THE MINTS “ÆT GOTHABYRIG” AND “ÆT SITH(M)ESTEBYRIG”

By R. H. M. Dolley and F. Elmore Jones

with

A PHILOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON CISSBURY

By M. Daunt

A. THE MINT “ÆT GOTHABYRIG”

There has long been known to numismatists a small group of late Saxon pence with the remarkably consistent mint-signatures GOTHABYRI, GEOTHA, GIOTHA, IOTHA, &c. At various times these have been given to Godalming in Surrey,1 Jedburgh in Roxburghshire,2 Dewsbury in Yorkshire,3 Woodborough in Nottinghamshire,4 Idbury in Oxfordshire,5 and “Ythanceaster”, a Roman and early Saxon site near Bradwell-on-sea—or more correctly Bradwell-juxtamare—in Essex.6 This last attribution has never found favour with the historians and philologists, but its citation in Brooke’s English Coins, albeit with a query, has led to it acquiring a wider acceptance than any of its predecessors. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that on numismatic grounds alone the mint must be sought in quite another part of the country, and indeed in an area where a new mint was scarcely to be suspected. It is regretted that it has not been possible to pin-point the site, but it is believed that a new generation of Anglo-Saxon numismatists will prefer an honest confession of this fact to a facile solution that our successors will have only to waste time in disproving.

The coins of the mint in question span a period of approximately forty years. Very few of them have been illustrated before, but it is hoped that the accompanying plate depicts all the known dies and combinations thereof. It is based on the Systematic Collection at Stockholm, and yet again the writers must express their appreciation of the kindness of the Swedish authorities who have supplied the excellent direct photographs. In this connexion it seems worth noting that the late Major P. W. P. Carlyon-Britton, the originator of the “Ythanceaster” identification, was labouring under the great disadvantage of having to rely for illustrations upon a coin of Æthelræd II’s “Helmet” type in the National Collection and an “Arm-and-Sceptre” coin in his own cabinet. In neither type has it proved possible to distinguish the provincial styles that in fact gave the present writers their first real clue to the solution of the mystery.

2 e.g. Hildebrand, p. 497.
3 Cf. N.C., 1895, p. 47.
4 Ibid., p. 49.
5 Ibid., p. 48.
The Mints "et Gothabyrig" and "et Sith(m)estebyrig"

ÆTHELRÆD II

"Long-Cross" issue (Hild. D = Brooke 5 = B.M.C. iva)

Sept. 997-Sept. 1003?

(1) Obv. +/EBELR/EDREXANGL Rev. +FVL|FM/ER|M'OG|EOBA
Hild. 1133

The form of the copulative in the reverse legend suggests that the dies were cut late rather than early in the currency of the "Long Cross" type—it is noticeable that in the one-moneyer Guildford mint the "Crux" moneyer Leofwold uses the form Ω. A date comparatively late in the "Long Cross" issue seems also indicated by the fact that only the one pair of dies is known for this type whereas in the normally less prolific "Helmet" issue three pairs of dies are recorded in four combinations. At this point it is perhaps pertinent to remark that Wulfmaer is otherwise known in the last decade of the tenth century at London c. 985-91, at Barnstaple c. 991-7 and at Totnes c. 997-1003. A Wulmær is also known at Lincoln c. 997-1009. A strong Devonshire flavour is already apparent, and it will be the suggestion of this paper that the moneyer Wulfmaer at "Gothaburh" is one and the same individual as the Wulfmaer who strikes at Barnstaple and Totnes.

"Helmet" issue (Hild. E = Brooke 4 = B.M.C. viiiia)

Sept. 1003-Sept. 1009

(2) Obv. +/EBELR/EDREXANGL Rev. +FVL|FM/ER|M'OG|EOBA
Hild. 1134

(3) Obv. +/EBELR/EDREXANGL Rev. +FVL|FM/ER|M'OG|EOBA
Hild. 1135

(4) Obv. +/EBELR/EDREXANGL Rev. From same die as no. 3
Hild. —

(5) Obv. From same die as no. 4 Rev. +FVL|FM/ER|M'OG|EOBA
Hild. 1136

Wulfmaer is known at no other mint in this type, but again a Wulmær is known at Lincoln. At this point we would like to express our indebtedness to Mr. A. H. F. Baldwin for bringing to our notice a very fine "Gothaburh" coin in his collection of this type and moneyer which was found in Ireland with coins of the Exeter mint.

