

## SHORT ARTICLES AND NOTES

### A TREMISSIS OF JUSTIN II FOUND AT SOUTHWOLD, SUFFOLK

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A GOLD *tremissis* of Justin II (565–78), which in March 1984 passed through the hands of a Cambridge coin dealer, is said to have been found by a metal-detector user on what was claimed to be a 'Saxon site near Southwold'. The coin appears to be a *tremissis* of Constantinople similar to Dumbarton Oaks catalogue nos. 13–14<sup>1</sup> and two specimens in the Bibliothèque Nationale.<sup>2</sup> The legends on the coin read:

Obv. ///IVSTI NVSPPAVI

Rev. VI/////AVGVSTORVI and in ex. COHOB

It weighs 1.49 g and has a die axis of 180°.

<sup>1</sup> A. R. Bellinger, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection* 1 (Washington, 1966), p. 202, nos. 13–14.

<sup>2</sup> C. Morriison, *Catalogue des monnaies byzantines de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 1 (Paris, 1970), p. 128, nos. 11–12.



Of the twenty Byzantine coins or close derivatives of the sixth and seventh centuries found in England and listed by Rigold,<sup>3</sup> one is a *tremissis* of Justin II found at Canterbury and one is a *solidus* of Justin I or II found at Richborough. The majority of coins of this period in this country are barbarous imitations of imperial coins, many of them Merovingian.

<sup>3</sup> S. E. Rigold, 'The Sutton-Hoo coins in the light of the contemporary background of coinage in England', in *The Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial* 1, edited by R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford (London, 1975), pp. 653–77, at 665.

### A PENNY OF COENWULF AND A SMALL HOARD OF CNUT FROM BOTTISHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

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BOTTISHAM is a village on the edge of the Fens seven miles north-east of Cambridge. It lies just to the north of the Cambridge to Newmarket road (A45). The presence of earthworks, crop marks and finds of artifacts suggests that there were significant prehistoric and medieval settlements in the parish.<sup>1</sup> The village is recorded in Domesday and we know that there were a number of later medieval manors. No archaeological evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlement has been found, but a pagan Saxon barrow was excavated in the nineteenth century and fragments of two ninth-century bronze strap-ends were recently found in the same vicinity as the coins of Cnut described below.<sup>2</sup>

A penny of Coenwulf of Mercia (796–821) was found near the village by Mr P. L. Evens on 5 April 1983 (Plate, No. 1). It was discovered with

the use of a metal detector in pasture at a depth of about six inches.<sup>3</sup> The finder promptly took the coin to the Fitzwilliam Museum for identification and it has since been acquired for the collection.<sup>4</sup> It is a penny of the *Tribrach* type (*BMC* 93; North 342) by the Canterbury moneyer Seberht (OE Sæbeorht) and was struck between c.798 and c.805. The legends read:—

+C·OE·NVVLF R·EX

SE BE RHT (HT ligatured)

Blunt, Lyon and Stewart have recorded six other specimens of this moneyer and type.<sup>5</sup> This coin is from the same reverse die as *SCBI* (20) Mack 578 and Ryan (Glendining, 22 January 1952) lot 632, but the obverse appears to be previously unknown. It weighs 1.27 g (19.6 gr) and has a die-

<sup>1</sup> Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *County of Cambridge* 2 (London, 1972), 2–18.

<sup>2</sup> Recorded in the Cambridgeshire County Council's Archaeological Record.

<sup>3</sup> The precise findspots of this and the Cnut coins have been withheld from publication for reasons of security, but they are recorded in the Cambridgeshire County

Council's Archaeological Record.

<sup>4</sup> It will appear in the forthcoming catalogue *Medieval European Coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum* 1, no. 1139.

<sup>5</sup> C. E. Blunt, C. S. S. Lyon, and B. H. I. H. Stewart, 'The coinage of Southern England, 796–840', *BNJ* 32 (1963), 1–74, at 51, no. 12.



axis of  $290^\circ$ . The metal has been heavily corroded in the soil resulting in perforation of some areas and a significant loss of weight, but the coin does not show signs of long circulation. This type could theoretically have remained in circulation in Wessex until the mid 850s, in Mercia until the early 860s and even later in East Anglia, but the significant rate of natural wastage from the currency means that it is unlikely to have been lost much after 825.

