SAXON COINS FROM SOUTHAMPTON AND BANGOR

By C. E. BLUNT

COINS FROM EXCAVATIONS AT SOUTHAMPTON, 1946–53

Excavations carried out over a series of seasons in bombed areas in Southampton by Mr. M. R. Maitland Muller have further strengthened the identification of the traditional site of the Saxon Hamwih on the west bank of the Itchen just above the point where it flows into Southampton Water. Two interim reports have been published by Mr. Muller in The Hampshire Field Club Proceedings and a full report is in course of preparation. I am very grateful to Mr. Muller for allowing me to publish the coins here.

This particular part of Southampton produced a number of important early Saxon coins, that were for the most part found in bone-pits, when the area was developed for building in the last century. Many, it would seem, were dispersed, but there are records of no less than two specimens of the extremely rare penny of Æanberht, one of Cuthred, one of Offa, three of Cœnwulf, one of Egbert of Wessex, and a number of less important coins going down to Edward the Elder.

Even more important were the finds of sceattas which are discussed below.

In the recent excavations carried out by Mr. Muller five important pennies dating from Cœnwulf to Alfred were found and twenty-nine sceattas. Twenty-three of these were a hoard with two outliers in the same pit found 18 inches away. The remainder were isolated finds.

The sceatta hoard has been briefly noticed by Mr. John Allan in Num. Chron. vi (1946), p. 73. The coins are numbers 1–23 in the list appended; the two outliers are numbers 24–25. The hoard proper may have been contained in some sort of a purse; it was found closely knit together and there were fragments of what may have been a metal clasp. As a result of corrosion the condition of the coins is very poor—several in fact have disintegrated—but it is possible to say with certainty that three are of B.M.C. type 39 (one is illustrated, Pl. II, 1), and that eleven are of B.M.C. type 49 (the type is illustrated, Pl. II, 2, from two of the isolated finds, nos. 27 and 28, which were well preserved). The type of the other nine coins in the hoard is not absolutely certain but they appear to be B.M.C. 49. The two outliers are of this type as are three of the four isolated finds. The fifth is of the degraded standard type but in such poor condition that more detailed identification is not possible.

1 Vol. xvii, pp. 1–8 and 125–9.
It will be seen therefore that the twenty-nine sceattas found in these excavations can be summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Hampshire, Southampton</th>
<th>London</th>
<th>Bitterne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>B.M.C.</em> type 39</td>
<td>1 specimen, possibly part of a small hoard.</td>
<td>6 (?) specimens</td>
<td>2 specimens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; 49 (certain)</td>
<td>1 specimen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; (probable)</td>
<td>1 specimen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degraded standard type</td>
<td>1 specimen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two types *B.M.C.* 39 and 49 are closely connected. The reverses are similar and the obverse of type 39 (*Pl. II, 1*), with its four rosettes divided so as to leave a celtic cross with rosette centre as the main element in the design, appears to be a derivative of type 49 (*Pl. II, 2*). The presence of these two types in such preponderating numbers in the hoard and in the isolated finds suggests that they may have been a product of this area, and this suggestion is confirmed both by the other recorded find-spots of these types and their absence generally in other parts of the country.

The following find-spots are known to me in addition to the coins recorded above:

**Type 39**

- Hampshire, Southampton: 1 specimen, possibly part of a small hoard.
- London: 6 (?) specimens.
- Bitterne: 1 specimen.
- " " London: 1 specimen.

**Type 49**

- Dorset, Dorchester: 2 specimens.
- Hampshire, Southampton: 3 specimens (part of the small hoard (?) referred to above under type 39).
- " " Bitterne: 1 specimen.
- " " London: 1 specimen.

The evidence of find-spots thus indicates a Wessex origin for these two types. Mr. P. V. Hill has, however, pointed out that the Celtic cross type which constitutes one side of *B.M.C.* type 39 is also found combined with obverses which he designates "London-inscribed" and "London-connected" types. He gives a number of find-spots for the two latter types including London and district, Dorchester (Oxon), Brighton, and Whitby, and, for *B.M.C.* type 48, which combines the Celtic cross with a wolf-whorl type, Southampton only. While, therefore, the evidence for assigning the types associated with *B.M.C.* 39 and 49 must at present depend more on stylistic considerations than on provenances because of the varied nature and small number of the latter, we are, I suggest, on fairly firm ground in assigning these two main types to the Hampshire area.