"Last Small Cross" issue (Hild. A = Brooke 1 = B.M.C. i)

Sept. 1009-16?

(6) Obv. +/EBELR/EDREXANGL Rev. +GODAONGOBABYR! Hild. 1131

(7) Obv. From same die as no. 6 Rev. +PVLM/ERO|NGOBA
Hild. 1137

(8) Obv. +/EBELR/EDREXANGL: Rev. +PVLFM/ERONGVBA
Hild. 1132

Again the form Wulfmaer is found in no other mint in this type, but the spellings Wulfmr and Wulmer do occur at Norwich, and the
spelling Wulmær at Shrewsbury. Goda, however, is known at Lydford and Totnes—and once more the suggestion of this paper will be that the Goda of “Gothaburh” is the Goda of the other Devonshire mints. It will doubtless be objected that there are other moneyers of the same name at Chester, London, and Shaftesbury in the same type, but fortunately there is now available a stylistic argument that suggests very strongly that the moneyer or moneyers with this name at London and Chester at least are not to be associated with “Gothaburh” while the latter mint is linked even more firmly with Devonshire. A glance at the plate will show that both the obverse dies recorded at “Gothaburh” belong to a grouping distinguished in a recent paper as “south-western”.¹ The following table lists those mints for which coins of this style are recorded by Hildebrand—and also in the case of the same mints the total number of coins of other styles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“South-western” style</th>
<th>Other styles</th>
<th>“South-western” style</th>
<th>Other styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnstaple</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Huntingdon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedford</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadbury</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lydford</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chichester</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Salisbury</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricklade</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Shaftesbury</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorchester</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Taunton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td>Totnes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hereford</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is at once apparent that the dies of the style in question must have emanated from a centre in the south-west—no other style is found in Devonshire while the four Devon mints between them account for something like 80 per cent. of the recorded dies. Outside Wessex only the odd die is found, and especially we would draw attention to the fact that no Hildebrand coin of this style is found at London, or in East Anglia. The conclusion is almost inescapable that “Gothaburh” is a Wessex mint, and coins of the next type may seem to clinch the argument beyond all reasonable doubt.

In this type the spelling Wulfmaer occurs otherwise only at Thetford. A spelling Wulmser occurs at Worcester and at Thetford. It is when we come to Carla, however, that prosopography again points remorselessly to a West Country attribution. The name is an extremely unusual one, and in fact occurs, "Gothaburh" excepted, only at Exeter. Major Carlyon-Britton was in error when he claimed that Carla was a London moneyer—presumably he was misled by Hild. 2123 which is certainly a Scandinavian coin by the Lund moneyer Carel.

Again, too, prosopographical arguments are more than reinforced by considerations of style. A full study of the die-cutting centres in operation at this period has still to be attempted, but a provisional paper has established that there is one style that is associated par excellence with the Exeter mint. 2 To date no coin of this style has been found east of the Somerset and Hampshire Avons, and the following list of mints where the style has been recorded suggests that the centre of gravity is much farther to the west. In this case it has been possible to base the figures on rather more coins than those in the Systematic Collection at Stockholm, and there can be little doubt but that they reflect faithfully the position represented by both English and Scandinavian hoards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>&quot;South-western&quot;</th>
<th>Other styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnstaple</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bath</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crewkerne</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilchester</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydford</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totnes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown above, the style is not found east of Ilchester, and yet it is to this exceptionally characteristic style that all four of the obverse dies recorded at "Gothaburh" belong.

