A GROUP OF TENTH-CENTURY COINS FOUND
AT MONT-SAINT-MICHEL

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The purpose of this paper is to put on record a little group of English and allied coins that seems to us to possess quite extraordinary significance where students of the tenth-century English and French coinages are concerned. Our attention first was drawn to them in 1966 in connection with preparations at Mont-Saint-Michel in Brittany for the public celebration of the millennium of the great Benedictine house, and it is hard to believe that coins of such importance as those, with which we are here concerned, could have come to light perhaps as much as a century ago, and then lain for all these years unnoticed and unsung in a showcase in the abbey’s museum. There can be little doubt, though, that the six silver pennies were found before 1913 and possibly as early as 1875 at some point within the precincts of the abbey church, and it is unfortunate that we have today no more exact provenance (see Appendix A). Found between the same dates, but by no means necessarily in the same general context since the works over the period as a whole were very extensive, were five other coins that can be referred to the tenth and eleventh centuries, three of them being Rouen deniers of Saint-Ouen (Prou 394 and 394a) which M. Jean Lafaurie would date, we understand, perhaps a whole quarter of a century later than the English and related pieces that are the subject of this paper, and two deniers that can be assigned to the time of Eudes of Penthièvre and so belong very much later still. These last two coins do have a certain findspot inasmuch as they are recorded as having come to light in 1908 beneath the crossing of the present church (cf. the preliminary account of the coins which one of the present writers (J. Y.) has published on pp. 307 and 308 of the September/October fascicle of the Bulletin de la Société française de Numismatique for 1968). More modern coins also were found in the course of the same excavations, but are of little significance and of no relevance at all to the discussion that follows. What we do think should be stressed, though, is that there is no need to assume any connection between the six ‘English’ coins, the subject of this paper, and the three Rouen deniers. For all that is known to the contrary, the two groups of coins could perfectly well have been found at opposite ends of what is a fairly extensive edifice, and it is even possible that one or other could have been found outside the limits of the church proper.

Three of the six ‘English’ coins are of Æthelstan (924–39), and they are all of the common Two-line type (BMC i = Brooke 1 = North 668 = Seaby 616) which there is reason to think was struck both early and late in the reign. The first (Pl. VI. 1) purports to be by the well-attested moneyer Beorard, but weighs only 17·0 gr. (1·10 g.). Ominously, too, the spelling of the moneyer’s name BEORAID is one that will be found to be unprecedented, while both the work and the fabric are rather more irregular than those found on five other coins of the reign, moneyer, and type that are known to Mr. C. E. Blunt, F.B.A., the acknowledged authority where the coinage of Æthelstan is concerned. The style of the regular coins, where three if not four of them exhibit the unusual letter
form D for Æ reproduced with some fidelity on the Mont Saint-Michel specimen, is in every way consistent with their having been struck at Chester, the mint of Beorard’s apparently unique Circumscription (+) coin in the Nottingham Museum (SCBI Midlands 131), and only less rare Circumscription (-.) coins in the British Museum (BMC 44, ex Young (Sotheby, 4–11: ix: 1839) lots 532–7), and in the Museo Nazionale at Rome (NC 1884, p. 244, no. 217). There is some reason to think, then, that Beorard was operating at Chester during the latter part of the reign of Æthelstan. He is not known, however, for Eadmund (939–46), unless we give to him the very irregular and almost certainly imitative Circumscription coin with reverse legend BAROMTILECE of which examples occurred in both the Forum (Rome) and 1950 Chester hoards (cf. NC 1884, p. 252, no. 382—which is there wrongly described as with bust—and BNJ xxvii (1953), p. 144, no. 118). It could well be, then, that the BEORAID and BARO coins are from one and the same stable, and certainly a date for both c. 940 would seem acceptable on the evidence at present available, while the most likely provenance would appear to be an atelier operating in the north of England but outside the effective jurisdiction of the English king.

