABC 1633–42, is ANTEDEI, with no hint of a -ricov, -ricu or -rigu suffix which is Celtic for "king").

Having decided that Iceni Anted and Dobunni Anted were one and the same person, a king called Antedrigus, Evans then solves the mystery of when and why he leaves the "Eastern District", the land of the Iceni, and travels over a hundred



Evans' Anted gold staters of the Dobunni (BMC 3031, left) and the Iceni (BMC 3790). (from Paul Sellier, Paris, 1890).



DOBUNNIC MONOGRAM ABC 2069.
ICENIAN MONOGRAM ABC 1639.

Similar but not the same. John Sills thinks the Dobunnic engraver copied the Icenian engraver. (Image Chris Rudd.)

miles to the "Western District", the land of the Dobunni. His solution is ingenious. He suggests that Antedrigus led the first Icenian rebellion against Rome, which took place circa AD 47–48 (the second rebellion, led by Boudica, was in AD 60–61) and that, after being defeated by Publius Ostorius Scapula, the new governor of Britain, he went west. In 1864 Evans writes:

"I have shown the probability of the Icenian coinage having ceased at all events in AD 50, after their defeat by Ostorius. It does not appear from history who was their chieftain at that time, but I think it very improbable that it was Prasutagus, who was far more probably a mere creature of the Romans, appointed by them as a regulus of the tribe, on their submission to the Imperial power. I would therefore suggest that it was Antedrigus who was their ruler at the time of their attempt to liberate Britain from the Roman yoke, and that after their defeat by Ostorius, he retreated into the west, either with some remnant of his people, or else having been elected to the sovereignty over some other British tribe or league of tribes. If the latter were the case, his career would be, to some extent, similar to that of Caractacus, who, though a son of Cunobeline, the king of the Trinobantes, appears eventually to have become a chief of the Silures. Under any circumstances, the occurrence of the name ANTED on coins belonging to the one class to the East and the other to the West of Britain, is a fact worthy of attentive consideration". (The Coins of the Ancient Britons, 1864, pp. 256–7).

In 1864 Evans also wondered if the name Antedrigus could be traced in that of Arviragus who is mentioned once by the Roman poet Juvenal (circa AD 55–140) and many times by the Welsh chronicler Geoffrey of Monmouth (c. 1100–54). In a satirical poem Juvenal tells us that the Roman emperor

Domitian, when presented with a giant turbot, is greeted with the cryptic omen: "Some king you will capture or Arviragus will be hurled from his British chariot pole" (Satires 4.126). Archaeologist Dr Miles Russell says: "Quite what this means is anyone's guess, though presumably it was an oblique reference to the potential deposition or overthrow of a British leader. For it to have any meaning, Juvenal's audience would have to know who precisely "Arviragus" was. Frustratingly no further reference is made to this chariot-racing monarch, so we remain none the wiser". (Arthur and the Kings of Britain: the historical truth behind the myths, Amberley, 2017, p. 199).

In his literally "fabulous" *Historia Regum Britanniae* (part fact, part fiction, finished c. 1136), Geoffrey of Monmouth is perhaps, but only perhaps, a mite more enlightening about the identity of Arviragus. He tells us that Arviragus was the second son of Cymbeline (Cunobelinus), king of Britain, becomes an ally of Claudius, fights in the west and southwest of England, and founds Gloucester (in the heartland of the Dobunni) where he is said to be buried. Given his alleged association with Gloucester and the superficial resemblance of his name to that of Antedrigus, I can understand why Sir John Evans speculated on a possible connection with Arviragus.

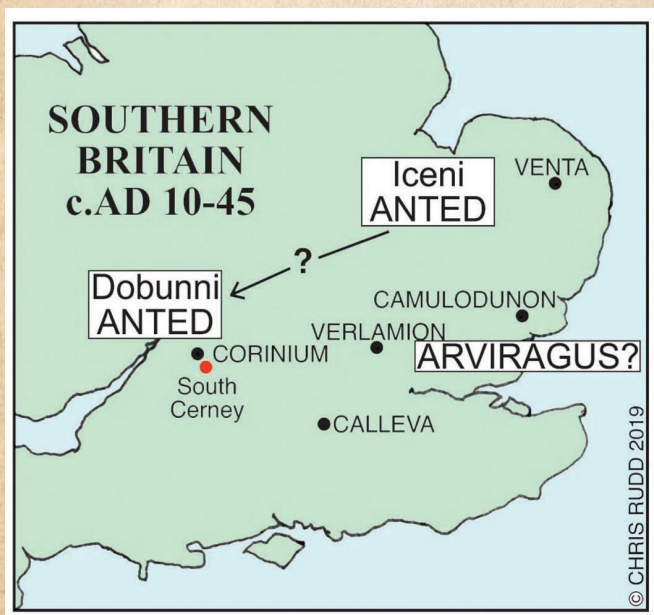
In his 1890 Supplement to *The Coins of the Ancient Britons* Evans reaffirms more confidently "that the coins of both the Eastern and Western Districts bearing the legend ANTEDRIGOV in a more or less extended form, were struck under one and the same prince, Antedrigus". By now Evans had the support of the distinguished Welsh philologist, Sir John Rhys (1840–1915), who became the first professor of Celtic at Oxford University in 1881. Rhys too believed "that when the Roman forces arrived the