The other find of Anglo-Saxon coins from the parish was made six months earlier in October 1982 by Mr A. E. J. Rank. Three coins of Cnut (1016-35) were found with a metal detector in a field some way from the village. They lay within a radius of five yards of each other within the top two inches of the plough soil. The coins were all of the *Short Cross* type (North 790), dated by Dolley *c.* 1030-1035/6, and they evidently constitute a small purse-hoard or possibly part of a larger hoard, although no more has been found. Soon after their finding Mr Rank informed the local coroner and the County Archaeologist, and took the coins to the Fitzwilliam Museum for identification. They are temporarily deposited there pending determination of their final disposition.

They may be described as follows:

i. London, moneyer Brungar. (Plate, No. 2)

+C/////T RECX  
+BRVNGAR ON LV:

Wt. 1.13 g (17.4 gr). Die-axis  $90^\circ$ .  
Slightly buckled, obverse deformed and traces of black deposit on reverse.  
Same legends as Hildebrand<sup>6</sup> 2086.

ii. London, moneyer Swan. (Plate, No. 3)

+CNV / T RCCX  
+SPAN ON LVND

Wt. 1.06 g (16.4 gr). Die-axis  $180^\circ$ .  
Traces of black deposit on obverse and reverse.  
Same legends as Hildebrand 2707. Same dies as *SCBI* (14) Copenhagen iiiB, 2919 and same obverse as *SCBI* (14) Copenhagen iiiB, 2921.

iii. Stamford, moneyer Fargrim. (Plate, No. 4)

+CNV / · TRE+  
+FARGRIM ONI STAN

<sup>6</sup> B. E. Hildebrand, *Anglosachsiska Mynt*, 2nd edition (Stockholm, 1881).

<sup>7</sup> The weight distributions are set out in H. B. A. Petersen, *Anglo-Saxon Currency* (Lund, 1969), p. 217.

Wt. 0.95 g (14.7 gr). Die-axis  $160^\circ$ .

Traces of black deposit on reverse. Same legends as Hildebrand 3256. Same dies as *SCBI* (27) Lincolnshire Collections 1297.

Each of the coins has traces of a black deposit or patination suggesting that they have been through a fire and the obverse of No. i may have been deformed by heat. Even if the coins had been lying on the surface, it is unlikely that crop burning could have generated sufficient heat to blacken both sides as on No. ii. It is more probable that they had been concealed in a house that was burnt down, or found their way into a hearth.

In the *Short Cross* type the weight standard was progressively reduced from *c.* 1.2 g to *c.* 1.0 g or even less at some mints, and the weight of a coin can thus give some indication of its relative date.<sup>7</sup> No. i falls in the upper half and No. ii virtually at the mean of the weight distribution of London coins. The Danelaw mints, such as Stamford, struck to slightly lower weight standards, but even so No. iii is well down in the lower half of that region's weight distribution, suggesting that it was not struck early in the issue. The find can scarcely be earlier than *c.* 1032. Equally is it unlikely to have been deposited later than the autumn of 1036, for the recoinage introducing the *Jewel Cross* issue probably commenced in spring 1036. A date of deposit of *c.* 1035 is suggested.

The coins are too few to comment on the proportions in which the mints are represented or on the absence of coins of Cambridge. One could well expect coins of London and Stamford to be found circulating in this region.

The find might be summarized in *Inventory* form:-<sup>8</sup>

BOTTISHAM, Cambridgeshire, Oct. 1982  
3  $\mathcal{R}$  Anglo-Saxon. Deposit *c.* 1035  
KINGS OF ENGLAND: Cnut, *BMC (A)* type xvi-London: Brungar, 1; Swan, 1; Stamford: Fargrim, 1.  
*BNJ* 53 (1983), 176-77.  
*Disposition*: temporarily deposited in Fitzwilliam Museum.

<sup>8</sup> I am grateful to the finders, Mr Evens and Mr Rank, for the very prompt and proper action they took in reporting these coins and for their subsequent assistance towards the preparation of this note.