The second of the Two-line pennies with the name of Æthelstan (Pl. VI. 2) is of entirely orthodox work and weighs 23-9 gr. (1-55 g.) which is a normal weight for a coin of the type and reign. The style and the lettering of the Mont Saint-Michel piece are associated with coins emanating from the part of England immediately to the east of the so-called Five Boroughs, and known to Mr. Blunt are at least four other coins of the moneyer (BMC 102; SCBI Edinburgh 126; Forum 111; and a private cabinet), all of them consonant in appearance with the new piece, which exhibit the same apparently genetival spelling DOMENCES which is probably essaying the Latin Dominicus, cf. the rather rarer coins of identical style which read DOMINIC (e.g. BMC 103 and Forum 112) where the dropping of the Latin termination is unexpectedly early. We leave to one side the question whether Dominicus is a Latinization of an Old English personal name compounded with some element such as Dryht- or Leod- (cf. the slightly earlier BONVS HOMO which is so surely for Godman), but do notice that the DOMENCES spelling recurs on some rare coins of Eadmund (e.g. BMC 41) which again are of compatible style, so that we are probably justified in inferring that the coin from Mont Saint-Michel was struck late in the reign of Æthelstan and at an English mint in the north-eastern Midlands—again we do not feel called upon to pronounce whether or not later in the reign of Eadmund the moneyer moved across the Pennines to strike in the Chester area the rare rosette coins (e.g. BMC 39 and 40) where we find what is presumably the same name but in the form DEMENEC.

The third of the coins bearing the name of Æthelstan (Pl. VI. 3) would appear to be for practical purposes unpublished, though the existence of a comparable coin could be thought to be postulated by an italicized (i.e. coin not in British Museum) entry Hungar on p. 102 of BMC A/S II. The Mont Saint-Michel coin is of very neat work and fabric with a distinctive, small epigraphy, and again the weight of 23-9 gr. (1-55 g.) is well within the bracket characteristic of official coins of the type in question. The name of the moneyer is Hungar, a name known to us otherwise as that of an English moneyer of the first half of the tenth century only on the basis of an apparently unique penny of Æthelstan’s mint-signed Crowned Bust type (BMC viii = Brooke 4 = North 675 = Seaby 621) which is now in the British Museum (ex Lockett 567 ex Allen 225 ex Bliss
94—and probably ex Lindsay and found in south-western Ireland, cf. NC 1839/40, p. 36). The mint of this portrait coin is Rochester, and the style of the coin of Two-line type from Mont Saint-Michel is consistent in every way with its attribution to this Kentish mint which was perhaps only now reopening after an eighty-year intermission in striking consequent on the great Danish assaults on south-eastern England about the middle of the ninth century. Both the Hungar coins would appear to belong to the second half of Æthelstan’s reign, though within this bracket the epigraphy of the Mont Saint-Michel coin could be thought to suggest a relatively early date, one say nearer 930 than 935, in which case the coin in question could be reckoned the earliest in the whole find.

The fourth of the ‘English’ coins from Mont Saint-Michel (Pl. VI. 4) seems to us even more significant. Again it is of Two-line type, while the weight is 21·4 gr. (1·39 g.) which suggests official rather than imitative work if the proposed attribution is thought acceptable. The obverse legend reads clearly and unequivocably ANLAFREST, while the name of the moneyer is no less obviously Roth(e)rt. Both in style and in fabric the coin gives every appearance of belonging to the Northumbrian series associated with the intrusive Dublin dynasty at York whose intermittent rule began in 919 with the advent of Sihtric Caoch and ended in 952 with the expulsion of Anlaf (‘Olaf’) Sihtricsson for the third time. Confusingly there were two Anlafs who make matters more difficult for the historian by being cousins and contemporaries. The younger was Anlaf Cwaran (or Quaran) Sihtricsson (‘Olaf of the Sandal’) who technically succeeded his father at York in 927 while still a boy, but who was at this juncture a king in name only since effective powers seems to have resided in the person of his paternal uncle Guthfrith, the father of the second Anlaf, Anlaf Guthfrithsson, who would appear to have been considerably older than his homonymous cousin. Within a few months of Guthfrith’s usurpation all three were expelled from York and took refuge with the Scots before basing themselves once more on their ancestral Dublin. In 939, on the death of Æthelstan, Anlaf Guthfrithsson again made himself master of York, and he at once threw himself into whirlwind campaigns which carried the borders of the revived Hiberno-Norse kingdom of Northumbria up to and beyond the Trent and the Tweed. In 941, at the zenith of his power, Anlaf Guthfrithsson suddenly died, and it was only then that Anlaf Sihtricsson was allowed to come into his own. Even so, the succession was disputed, the challenger being Regnald, a brother of the dead Anlaf, and in 944 the English were able to profit from this cousinly dissension by expelling from Northumbria both the protagonists, Regnald being slain, while Anlaf Sihtricsson once again took refuge in Dublin. Thence in 948 or 949 he returned to York where the English seem to have acquiesced in his rule until in 952 he was finally expelled by Eric Bloodaxe from Norway.