In the penny series five coins were found in the course of the excavations at Southampton and Bangor.

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lations. Only the Alfred, which I have already published,\(^1\) constitutes a new type, but all are coins of considerable rarity and the Berhtwulf provides a variation of a known type.

The coin of Cœnwulf is of a type associated with the mint of Canterbury and is one of several specimens of the moneyer Ethelmod that survive today.

Of the Berhtwulf coin by the moneyer Burnwald (Pl. II, 3) there were specimens in the Murdoch sale (1903) lot 31 (ill.) and in the St. Austell find (later Carlyon-Britton sale (1918) 1672, ill.). A third specimen, varying in detail in the reverse design, is illustrated by Lindsay in his *Coinage of the Heptarchy*, Pl. 2, 45. This was from a find in Hampshire in 1837.

The Berhtwulf coin by the moneyer Sigeheah, which is in too frail a condition to cast safely (Pl. II, 4), was previously known from two specimens, *B.M.C.* 136, Pl. x. 7, and *B.M.C.* 137, which is illustrated by Ruding on Pl. 29, 21. The form of the letter A that constitutes the reverse type differs, however, from both these specimens. It has the curled ends of *B.M.C.* 136 but the crossbar is continued to form a cross, as on *B.M.C.* 137, instead of an omega.

The Egbert coin (Pl. II, 5), with the *abbreviated* form of the Saxon inscription on the reverse is of one of the least rare of his types, but only one other specimen appears to be known by this moneyer, Tilred. This is a specimen now in the British Museum (*B.M. Acqns.* 409) from the London hoard.

The fifth penny was the new type of Alfred mentioned above.

**Sceattas. Hoard of 23 coins from pit 15.**


*Obv.* Small facing head contained in circle of annulets enclosing pellets, usually a cross at the bottom of the coin.

*Rev.* Fantastic bird to r., with various ornaments in the field.

1. Eight © around head; © above and to r. of bird; · · below.
2. Number of © doubtful; © to r. and (?) above bird.
3. Number of © doubtful; © above, + to r. of bird.
4. Seven © around head; © above, + to r. of bird.
5. Number of © doubtful; © above, pellets to r. of bird.
6. Ten © around head, no cross below; rosette of pellets to r. of bird.
7. Seven © around head; © to r. of bird.
8–11. Details uncertain.
12–20. Type uncertain, but probably *B.M.C.* 49.

*B.M.C.* type 39, Pl. iv. 2.

*Obv.* Fantastic bird to r.

*Rev.* Celtic cross, rosettes of pellets in each quarter and in centre.

21–23. Type as above. (Pl. II, 1.)

**Isolated finds**

*B.M.C.* type 49 (as above).

24. Seven © around head; © above and to r. of bird; (from pit 15).

25. Six ♣ around head; ♣ above and to r. of bird; (from pit 15).
26. Nine ♣ around head; ♣ above and to r. of bird; (from pit 20).
27. Eight ♣ around head; ♣ above bird, ♣ surrounded by circle of pellets to r.; (from pit 64).
28. Ten ♣ around head, no cross below; rosette of pellets to r. of bird; (from pit 70). (PI. II, 2.) Degraded standard type.
29. Obv. type uncertain; Rev. degraded standard. Very poor and much corroded; (from pit 20).

**Mercia**

_Coenwulf_ (796–822)

_Obv._ E·Ē·Ē·N·V·VL·F·E·X· Inverted Π with four pellets around.

_Berhtwulf_ (839–52)

_Obv._ BERHTVL.: F REX Diad. bust r.
_Rrev._ BYRNYYALD (Burnwald) Cross crosslet. (PI. II, 3.) Cf. P. W. Carlyon-Britton Sale (1918) 1612 (ill.). The dies differ; (from Grove St. 1946).