While we would not pretend that style is decisive in the face of positive evidence to the contrary, we do believe that it is capable of making very positive contributions to the study of the late Saxon coinage. For example, the recently resuscitated theory of a mint at Lancaster 3 falls down hopelessly when we find that all the coins in question belong to two styles associated with the West Country. We ourselves have not hesitated to make a number of corrections to Hildebrand and the British Museum Catalogue primarily on stylistic evidence—for example, the reattribution to Derby of the two moneyers Osbern and Osgar given to Dorchester, 4 the translation of the moneyer Ælfwig from Aylesbury to Langport 5 and of Leofsige from Ilchester

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4 Spink's Numismatic Circular, 1956, p. 323.
to Ipswich,\(^1\) the reallocation of Hild. 3741 to Worcester, &c.\(^2\) Un-
questionably, though, the great value of the stylistic approach to
certain types is that it makes possible a systematic search for obverse
die-links, and we expect that an increasing number of these will be
discovered in the course of the next few years.\(^3\) In the case of “Gotha-
burh”, however, it can hardly be claimed that the mass of material
was overwhelming—at Exeter Carla is known from only three obverse
dies. Of these only one could conceivably have provided an obverse
die link, for a glance at Hildebrand is sufficient to show that only
Hild. 368 has the form of obverse legend found on the “Gothaburh”
coin. More recently, too, it has been shown that Hild. 369 and Hild.
370 have obverses of quite different styles. In fact these are two out
of the three coins of the Exeter mint which do not belong to the same
stylistic grouping as the coins of the mysterious mint with which we
are here concerned.

The question is a simple one. Is there in fact an obverse die-link
between Carla’s solitary coin of “Gothaburh” and his one coin of
Exeter which is consistent both as regards the style and the form of
the obverse legend? Reference to the plate supplies an immediate
answer—there is the die-link that arguments of style and prosopog-
raphy had led us to expect. [Pl. XXII, A and 9.]

Before we proceed to consider some of the implications of this wel-
come corroboration of our earlier line of argument, we should perhaps
complete our listing of all the known dies of the mint under review.
The “Quatrefoil” type of Cnut was withdrawn in all probability not
later than the autumn of 1023, and Mr. Peter Seaby’s recent demon-
stration that “Arm-and-Sceptre” coins with the name “Cnut” belong
in fact to Harthacnut\(^4\) means that we now have no coin of the “Gotha-
burh” mint which can be given to the last twelve years of Cnut’s reign.
This gap is by no means disturbing—coins of Cnut’s “Short Cross”
type are notably fewer than those of his “Pointed Helmet” type
which in turn are fewer than those of the “Quatrefoil” issue—but we
would suggest that it is particularly appropriate in the case of a West
Country attribution as the decline in output was generally far more
marked in this area than elsewhere in England. To take for example
the three minor Devon mints, the position as set out by Hildebrand
may be summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quatrefoil</th>
<th>Pointed Helmet</th>
<th>Short Cross</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnstaple</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydford</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totnes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Somerset and Dorset the position is much the same—and indeed at
Ilchester the slump in output is even more striking—though at Exeter

\(^{1}\) *Spink’s Numismatic Circular*, 1956, p. 323.
\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 324.
\(^{3}\) Cf. R. H. M. Dolley, “The Significance of Obverse Die-Links, etc.” in the forthcoming
Swedish publication *Preliminary Studies*.
\(^{4}\) *B.N.J.* XXVIII, i (1956), pp. 111-46.
the process is less marked, very possibly because of the growing tendency to concentrate striking in larger centres.

Almost immediately after Cnut's death, however, we find the "Gothaburh" mint once more in operation, and this time the moneyer is a Leofmær:

**HAROLD I**

"Jewel Cross" issue (Hild. A = Brooke 1 = B.M.C. i)

Spring 1036–Sept. 1038?

(13) Obv. +HAROL LDREX

Rev. +LEOFMÆR(ONIO)DAB

Hild. 255

(PI. XXII, 13)

Leofmær is known at no other mint in this type—or indeed reign. It is significant, however, that his name should perpetuate the deuterotheme of his predecessor's, the more so because -mær is by no means the most common of elements, and it seems very probable that Leofmær was a son or grandson of the Wulfmær who had been "Gothaburh's" most prolific moneyer between c. 1000 and c. 1023.