Already a number of coins are known of both the Anlafs, and the essential problem is to try to determine where the new coin from Mont Saint-Michel should be fitted into an existing pattern of attribution that does seem to have gained fairly wide acceptance (NNA 1957/8, pp. 13–88). According to it, the Two-line coins, most of them with the king’s name spelt ONLAF, have been associated with Anlaf Sihtricsson and the period c. 943/4, an earlier attribution to the period c. 950 having been found to be inconsistent with the occurrence of a coin of this class by the moneyer Arnulf in the Forum hoard from Rome which there is good reason to think was concealed no later than 946 (op. cit., p. 76). That the ONLAF coins of Two-line type are rightly dated c. 943/4 cannot
well be disputed, but where the 1958 paper can be faulted is for its failure to take account
of two critical Two-line pennies, the second of them likewise from the Forum hoard, by
the moneyers H(i)ldulf and Nothe(r), and with obverse legends ANELFREM and ANELFREXN
respectively. The first of them was a still unrecorded coin in private possession, while
the second was known to the author of the 1958 paper only from De Rossi’s 1884
description of the piece in its uncleaned state, so that it was perhaps only natural for
students to wonder whether the great Italian archaeologist’s unprecedented readings
might not be more optimistic than well founded—though subsequent inspection of the
actual coin in the Museo Nazionale vindicates De Rossi yet again.

There are, in consequence, three Anlaf coins of Two-line type that the numismatist
cannot well continue to ignore, and which, it is suggested, constitute a subclass quite
distinct from that composed of the somewhat less rare pennies where the name of the
king takes the form ONLAF. The following are the relevant details:

(a) Obv. + ANLAF REST Rev. ∗ / ROTB / ++ + / RTNO / ∗
Mont Saint-Michel, found there c. 1875(?)

(b) Obv. + ANELF REX M Rev. / HLDV / ++ + / LFMEO /
Formerly in the Chilvers cabinet, no further provenance.

(c) Obv. + ANLEF REX N Rev. / NODE / ++ + / MONE /
Museo Nazionale, Rome, ex Forum hoard (NC 1884, p. 253, no. 385).

Clearly these three pennies stand apart from the ONLAF coins, and it is prima facie
probable that they belong slightly earlier in the series, even if it would be foolish to
attach too much weight to the absence from the Mont Saint-Michel find of English
coins of Eadmund (939–46), the parcel being too small for the omission to be of necessity
significant. What this note will suggest is that the three coins represent a coinage of
Anlaf Sihtricsson struck in Northumbria in the months immediately following his
restoration to York in 941. The implication of this is that the second element of the
obverse legend of the Mont Saint-Michel coin may not be a rather implausible blunder-
ing of REX and of the initial letter of a pseudo-ethnic, but should in fact be read as the
first four letters of the Latin word restauratus, so that we are to English the whole legend
‘Anlaf Restored’. We are aware that this interpretation will seem to some so fanciful
as to occasion disbelief, and it is for this reason that we stress the fact that our dating
of the three coins to the period 941/2 is wholly independent of the whole
restauratus hypothesis, there being arguments of quite another kind to support the view that the
coins belong to the period immediately following the death of Anlaf Guthfrithsson.

The moneyers of the three Two-line coins of Anlaf with prototheme AN- instead of
ON- are, as we have seen, Hildulf, Nother, and Rotbert, and it is instructive to discover
the incidence of these three names where other English coins from the second quarter
of the tenth century are concerned. A moneyer Hildulf is known for Æthelstan, so Mr.
Blunt informs us, from an apparently unique Two-line penny with the identical reverse
legend ∗ / HLDV / ++ + / LFMEO / ∗ which occurred in the 1862 ‘Ireland’ find (NC
1863, p. 49, no. 11). He has still to be recorded for Eadmund, and we are reluctant to
identify him with the moneyer of the same name, but this time spelling it HILDVLZ, who
was striking under Eadred (946–55) in the area of Chester (cf. Lockett 3699 (a)). There
can be little doubt, though, that the Æthelstan and the Anlaf coins were struck by one
and the same individual, and it will be surprising if the Æthelstan penny, if and when its present whereabouts can be traced, does not prove to be of the Northumbrian style and fabric that are suggested by the MEO of the reverse legend, and to belong relatively late in the reign, a dating consistent of course with the dates of the coins in the Mont Saint-Michel parcel and entirely consonant with the supposition that the H(i)ldulf of the Æthelstan penny struck for one or other of the Anlafs in the years following Æthelstan's death.

