AN UNPUBLISHED HOARD-PROVENANCE
FOR A PENNY OF CEOLWULF II OF MERCIA

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On p. 234 of *BNJ* xxix. ii (1959) attention was drawn to a small find (Inventory—) from Washington in Sussex which contained pennies of *BMC* type v of Alfred the Great. Three coins in the National Collection (*BMAcq.* 477, 478, and 480) were there cited as deriving from this hoard (cf. *NC* 1925, p. 349—p. 7 in the reprint), and the remark was made that ‘It is not clear whether there were others beyond the three he [i.e. G. C. Brooke] records.’ Recently the writer had occasion to check through certain manuscript sources in the Department of Coins and Medals, and as a result he has been able to make what seems a significant addition to the list of coins found at Washington in the spring of 1904. The new coin is *BMAcq.* 153 (cf. *NC* 1922, p. 244—p. 32 in the reprint), one of the exceptionally rare pennies of Ceolwulf II.

The evidence is as follows. Rather surprisingly, perhaps, *BMAcq.* 477, 478, and 480 prove not to have been purchased on the same occasion nor all from the same person, though both vendors wrote from the same address. *BMAcq.* 480 was offered by vendor ‘A’ in May 1904, and it was only in the June that vendor ‘B’ submitted his parcel which consisted of *BMAcq.* 153, 477, 478. Clearly all four coins are from the same find, and it may be taken that Brooke’s omission of the find-spot from his description of *BMAcq.* 153 was due purely to an oversight. In this connexion it should be recalled that in 1922 Brooke was newly returned from his posting to emergency duties, whereas by 1925 he had settled back into more scholarly routines, and there is the further consideration that in the case of *BMAcq.* 153 he had been preoccupied with the problem whether or not the obverse die had been altered.

The importance of the new discovery for the student of the ninth-century coinages of Wessex and Mercia is that it confirms that the Washington find of 1904 was on a very small scale. It is not perhaps sufficiently realized that Ceolwulf II pennies are of the very greatest rarity. Known to the present writer are no more than nine, the unique ‘Two-Emperor’ penny [Pl. VIII, 9] from the 1840 Cuerdale hoard which is in the Assheton cabinet at Downham (cf. *NC* v (1843), pp. 10 and 11), and eight pennies of *BMC* type v distributed as follows:

1. *BMC* 403—from the 1840 Cuerdale hoard. [Pl. VIII, 6]
2. *BMAcq.* 153—the coin under discussion—from the 1904 Washington find. [Pl. VIII, 1]
3. *BMAcq.* 154 from Cuff (lot 292), Dymock (lot 70), Murchison (lot 107), Boyne and Marsham (lot 87), and probably from the 1840 Cuerdale hoard. [Pl. VIII, 7]
5. Hunter, *Sylloge*, 381 with pedigree going back to eighteenth century and allegedly found in Ireland. [Pl. VIII, 2]
6. Coin at Stonyhurst College with tradition which must take it back to the 1840 Cuerdale hoard found only a few miles from the school. [Pl. VIII, 8]

7. Ryan 648 (now in the C. E. Blunt cabinet) with pedigree going back to the 1840 Cuerdale hoard. The statement in the Montagu sale catalogue (1895) that the coin is from the Assheton collection is probably wrong. In the Shepherd sale catalogue (1885) it is not mentioned. [Pl. VIII. 3]

8. Lockett 407 (now in the R. P. Mack cabinet) which is ex Bruun (1925) lot 35 [Pl. VIII. 5]

It will be seen from this listing that there is, apart from *BMACq*. 153, only one Ceolwulf II coin which could possibly be from the Washington hoard of 1904, Lockett 407 for which the pedigree does not extend back beyond 1925. All the other coins have provenances which are completely incompatible with their being from the Sussex find in question, and the writer thinks that the probability is that Lockett 407 also is from another source and ultimately even from Cuerdale(?). If Bruun really had had access to 'strays' from the 1904 Washington find he would surely have obtained at least one specimen of an Alfred of *BMC* type v which, relatively speaking, is common, and of which the find is known to have contained three examples as against only one of the corresponding issue of Ceolwulf II. In fact, Bruun's cabinet was singularly weak in respect of *BMC* type v of Alfred, and it is noteworthy that Bruun 62, now in the National Collection ex Lockett 3631, has quite another patina. Equally suggestive is the absence of coins of Ceolwulf II and the extraordinarily thin representation of *BMC* type v of Alfred where the Carlyon-Britton cabinet is concerned, since recent work has suggested (cf. *BNJ* xxviii. iii (1957), pp. 485 and 486) that here was a collector of unusual discrimination, and one, as it happens, closely connected with Sussex, who had absolutely no scruples when it came to the acquisition of choice pieces of Alfred. As it happens, too, the Washington find appears to have been brought to the notice of the British Museum at just the period when the Stamford hoard was finding its way into P. W. P. Carlyon-Britton's cabinet, while the sorry story of the so-called 'War Area' hoard (cf. *BNJ* xxvii. iii (1957), pp. 650 and 651) suggests that this peculiar mentality was to persist for at least another decade. Moreover, a glance at *BMC* type v of Alfred suggests that there are remarkably few pieces to which there does not attach a nineteenth-century provenance, such as did in fact accompany Carlyon-Britton 338, and so all the evidence must be that the coins found at Washington in 1904 were as few as they are undoubtedly rare.

It is hoped, then, that the following summary of the find in slightly modified *Inventory* format will be found useful by students of the series:

**WASHINGTON, Sussex, spring 1904.**


**MERIA, Ceolwulf II—*BMC* (A) type i:** Cuthulf, 1; *WESSEX, Alfred—*BMC* (A) type v:

Guthere, 1; Hereferth, 1; Luceman, 1.


Disposition: the four coins listed (? the whole find) are in the British Museum.

The prime interest of the hoard as now reconstructed is, of course, the new light which is thrown on the relationship of Alfred and of Ceolwulf II in the years immediately
following the latter's accession. It has long been recognized that Burgred, Ceolwulf's predecessor, and Alfred had shared at least one major mint (London?), and there is hoard evidence in plenty that their coins, effectively demonetized, or so it would seem, c. 875, had circulated freely in both kingdoms, but until now no Ceolwulf II penny has been on record as having been found on or south of the line of the Thames. Although, then, Alfred and Ceolwulf II obviously continued the arrangement by which the two kingdoms shared a major centre of coin-production (London?—cf. the lead trial-piece or mint-weight from St. Paul's Churchyard discussed in BNF xxvii. ii (1953), pp. 175–8), the student could not be absolutely certain that there was a parallel continuance of the agreement by which the Mercian penny was to be current in Wessex and vice versa. It now seems certain that this was in fact the case, and the fact that all the other find-spots hitherto recorded in the case of seven of the nine extant coins of Ceolwulf II (Cuerdale (5), Ireland(?), and Morley St. Peter) lie outside Wessex would appear to reflect nothing more than the accident of discovery.
PLATE I

Cn 14 Cn 15 Cn 16

(GROUP I) NON-PORTRAIT ISSUES, MERCIA & KENT