_Obv._ BERHTVL -- EX Diad. bust r.
_Rrev._ +I·E·A·E·H·A·E·H·A (Sigeheah) Large A, the feet curled. From the chevron crossbar depends a cross. (PI. II, 4.) Cf. _B.M.C._ 136 (Pl. x. 7) and 137 (ill. Ruding, Pl. 29, 21.) Frail and much corroded; (from Pit 36).

**Wessex**

_Ecgbeorht_ (802–838/9)

_Obv._ +E·C·G·B·E·O·R·H·T· REX Monogram of Saxon.
_Rrev._ +T·I·L·R·E·D MoNEA (Tilred) Plain cross. (PI. II, 5.) _B.M.C._ type xviii. Cf. _B.M.Acqns._ 409.

_Alfred_

A penny of Alfred of a hitherto unrecorded type is described and illustrated in _Brit. Num. Journ._, vol. xxvi, p. 213.

**THE BANGOR HOARD (TENTH CENTURY)**

The small hoard, of which the following is an account, was found at Bangor, North Wales, in 1894, and a short report, inadequate so far as the coins are concerned, was published in the _Illustrated Archaeologist_, September 1894 (pp. 103–6). A more detailed report illustrating one side of each coin was included by Lady Fox in the centenary volume of the Cambrian Archaeological Association (pp. 118, 122, and plate), and I am very grateful to Lady Fox for bringing the hoard to my notice and allowing me to make use of her paper in these notes. I must also thank Professor R. T. Jenkins of the Museum of Welsh Antiquities at Bangor, where the coins now are, for arranging for casts to be made, and that Institution for giving me permission to publish them here.
The composition of the hoard was as follows:

**English**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coinage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edward the Elder <strong>B.M.C. ii</strong> = Brooke 13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B.M.C. iii</strong> = Brooke 12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sihtric</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon. Viking issue</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Peter's coinage</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Arabic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coinage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isma'il ibn Ahmad</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmad ibn Isma'il</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(imitation)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain, c. A.H. 300 (= A.D. 912/13)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total                       | 13     |

With the coins were found a stamped fragment of a bracelet (?) weighing 112·5 gr. (Pl. II, 14) and a cut section of an ingot weighing 274·2 gr.

The general composition of the hoard is typical of a number of finds in the north-west of England, Scotland, and Ireland, where Scandinavian influence was felt.

The Edward the Elder coins call for little comment. Adalbert (No. 1) is recorded by Brooke as a moneyer of this type; Beorard (Pl. II, 2) is not recorded unless it is a variant of Beahred. The coin with the bust (Pl. II, 3) is a well-known but rare variety with an as yet undeciphered reverse inscription. It appears likely to be an imitative piece probably struck in this country by the Scandinavian invaders.

The next two coins are of considerable interest. Mr. Derek Allen has listed in vol. xxii of this Journal the few known coins with the name of Sihtric.¹ No. 4 in the hoard (Pl. II, 4) is generally similar to his No. 4, which is in Stockholm.² Mr. Allen identifies three moneyers on coins of Sihtric bearing the title Rex—Are, Eric, and Sibrant. On the other four specimens that he lists the inscription is blundered. On the Bangor coin the middle of the moneyer's name is missing, but sufficient is left to make it probable that it was Athelferth (retrograde). This name is found on coins of Anlaf of the raven type and if it is right to read the same name on the Sihtric coin it would confirm Mr. Allen's (and Dr. Brooke's) arrangement which put this type of Anlaf early in the series, following the coins of Sihtric.

The next coin (Pl. II, 5) provides a new type for the Viking coinage. The sword and hammer are motifs frequently used, but on all other specimens the sword lies between two lines of horizontal inscription. On this coin it is placed vertically within an inner circle.

¹ Pp. 175-7. It is perhaps worth noting here that there is a further specimen, generally similar in type to Mr. Allen's 7 and 7a, in the Museum of National Antiquities at Edinburgh. The legend appears to differ and there are no lines beside the object on the reverse.