The moneyer Nother spelling his name NOBE, as on the coin of Anlaf in Rome, is known for Æthelstan, as Mr. Blunt again informs us, from two coins in the Forum hoard (NC 1884, p. 239, no. 144) and one in the British Museum from an earlier discovery in Rome (BMC 119, cf. BNJ xxviii (1955), p. 47). Coins of identical style but with the moneyer's name spelt NODER occurred both in the Forum hoard (NC 1884, p. 239, no. 144) and in the earlier Rome find (BMC 118), and other examples are in the Berlin and American Numismatic Society cabinets as well as in at least one English private collection, this last piece having a Swiss (? ultimately Italian) provenance. That all these coins whether reading NOBE or NODER were struck in north-eastern England and relatively late in the reign of Æthelstan cannot well be doubted, though unlike H(i)ldulf the moneyer Nother is known under Eadmund from a single coin of portrait type. A moneyer of the name, though, does not recur under Eadred. Again, then, there is something more than a suggestion that the NOBE coin of one or other of the Anlafs emanated from a moneyer active in the closing years of Æthelstan's reign.

The position as regards the moneyer Rotbert is a little more complicated. No Two-line coin of his struck for Æthelstan is known to Mr. Blunt, but there is the unique High Relief Portrait (BMC x = Brooke 4 var. = North 676 = Seaby 629A) penny in the British Museum (BMC 16) which has a reverse legend reading ROTBERT MO EO. The style and the mint-signature alike are compatible with an attribution to the York mint, though the same cannot be said with confidence of a pair of die-duplicate Two-line type coins of Eadmund in the Forum hoard (NC 1884, p. 252, no. 367) where the reverse legend runs : : : ROBE / + + + / RIHTM / : : . Not to be associated presumably with either the Rotbert or the Rodberiht would be an apparently vanished Two-line penny attributed to Eadred which was formerly in the cabinet of the great eighteenth-century Irish numismatist James Simon (Nat. Lib. Ireland MS. 301, f. 6, no. 33). Here the spelling of the moneyer's name is alleged to have been RODA BERT (retrograde), while the presence of rosettes above and below would seem decisive that the coin was struck somewhere in the Chester area. Where lines are to be drawn is never an entirely satisfactory matter when the evidence is so fragmentary, but we would give it as our opinion that the only coin strictly relevant to the new Anlaf coin of Rotbert is the High Relief Portrait coin of Æthelstan. Its exact place in the chronology of Æthelstan's York issues is not quite easy to establish, and there is a further complication dependent on the degree of our acceptance of the hypothesis that for most if not all the second half of Æthelstan's reign a single individual may have had a monopoly of striking the official coinage of York. That a very prolific Regnald occupied this position for several years must seem very likely, and one is tempted to go on to argue that his successor at the very end of the reign of Æthelstan was that Æthelfrith who struck a major issue of Anlaf Guthfrithsson. It is not easy, however, to reconcile this interpretation with the apparently parallel existence of a moneyer Rotbert striking on a scale that can only be described as exiguous
in comparison, even if a possible escape from the difficulty might be thought to be afforded by the hypothesis that Rotbert could have been an archiepiscopal moneyer striking a token issue to maintain the minting rights of the see of York—though it must be admitted that there is no solid evidence for such a view. What does seem well founded, on the other hand, is Rotbert’s existence at York at the very end of the reign of Æthelstan, and the new coin from Mont Saint-Michel suggests strongly that he was active for a little longer than might previously have been supposed. The obvious bracket for the new coin is the period 939-44, the terminus post quem being the accession of Anlaf Guthfrithsson and the terminus ante quem the second expulsion of Anlaf Sihtricsson—any later date is precluded, of course, by the existence of the coin of the same issue by the moneyer Noth(e)r with its Forum hoard provenance.