"Fleur-de-lis" issue (Hild. B = Brooke 2 = B.M.C. v)

Sept. 1038–Summer 1040

(14) Obv. +HARO LDREE-.-

Rev. +LE|OM/E|RON|IOB:

Hild. 256

(PI. XXII, 14)

(15) Obv. From same die as no. 14

Rev. +LE|OM/ER|ON|IODA

Hild. 257

(PI. XXII, 15)

**HARTHACNUT**

"Arm-and-Sceptre" Hild. Cnut I = Brooke Cnut 5 = B.M.C. Cnut xix

Hild. B Brooke 2 B.M.C. ii

Summer 1040–Summer 1042

(16) Obv. +ENVTR EEXAN

Rev. +ÆLFVARDONGOÐA

Hild. Cnut 998

(PI. XXII, 16)

(17) Obv. +ENV TREX

Rev. +LEOMÆRONGEOÐ

Hild. Cnut 1000

(PI. XXII, 17)

Again no other Leofmær is known for the reign, and the only moneyer with a name approximating to Ælfward recorded by Hildebrand proves to be Scandinavian. Prosopographically, therefore, these, the last recorded coins of the mint "æt Gothabyrig", throw no light on the location of the mint, nor is style any serviceable criterion in this type. Nevertheless the fact that these coins cannot have been struck earlier than the summer of 1040 does destroy one link in the chain of evidence advanced in support of the "Ythanceaster" attribution. In his paper already mentioned Major Carlyon-Britton commented on the fact that "the great wind" of 1039 coincided exactly with "the cesser of the Giodaburgh coinage", and suggested that an influx of the sea overwhelmed the Bradwell-juxta-mare site.\(^1\) This is

\(^1\) Op. cit., p. 44.
quite possible, though the balance of the historical evidence must surely be that there was no intensive habitation of “Ythanceaster” after the Danish attacks of the ninth century at the latest, but the fact remains that coins of “Gothaburh” are known to have been struck at least a year after “the great wind” of 1039. We believe that there is in fact no connexion between this event and the termination of coinage at a mint which we hope to have shown to have been situated somewhere in the neighbourhood of Exeter.

To sum up. The mint “aet Gothabyrig” is die-linked with Exeter; the moneyer of the die-link is otherwise known only at Exeter; in both the “Last Small Cross” type of Æthelraed II and the “Quatrefoil” type of Cnut the obverse dies all belong to two styles that are peculiarly associated with the Exeter area, and in many cases the moneyers are found elsewhere in the West Country at just the period in question. On this evidence we believe that we are quite justified in rejecting out of hand the attribution to “Ythanceaster” which has stood for fifty years. We would stress, too, that we have found no real link between “Gothaburh” and Colchester and Maldon. Unlike our predecessors, however, we do not propose to associate “Gothaburh” with a fixed point upon the map. That is a task that we feel should be left to the historian and philologist who were rightly so critical of the “Ythanceaster” attribution. In justice to the memory of a very great numismatist, however, we would like to put on record our view that Sir John Evans may well have been right when he equated “Gothaburh” with the mysterious “Iudanburh” where Archbishop Wulfstan was held prisoner by King Eadred.1 The neighbourhood of Exeter would have been a very likely place of imprisonment for that prelate—and perhaps a little more plausible than a remote and decayed township on the East Coast open to a sudden descent by the seamen of York.