Evans saw RIGOV as part of a personal name "Antedrigus". I see it as a regal title like RIGON "king" on gold staters of Tasciovanos, ABC 2577, 2580. (Image Derek Allen, for Bagendon, 1961, adapted by CR.)

Iceni were induced to enter into an alliance with the Roman power, and Antedrigus had to flee; that he was then hospitably received by the Dobunni, among whom he organised resistance to the Romans for some years afterwards". (Celtic Britain, 1882, p. 37).

Backed by the influential Sir John Rhys, Sir John Evans' theory that Icenian Anted and Dobunni Anted were one and the same remained unchallenged for the next 70 years. In his first edition of *The Coinage of Ancient Britain* (Spink 1953) Commander Richard Mack (1901–74) says: "It is quite possible that the Antedrig of the Dobunni is the same as the Antedrig of the Iceni, but there is at present no means of proving it". However, by the time the second edition of Mack's book was published in 1964, this possibility had been dropped, probably at the suggestion of the much respected Celtic numismatist, Derek Allen (1910–75), who clearly wasn't convinced by Evans' idea because he didn't mention it in his seminal study of Dobunnic coinage in Elsie Clifford's *Bagendon, a Belgic oppidum* (Heffer, 1961), nor in his landmark review, *The Coins of the Iceni* (Britannia I, 1970), in which he explicitly states that "Antedios [of the Iceni] was probably a latish contemporary of Cunobelinus, and perhaps a little later than a namesake amongst the Dobunni of Gloucestershire". However, the great American numismatist, Robert Van Arsdell, is more open minded than Allen and says that "Evans' assertion the coinages of [Dobunnic] ANTEDRIG and the Icenian ANTED represented the unified output of a single ruler should be reconsidered". (Celtic Coinage of Britain, Spink 1989, pp. 267–8).



Did Icenian Anted become king of the Dobunni? Same person as Arviragus? (Image Chris Rudd.)

Claudius made Ostorius Scapula, governor of Britain in AD 47. Statue of Ostorius Scapula, Bath, by sculptor G. A. Lawson, 1897 (photo Robin Stevens). Claudius DE BRITANN gold aureus, sold by CNG, 9.1.2019, for \$26,000. (Image courtesy of CNG, Triton XXII, lot 1011.)



John Philpotts' Anted Monogram gold stater, one of only three known. Different dies from Terry Howard's coin, found Northleach, Gloucestershire. (Image courtesy of Silbury Coins.)

But it hasn't been reconsidered. For the last 30 years the general assumption has been that Icení Anted and Dobunni Anted are two different kings and that the Dobunnic -rig suffix and its variants are a regal title, not part of Anted's personal name. In 2003 Dr John Sills resequenced the gold staters of the Dobunni, but omitted the Anted Monogram stater from the 12 main types he illustrated, saying that it "*has several odd features and is either a derivative issue or a 19th century forgery*". (Chris Rudd List 72, November 2003, p. 6). I'm pleased to say that John no longer suspects that Evans' celebrated Anted Monogram stater (BMC 3031) might be a forgery, because two other indisputably authentic examples have since come to light: one recorded with the Celtic Coin Index in 2013 by John Philpotts of Silbury Coins (CCI [Celtic Coin Index] 13.0003) and, late last year, the one found by Terry Howard in 1994/95 (CCI 18.1260). Commenting on Terry's gold stater John Sills says it's "*still coin of the year [2018], by some distance, despite there being two others, numismatically significant and potentially politically significant as well, if the two Anteds are the same*". (personal comment 14.11.2018).

Was Icení Anted the same person as Dobunni Anted? I'm still thinking about it. The one thing I'm sure about is that Sir John Evans' proposal, first published 155 years ago, "should be reconsidered" as Van Arsdell recommended in 1989. Terry

Howard's remarkable Anted Monogram gold stater will be sold by auction in Aylsham by Chris Rudd on Sunday, May 19, 2019. For their help with this report I thank CNG, Elizabeth Cottam, Terry Howard, John Philpotts and Dr John Sills.



Terry Howard, 76, professional drummer, amateur metal detectorist and finder of the finest known Anted Monogram gold stater. (Image courtesy T. Howard.)