The question that remains is whether the AN- as opposed to ON- coins of Anlaf of Two-line type should be given to Anlaf Guthfrithsson, and dated between 939 and 941, or to Anlaf Sihtricsson, in which case they would belong between 941 and 944. At first sight the Mont-Saint-Michel provenance might be deemed to favour the attribution to Anlaf Guthfrithsson inasmuch as there is no other coin in the parcel that belongs, or rather perhaps need belong, later than 939, though it could be countered that the argument is of doubtful validity when the Æthelstan element itself amounts to no more than three coins, with one of them an imitative piece. It could be argued, moreover, that the types already attributed to Anlaf Guthfrithsson form a convincing entity that scarcely invites or even allows of addition, and on balance there does seem considerable force in the argument that restauratus—if that be the correct expansion and interpretation of the REST that appears on the obverse of the new coin—is a title not particularly appropriate where Anlaf Guthfrithsson is concerned. There is, after all, no evidence that the older cousin used the royal title in 927 when his father was very much in evidence, so that the usurpation of 939 could be termed a restoration only if applied to the Hiberno-Norse line and not to the individual. On the other hand, Anlaf Sihtricsson’s return to power in 941 was very much a restoration, the younger cousin having been nominal king in 926 after his father’s death, and been deprived of his inheritance by the successive usurpations of his uncle Guthfrith, of Æthelstan, and of his cousin Anlaf Guthfrithsson. It is hard, too, not to attach very considerable weight to the argument that we should be on principle reluctant to postulate any longer interval than necessary between the AN-Two-line coins and their ON- counterparts, and there is much to be said for regarding both as forming part of one and the same issue. All in all, then, the most natural place for the Anlaf coin from the Mont Saint-Michel parcel is somewhere around 942, and it is this dating that it is proposed to adopt for the purposes of this paper.

We come now to two coins superficially of English type but which one must suppose were struck at some place or places outside the effective jurisdiction of the English monarchy at the time of their emission. Pieces of this description can be divided into two classes. On the one hand are coins best described as ‘insular’, and these, like the ‘Beoraid’ piece considered at the head of this paper (supra, p. 1), appear to have emanated from one or more centres lying north or west of a line running across from the Humber to the Mersey and thence down the Welsh marches to the Bristol Channel. The second class consists of coins that can be labelled as ‘continental’. Such pieces may be supposed to have been struck at a mint or mints lying to the east of the North Sea or to the south of the English Channel. Urgently needed, incidentally, is a properly
provenanced corpus of all these imitative coins, 'insular' as well as 'continental', and we would content ourselves with remarking that a continental origin for some but by no means all of them does seem to be demanded by two quite spectacular coins in the 1963 Fécamp hoard, an account of which had been so eagerly awaited from the pen of M. Jean Lafaurie (cf. K. F. Morrison and H. Grunthal, Carolingian Coinage (New York, 1967), p. 382), and which is now the subject of a dissertation by Mme Dumas which has just been printed. ¹ Equally, though, there are pieces, many of them of Irish provenance (cf. J. Lindsay, Notices of Remarkable Greek, Roman and Anglo-Saxon and other Medieval Coins (Cork, 1860), pl. 2, nos. 9-11), where an insular origin may be taken as certain.

The first of the two overtly imitative coins (Pl. VI. 5) is of Circumscription type, but it is characterized by a large lettering that is hardly consonant with that found in the case of the obvious Æthelstan prototypes (BMC v = Brooke 5 = North 672 = Seaby 624). Nor do the exceptionally rare—and, indeed, rarely distinguished—Two-line/ Circumscription mules (mainly in the Forum hoard but cf. Lockett 570) present any very plausible alternative, and there is the further difficulty that if the fabric of the Mont Saint-Michel coin be deemed to have anything of English work about it, the flavour is of the reign not of Æthelstan but of Eadmund, a reign where the Circumscription type is known to us today from a unique Wallingford penny by the moneyer Beornwald in the Forum hoard (NC 1884 p. 249, no. 302) and from a couple of imitative pieces outside the regular or official series, the two ‘Baro’ coins already mentioned (supra, p. 2). Ominously, too, the weight of the Mont Saint-Michel coin is no more than 20.3 gr. (1.32 g.), and in this connection it deserves to be borne in mind that the run of Circumscription coins of Æthelstan tip the scale at 23 or 24 gr. or even more. What really sets the new coin apart from other imitative coins of this class, though, is the fact that the obverse legend makes no attempt to essay the uniform legend of an Æthelstan penny of Circumscription type. It is most naturally read as:

$$+ \text{VILEIM DV} + \text{IRB}$$

the ‘D’, ‘R’, and ‘B’, the three letters incorporating a curved element, all being retrograde, though in fairness it must be observed that it is not strictly necessary for us to begin with the ‘+’ flanked by the ‘b’ and first ‘v’ as against that which occurs between the third ‘v’ and third ‘i’. Little joy, however, is to be obtained from an attempt to find any convincing interpretation of a legend read as:

$$+ \text{IRB} + \text{VILEIMDV}$$

and we would suggest that the most intelligible reconstruction of the engraver’s intent is:

$$+ \text{VILEIM DVX BRI.}$$

On this basis we are faced with a coin struck somewhere in the second quarter of the tenth century by a ruler with a continental Germanic name usually Englished today as William, and claiming the authority of a duke over a people or territory with a name that begins Bri-. Even if the new coin had not its Mont Saint-Michel provenance, one might have been very tempted indeed to expand Bri- into Britonum, and to argue that we have here a coin of William Longsword who was Duke of Normandy (932–42) and who entertained designs on the territories of his Breton neighbours. Against this perhaps

the most solid objection that could be made—and it without real validity—would be
the observation that until 1297 Brittany was a county and not a duchy in strict feudal
law, though here it should be remarked that William Longsword's contemporary Alan
Wrybeard (937-52) is in fact styled *dux et dominus totius Britanniae* in the Chronicle of
Nantes (ed. R. Merlet (Paris, 1896), pp. 89, 93, 94, etc.). A 'duke of Brittany' at this
period was in reality any 'count of Rennes' or 'count of Nantes' who had been able to
achieve effective primacy over the other Breton lords. It is dangerous in fact to read
back too much from the administrative tidiness of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,
and in this connection it should be observed that the tenth-century 'dukes of Normandy'
themselves were far from employing the ducal dignity with the uniformity that one might
have been led to expect. Indeed, *comes* ('count') seems to have been their normal style
pp. 49 and 50).

Before embarking, however, on any detailed discussion of a possible attribution of
the new coin to William Longsword, we should probably set out our reasons for
rejecting the alternative hypothesis that the piece is 'insular' and not 'continental'.
It is after all an undeniable fact that at least one and most probably two of the other
pieces in the Mont Saint-Michel parcel have to be classed as insular and not continental
imitations (*supra*, p. 1 and *infra*, p. 11). It seems also true that considerably more
'insular' pieces exist today. At first sight, too, a Welsh origin might be thought to be
indicated by the reverse legend which seems to exhibit no blundering whatever and
which reads:

+ RIVVALLON.

Here is a personal name that is perfectly acceptable in a Welsh context, as witness the
entries 'Riuuala', 'Riuuallonus', and 'Riuualo' in Searle's *Onomasticon*, and it should
not be forgotten that Welsh context at this period takes in Cornwall and much of
Cumbria as well as Wales proper. Nor should it be overlooked that *dux* in the tenth
century is a perfectly normal Latinization of Old English *ealdormann* and Old Scan-
dinavian *iarl*, so that the prima facie case for the coin being possibly from the Irish
Sea area is one that cannot be dismissed out of hand. On the other hand, there are
arguments that in cumulative combination seem to us decisive that the new coin from
Mont Saint-Michel belongs to the Continent. In the first place, we are fortunate in
having a Welsh coin of this very period, the unique penny of Hywel Dda now in the
British Museum, and it is very noticeable that it is of purely English fabric—indeed
the work alone would mark it down as a product of the Chester school of die-cutting—
and even more significant that the Hywel coin should exhibit in its obverse legend the
characteristically insular letter 'P' instead of 'vv' as on both sides of the new piece.
Secondly, there is the undeniable reluctance of the English king at this period to concede
what was considered a regalian right, and Hywel does seem to have been quite ex-
ceptionally favoured. If this was the attitude of Æthelstan and of Eadmund, then we
may suppose that the Welsh princes would have been not one whit less jealous in
respect of their own subjects, and particularly when toleration could court the disfavour
of their Welsh and English overlords alike. A third consideration is the virtual impos-
sibility of our finding at this period a 'Welsh' territory with a non-Brythonic prince—
as we have seen the name is continental Germanic and neither Old English nor Old
Scandinavian—and there is the further problem that there seems no plausible territory for such a ruler whose of the ethnic could possibly begin in its Latin form Irb- or Bri-. Fourthly, and perhaps even more weightily, a close inspection of the coin reveals points of detail which suggest that many of the affinities with English coins of the period are more apparent than real. Particularly worrying is the substitution of a pellet for the small cross of the reverse type, a variant completely unprecedented on the surviving coins of Æthelstan, the last of the English kings to strike a substantive Circumscription issue until we come to Eadgar and the 960s, and there seems to be known only one coin of Eadmund where a pellet replaces the small cross of the obverse type—though even here it is embraced by an annulet—a Two-line penny from the Forum hoard (NC 1884, p. 251, no. 346—variant not remarked by De Rossi and Keary). We have seen already, too, that the Circumscription type is one exceptionally rare in an official Eadmund context, but common enough under Æthelstan (supra, p. 7). Minor details of the epigraphy, moreover, seem on balance to favour a continental rather than an insular origin for the new coin from Mont Saint-Michel, and even the + RIVVALLON reverse legend will be found to be much less satisfying as an argument for a ‘Welsh’ attribution than appeared at first sight.