It should perhaps be added that our reluctance to associate “Gothaburh” with any given place does not spring from lack of imagination. Various possibilities have occurred to us, but we do not feel that it is for the numismatist to postulate lost places with hypothetical names that might give for example a modern form “Idefbury” or “Yeobury” to set beside Ideford or Yeoford, or a “Yetbury” or “Yetborough” to set beside Yetminster. Recent work has shown just how subtle are the toils into which even an accomplished numismatist can fall when he seeks to deal, however superficially, with the coins of a period with which he is not familiar, and for the numismatist to trespass on the preserves of the place-name specialist and the historian is to court disaster. In this connexion we may perhaps remark that if there was ever a county where the historian did not want another burgh it was Devonshire. There is particularly satisfying documentary evidence that in the reign of the great Cnut Devon was the shire of the four boroughs, Exeter, Totnes, Lydford, and Barnstaple, and Domesday gives absolutely no hint of a fifth.2 Cornwall, where Mr. S. E. Rigold

1 A.S.C., s.a. 952 (D only), cf. Roger of Wendover, i, p. 403.
has drawn our attention to a Castle Gotha, seems rather far for a die-
link with Exeter—but not impossibly so. This leaves the extreme
south-west corner of Somerset, already the county of eleven mints,
and western Dorsetshire, which one might have thought amply
catered for by Bridport. The problem is a nice one, and for the moment
we must leave it, only remarking that if the numismatic evidence
points anywhere it is to the neighbourhood of Exeter.

B. THE MINT "ÆT SITH(M)ESTEBYRIG"

The second group of mint-signatures with which this paper is
concerned comprises the spellings SIDE, SIBESTEB, and SIDMES.
We know perhaps two dozen coins, rather surprisingly from six
obverse and only four reverse dies, and all these coins are of two
successive types. Three moneyers are recorded, and it seems clear
that the mint or mints in question remained open for at most a few
years. By a fortunate chance, however, the two types which were
issued are precisely those where we are now able to distinguish
markedly regional styles of die-engraving, and it was in fact the
peculiarly localized style of the obverse die of one particular coin
which gave us our first real clue to the solution of a mystery that has
been discreetly side-stepped by our predecessors. Once again it is
remarkable that so few of the coins have been illustrated before, but it
is believed that the following “catalogue” and the accompanying
plate lists every known die and combination of dies. For reasons of
economy it takes into account only the English and Swedish National
Collections, and duplicates in those collections are ignored.

ÆTHELRAED II

“Last Small Cross” issue (Hild. A = Brooke 1 = B.M.C. i)
Sept. 1009–1016?

(1) Obv. ÆDELREDREXANGLOÆ
Hild. 3406
Rev. GODIPNEONSIDMES
(Pi. XXIII, 1)

(2) Obv. ÆDELREDREXANG
Stockholm
Rev. From same die as no. 1
(Pi. XXIII, 2)

(3) Obv. ÆDELREDREXANGL
British Museum (ex Lockett 653)
Rev. From same die as no. 1
(Pi. XXIII, 3)

(4) Obv. From same die as no. 3
Hild. 3409
Rev. GODRINEMOTISID
(Pi. XXIII, 4)

(5) Obv. ÆDELREDREXANGLOÆ;
Hild. 3407 & British Museum
Rev. CIOLONOONSIDESTEB;
(Pi. XXIII, 5)

(6) Obv. ÆDELREDREXANGLOÆ;
Hild. 3408 & B.M.C. 313
Rev. From same die as no. 5
(Pi. XXIII, 6)

CNUT

Quatrefoil issue (Hild. E = Brooke 2 = B.M.C. viii)
Sept. 1017–Sept. 1023

(7) Obv. CNVTREXANGLORYM
Hild. 3194 & B.M.C. 514
Rev. LEOFFINEONSIDE
(Pi. XXIII, 7)
The Mints "et Gothabyrig" and "et Sith(m)estebyrig"

In the past these coins have been given to more than one mint. Hildebrand's suggestion was that SIDMES might indicate Sidmouth in Devon, and SIDESTEB Sidnaceaster, usually identified with the modern Caistor in Lincolnshire. Keary was no less cautious, but appears to give guarded assent to the former attribution. The latter, on the other hand, he rejects completely, substituting, but again with a query, Sidbury in Devon. To Brooke must be given credit for having suggested, albeit tentatively, that SIDMES and SID(ESTEB) denote the same place, but he too accepted the queried attribution to Sidbury. It is obvious that any discussion of the problem is academic until it can be decided whether two mints are concerned or one, and it is here that the unique coin recently acquired by the National Collection from the Lockett Collection comes into its own. Since it supplies an obverse die-link between the signatures SIDE and SIDMES, we must accept that the two readings denote the same place, since there comes a point beyond which coincidence cannot be stretched.