² III. Hildebrand, p. 4.
with a legend round the edge. On a number of coins of the St. Peter’s issue the legends are very blundered, but it is always possible to trace elements of either the St. Peter inscription or the mint name. On the Bangor coin both inscriptions seem to be meaningless. I would suggest that this piece preceded the introduction of the St. Peter’s issue.

The three remaining English coins (Nos. 6–8) are normal specimens (No. 6 ill. PI. II, 6). Two are clearly of the heavier (and probably earlier) St. Peter’s issue; the third is too fragmentary to say either way.

The Arabic coins, which Dr. Walker has been kind enough to identify, call for no special comment. The latest of them is c. A.H. 300 (= A.D. 912–13) and as such provides a terminus ante quem for the deposit. The absence of any coin of Athelstan, who succeeded Edward in 925, suggests that the deposit was made not later than c. 925–930. Dr. Brooke suggests that the St. Peter’s issue probably began about the middle of the tenth century. Mr. Allen gives reasons for bringing the date back to c. 925. The evidence of this hoard, though too small to be conclusive, goes to support Mr. Allen’s dating. The evidence of the Harkirke hoard, to be published in the next number of the Journal, suggests an even earlier dating (? c. 915).

**Bangor Hoard**

*The coins marked with * are illustrated on Pl. II*

**Edward the Elder**

*B.M.C. ii = Brooke 13. Obv. small cross; rev. moneyer’s name in two lines, crosses between; trefoil of pellets above and below.

1. EADVVEARD REX ←-./ADAL+/BERT/- • Adalbert 23.1.
2. EADVVEARD REX ↓-./BEORA+/DMO/- • Beorard 21.0.

*B.M.C. iii = Brooke 12. Obv. Diademed bust to left; rev. as the last.

3. - ] EADWVEADR [← \*./OEIOI/+/-IIOO/ • (?) 16.7 chipped.

**Sihtric**

*Obv. King’s name and title in two lines, a plain sword between; rev. T or hammer.

4. rTR/sword/ICR • • +APEI • • • P†Φ retrograde Athelferth (?). 13.2 chipped.

**Anonymous Viking Issue**

*Obv. Sword with a line down the centre of the blade, in an inner circle: legend around; rev. T or hammer in an inner circle, as on the last coin.

5. +EIE • • • IVE ↑+EVIVEI • • 12.7 chipped.

**St. Peter’s Issue, York**

*B.M.C. 1. Obv. Legend in two lines, sword between; rev. cross with pellet in each angle.

6. c+c/SClPE/sword+/TRAEI/ • • • +EBCRÆCGEI 17.7.

*B.M.C. 5. Obv. Legend in two lines; rev. small cross.

7. 2/SFlPE/＜/D/TRIIIE/ • ←+BORACCEI 18.9.
8. Another in fragments.

ARABIC COINS


10. Dirham minted at Samarkand, A.H. 290 = A.D. 902/3, and bearing the name of the ‘Abbasid Caliph al-Muktafi billah and that of the Samanid ruler Isma‘il ibn Ahmad.

11. Dirham minted at al-Shash, A.H. 297 = A.D. 909/10, and bearing the name of the ‘Abbasid Caliph al-Muktadir billah and that of the Samanid ruler Ahmad ibn Isma‘il.

12. Dirham minted at Andaraba (Merv) probably A.H. 299 = A.D. 911/12, and bearing the name of the ‘Abbasid Caliph al-Muktadir billah and that of the Samanid ruler Ahmad ibn Isma‘il.

13. Imitation of a Samanid dirham attributed to the Bulgars of the Volga. The original was almost certainly a Samarkand dirham with the name of the ‘Abbasid Caliph al-Muktafi billah (A.H. 209–14 = A.D. 902–7) and that of the Samanid ruler Ahmad ibn Isma‘il, but date and mint are hopelessly blundered.

Postscript. It has been stated that this hoard comes from Bangor-on-Dee, but in fact there is no doubt that it comes from Bangor (Caern.).
COINS FROM SOUTHAMPTON

BANGOR HOARD

"JEWEL-CROSS" COINS

MEDESHAMSTEDE
(See p. 263)

WILLIAM THE LION
(See p. 277)