Since style can be decisive in the attribution of coins of the two types with which we are concerned, we should perhaps begin by considering how the style or styles of the SID(M)ESTBURH coins accord with the identifications already proposed. As regards Æthelræd's "Last Small Cross" type we find that all five obverse dies belong to a regional grouping which, as a recent paper has demonstrated, is associated particularly with London. The odd die is admittedly found as far north as Lincoln, but on fewer than 3 per cent. of the coins of that mint. For all practical purposes "London" dies can be disregarded at every mint north of the Great Ouse, and it is inconceivable that a mint in Lindsey should have used exclusively "London" dies and not have employed even once a die of either of the two styles which are associated particularly with the mints of York and Lincoln. It is the same when we come to consider the single SID(M)ESTBURH die of Cnut. Regional styles are probably even more pronounced in Cnut's "Quatrefoil" type, and, although their ramifications have still to be worked out in the same detail for the whole country, enough is already known about them for us to be able to state categorically that the die in question belongs to a very localized grouping of which no example is found on or north of the Thames.

Of the three SID(M)ESTBURH moneyers it is worth remarking that their names are all purely Old English, being compounded in the normal way of recognized Old English elements. At Lincoln on the other hand we find that two in every three moneyers possess names that either are Scandinavian in origin or appear in a guise that would arouse immediate suspicion if purporting to be associated with a mint

1 Op. cit., p. 500. However, a recent paper (B.N.J. xxviii, i (1956), pp. 88–92) would suggest that by the tenth century the name was already CASTRE.
2 B.M.C. A/S ii, p. cxviii.
3 English Coins, p. 75.
4 Lockett I, lot 653.
5 Dolley, "Some Reflections, etc.", cf. supra, p. 266, n. 1.
west of Watling Street. The evidence of other mints, too, must support our contention that it is unthinkable that there should be a mint in Anglia, let alone Lindsey, where not one of three moneyers possessed a name betraying Scandinavian descent.

The coins of SIB(M)ESTBURH then, are by moneyers whose names would be incongruous in a Danelaw setting, and from dies that are associated with quite a different part of the country from Lindsey. If this were not enough finally to dispose of the Sidnaceaster attribution, there is an obverse die-link with a mint in southern England, and this we think clinches the matter. We have of course re-examined the tentative B.M.C. attribution to Sidbury. Philologically the attribution is not attractive. The coins read clearly SIB and not SID, and the deuterotheme in the place-name does not of necessity postulate the "borough" status usually associated with rights of minting. Indeed the evidence of Domesday is that Sidbury was not a borough, and the occurrence of the element "burh" in the name can be amply explained by prominent pre-Saxon earthworks in the immediate vicinity. Yet another historical argument against the equation SIB(M)ESTBURH = Sidbury has emerged in the course of the discussion of the probable location of GODABURH. As we have seen, Devon is a county where there is special reason for thinking that the number of mints was restricted to four, and these are already accounted for by Exeter, Lydford, Totnes, and Barnstaple.\(^1\)

As we have seen, too, all the five "Last Small Cross" dies of Æthelred II of SIB(M)ESTBURH belong to a style that is predominantly associated with London. In contrast every Devon coin known to us in this type belongs to an equally characteristic stylistic grouping which is associated with Exeter. It could of course be argued that Sidbury is in eastern Devon and was not therefore amenable to the same rules—Watchet, for instance, by some quirk received a die cut at the same centre as supplied Oxford, Chester, and Gloucester—but the fact remains that the farthest west that a "London" die has been recorded is at Winchester, and even there only an odd die in a mint where two other styles account for virtually 99 per cent. of the coins. Moreover the one SIB(M)ESTBURH obverse die of Cnut argues no less decisively against a West Country attribution. It belongs to a stylistic grouping which is more localized than most, and of which a neatly modelled hair-tie is the most easily discernible feature. Coins of this style are known to us from only three mints; Chichester where the style predominates, Lewes where it occurs on a small proportion of the coins only, and Guildford on the only coin of the type which in our opinion can be assigned to that mint with certainty. If it is objected that a stylistic argument must always to some extent be subjective, it can be replied that the association with Chichester is clinched in the most satisfactory manner possible. As was shown in a paper in the Numismatic Circular, B.M.C. 514 of Cnut (= Hild. 3194), a penny of Leofwine with mint-signature

\(^1\) Supra, p. 276.
The Mints "Æt Gothabyrig" and "Æt Sith(m)estbyrig"

SIBE, is from the same obverse die as a Chichester penny of Leofric in the English National Collection ex Evans ex a Swedish hoard (Pl. XXIII, 8). Clearly, then, SIB(M)ESTBURH is to be sought in the part of England south of the Thames and east of the Hamble, and preferably not too far from Chichester itself.1

In the "Last Small Cross" type of Æthelraed II the "London" style does not occur at Chichester, but at Lewes it is relatively common. Farther to the east, however, we find more and more coins of yet another style emanating from Canterbury. It is reasonable, therefore, to locate SIB(M)ESTBURH somewhere between Lewes and Chichester, and if anything nearer to the former than the latter despite the die-link in the next type. At this point the numismatist must hand over to the philologist, and in a separate note Miss Daunt shows quite convincingly that the various forms of mint-signature found on the coins accord perfectly with the modern place-name Cissbury. The identification is one that is quite acceptable both on numismatic and on historical grounds.

In the first place there is evidence from elsewhere in southern England that towards the end of Æthelraed’s reign certain vulnerable mints were being moved to the comparative safety of nearby Iron Age forts of which the defences were still reasonably intact. We have, for example, the Wilton mint transferred to Salisbury, and the Ilchester mint seeking the shelter of Cadbury.2 Whether or not Cissbury represents a similar transfer of an existing mint—and at present the balance of the evidence seems to be that it was a new creation though perhaps deriving nominal tradition from the Alfredian "lost" burgh at Burpham3—the fact remains that we may at last have an explanation of the sudden appearance out of the blue of the Steyning mint in Cnut’s second type. Is Cissbury the precursor of Steyning in the same way that the latter may have been the precursor of Bramber?4 The suggestion is attractive, and Steyning would then stand in the same relationship to the hilltop fort as, say, Bruton to Cadbury. Those who have visited Cissbury will appreciate how little work would have been needed to put the defences into reasonable order, and the numismatist may perhaps be permitted to speculate on the possibility that the post-Roman remodelling of the gateway may have been executed in the eleventh century rather than the fifth. In any case we need not suppose that the fort was reoccupied in the

1 Although the name is a common one it can scarcely be dismissed as a coincidence that the name Leofwine found on the last coin of SIB(M)ESTBURH occurs in the same type at the mint of Chichester with which SIB(M)ESTBURH is die-linked. The evidence is surely that Leofwine removed to Chichester taking his obverse die with him and there remained even after the opening of the Steyning mint.


3 Cf. A. J. Robertson, Anglo-Saxon Charters, p. 246.

sense that new works were cut and solid palisades erected. To suit the ends of the local inhabitants it would have been sufficient that the place was still naturally strong enough to confer on the defenders an advantage sufficient to cancel out the man-to-man superiority of the Scandinavian raiders. One wonders indeed if actual minting operations were ever carried out within the ramparts themselves—it may well have been expedient to conduct them in the valley below whence the personnel could have taken shelter on a signal from watchers on the hill with its commanding views across the surrounding countryside as well as out to sea. However this may be, we believe that Miss Daunt’s etymology of the modern name Cissbury is completely satisfying, and it is the suggestion of this paper that “the last burgh” is to be identified with the magnificent Iron Age earthwork which dominates the Downs above Worthing. Certainly the numismatic evidence points conclusively to the localization of SIMESTBURH within that area, and we feel that it is now for the historian and archaeologist to prove or to disprove a suggestion that we would not have advanced if we had sensed fundamental disapproval on the part of scholars far more qualified to pass a final judgement.¹

C. A PHILOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON CISSBURY

The coins described by Mr. Dolley and Mr. Elmore Jones in the article above show the readings SIMDUB, SIDESTEB, and a later SIDE. The required mint would appear to be “east of Chichester and west of Lewes”, and the moneyers concerned and the style of the coins support this area of Sussex as the site of the mint.

sipest and sipmest are regular Anglo-Saxon alternatives as the superlative of sip, “late”, so the mint would appear to have been referred to as “the last mint” which would be a good anonymous reference if marauding Danes were to be thrown off the scent. As these coins all date from the last years of Ethelred and the first of Canute this motive may have been important. On the other hand, it may have been a saxonization of an earlier name.

The first step towards identification of the mint must be a tracing of the phonological development of SIDESTEB. This is the most important superlative form, which occurs most frequently in Anglo-Saxon texts; the phonetic value was [si:ðes(t)b-] which would very soon lose the t, since there was always a tendency to drop the middle consonant of three (cf. Christmas, handsome, handkerchief, &c.), the s between voiced sounds would be [z], so [si:ðzb-] would be very soon

¹ There is one argument that could be adduced in support of Hildebrand’s Sidnaceaster attribution that we admit that we have ignored, namely the existence in the British Museum Collection of a square-flan striking from genuine English dies which corresponds exactly to a similar square piece of Torksey in a recent Swedish hoard. The argument, however, is inconclusive, and, as we have seen, the case for Cissbury rests securely on arguments based on style, prosopography, and an obverse die-link which in combination seem irrefutable. These square-flan strikings, moreover, merit separate discussion, and it is hoped to publish a special study of them in the near future.
established; next [ə] would be assimilated to [z] (cf. O.E. blīps = bliss) so [si:zb]. In late Anglo-Saxon or early Middle English long vowels were shortened before two consonants (if these were not certain lengthening groups, cf. ld, mb, &c.), so the next and last development should be [sizbəri] which, it is delightful to find, is the local pronunciation of Cissbury, the famous fortified hill “west of Lewes and east of Chichester”.

The spelling Ciss-bury was invented by Camden in the late sixteenth century. He thought it could be connected with a Saxon chief Cissa who was also connected with Chichester. Whether Cissa had a hand in Chichester one cannot say, but he certainly had no part whatever in Cissbury since a Saxon ci would always give [ʃi] not [si] (cf. child, chill, &c.). Putting aside possible references to Cissbury as the Old Byry (i.e. not Steyning) or on pisberh (Sussex Anglo-Saxon Charters, ed. Eric E. Barker, p. 150, where the p is clear in the manuscript), there are several good references with s, Sissabury (Speed) 1610, Sizebury (Gough’s Camden) 1774, and a very curious form sieberie appears in a map of the south coast made in 1587 just before the coming of the Armada. The present writer has not yet succeeded in seeing the original map, and the facsimile edited by Mark Antony Lower, M.A., F.S.A., and published at Lewes in 1870 certainly has sieberie. This, however, could be a misreading of Sizberie and there is still hope of finding this form, at a pre-Camden date.

It remains to add a footnote on the suitability of Cissbury as a refugee mint. Apart from its commanding position over the approach up the Adur, and splendid fortifications from which a watch could be kept, from the point of view of minters wanting to keep silver safe no place could be better. The neolithic flint mines with their deep shafts and daylit, short galleries would make an ideal hiding place for silver and if necessary a shelter for the men. There is no need to suppose that they lived up on the down, or that the Danes ever approached it in force. They probably lived in the nearby village of Cissbury (possibly built for the purpose) and only went up to fetch metal. This would account for the absence of Saxon remains on the hill, but as many of the square hut-like sites have not been examined, and as the pottery so far found is claimed as Romano-British on grounds not altogether accepted by some experts, it seems that no evidence has come to light to make a Saxon mint on Cissbury unlikely.