Rivallon or Rivvallon is, of course, a name completely acceptable in a tenth-century Welsh context, but the very fact that it is Brythonic should have been cause for caution. We admit that at the period in question it was normal English, and hence ‘insular’, practice to set the name of a person in this position on the reverse of a coin, and that contemporary Frankish practice, at least where the run of sub-Carolingian deniers is concerned, was to prefer the name of a place. But, and this we believe to be the nub of the whole matter, Rivallon or Rivvallon was a perfectly good Breton and Breto-Norman name at this time, and it has even been pointed out to us that the name is found in England proper in the following century as the result of it having been brought over by Breton vassals accompanying their Norman lords (e.g. C. T. Clay, Early Yorkshire Charters, iv (Leeds, 1942), p. 183: Pipe Roll 31 Henry I, pp. 63–5—Kent). More significantly still the name Rivallon which even survives in modern Breton (Ruellan, Rual, etc.) is one that actually figures among the pedigrees of the nobility of the terra Britonum in the eleventh century (cf. L. Musset, Histoire de la Normandie (Toulouse, 1970), p. 96; J. Loth, Chrestomathie bretonne (Paris, 1910), pp. 160, 172, 228, etc.; idem, Les Noms de saints bretons (Paris, 1910), p. 110). Best known, of course, is Rivallon of Dol who espoused the cause of William the Conqueror (cf. F. Doine, Histoire civile et politique de Dol jusqu’en 1789 (Paris, 1911), p. 16 n. 13). We are further informed by Professor Musset that he knows of some forty Rivallons actually from Normandy, mostly from the Avranchin but not a few from the Cotentin. As we shall see, too, both Normandy and Brittany were subject in the 930s and the 940s to a considerable amount of English influence, and it would not be surprising if a coin struck in that general area conformed to English practice in preferring the name of an individual, though perhaps not necessarily of a moneyer, to that of a mint where the inscription of the reverse was concerned. If we are right to read the obverse legend as + VVILEIM DVX BRI(tonum), then the occurrence on the coin of a Breton personal name cannot but take on a new significance. Coincidences cannot be multiplied indefinitely, and we ourselves must profess our own satisfaction that the new coin found at Mont Saint-Michel is one that had emanated from a mint in the same general area.
A GROUP OF TENTH-CENTURY COINS FOUND AT MONT-SAINT-MICHEL

The first point that deserves to be made is that Mont Saint-Michel was very much upon the marches of Normandy and Brittany. Whether or not with Professor Musset we accept the absolute and literal historicity of the grant of the so-called terra Britonum, comprising the Cotentin and Avranchin, to William Longsword by King Raoul of France in 933, and clearly Dudo of Saint-Quentin can be represented as here mirroring the political ambitions of Duke Richard II (996–1026) rather than the realities of William’s own day, there seems no reason to doubt that Longsword maintained a consistently expansionist policy as regards the territories on his western borders. Equally there is an essential plausibility about Dudo’s story that the Normans of the Seine had been granted Brittany unde possint vivere, and even the relatively modern jingle:

Le Couesnon dans sa folie
A mis le Mont dans la Normandie

expresses the historical truth that there was no sharply defined ‘frontier’ between Normandy and Brittany in the tenth century. Mont Saint-Michel itself was still as much a Breton as a Frankish or Norman house, and one may think that Prentout for his part has been unduly critical of Dudo’s conferment of William of the title dux Normannorum et Britonum in the context of his meeting with Louis IV of France and Alan Wrybeard (A. le M. de La Borderie, Histoire de Bretagne, ii (Rennes, 1898), pp. 379 and 411: cf. H. Prentout, Études critiques sur Dudon de Saint-Quentin, etc. (Paris, 1916), p. 291, etc.). If Alan Wrybeard was styling himself dux et dominus totius Britanniae, we can be sure that William Longsword would not have been backward in laying claim to ducal authority over those inhabitants of the terra Britonum who could be represented as in any way subject to his dominion. To put it another way, students of the history of tenth-century Normandy are unlikely to be surprised if numismatists give it as their opinion that a coin found at Mont Saint-Michel and with the name of a Breton moneyer is to be read in such a way as to be evidence that towards the end of his reign William Longsword styled himself dux Britonum (or Britanniae) as well as dux Normannorum, and here it is surely relevant that in his recent book no less an authority on the early history of the Duchy of Normandy than Professor Musset uses the coin under discussion to support his interpretation of William Longsword’s policy as tantamount to the establishment of a protectorate (op. cit., pp. 128–9).

In this connection it may seem worth remarking that the late 930s and early 940s saw the terra Britonum, as well as Brittany and Normandy proper, being subjected to a number of English influences which could well help to explain why the reverse legend of the new coin seems to accord with English rather than sub-Carolingian practice in exhibiting the name of a man and not a place. From 936 onwards one has Alan Wrybeard, Æthelstan’s godson, newly returned from England, and with English help making a fair show of recovering his inheritance (for a summary of the wider history of this period, see Appendix B). In 937 Norman adventurers are supposed to have fought on Æthelstan’s side against Anlaf Guthfrithsson at the battle of Brunanburh (cf. Prentout, op. cit., pp. 181, 182 (n. 1), 301 (n. 3), etc.), an interlude that must have lent added piquancy to the open warfare between the Bretons and the Normans which again flared up in 939 and again in 944, though here perhaps we should begin to draw further distinctions between the predominantly Danish Normans of Normandy proper and the
Norsemen established at the mouth of the Loire (cf. L. Musset, op. cit., p. 102; idem, "Les Invasions: le second assaut contre l'Europe chrétienne," etc. (Paris, 1965), p. 257). Not to be overlooked, too, is a signal defeat which the French king inflicted in 943 on some Scandinavian newcomers to the area who had as one of their leaders a certain 'Setric'. A possibility that we believe merits exploration is that this otherwise unknown 'Setric' is to be identified with the mysterious 'Sihtric' (a brother apparently of Anlaf Sihtricsson) who is known only from two York coins (BMC 1079 and NC 1884, p. 253, no. 388) which must belong to the very early 940s, unless he is the same as the shadowy 'Sihtric of the Jewels' who is supposed to have been taken captive at Dublin in 942 according to a very late recension of what no more than purports to be a contemporary poem (J. O'Donovan, "Tracts Relating to Ireland" (Dublin, 1841), p. 35, but see now D. A. Binchy in Eriu, xviii (1958), p. 120). It is curious, to say the least, that both these Sihtrics, if indeed they are not one and the same man, should vanish from history in 942 or 943, i.e. at precisely the juncture that a no more successful 'Setric' appears on the Continent, and it remains an intriguing possibility that it could well have been an expedition led by a brother of Anlaf Sihtricsson that brought to north-western France one of the latter's far from common coins of the York mint. That 'Setric' was a Hiberno-Norseman, incidentally, has already been suggested, but quite independently, by no less an authority than Professor Musset ("Histoire de la Normandie," etc., p. 102).

The balance of the evidence, then, must favour the view that the + WILEIM DVX BRI coin in the parcel from Mont Saint-Michel is not merely 'continental' as opposed to 'insular' but a denier of Duke William Longsword of Normandy struck at a mint very possibly situated in the terra Britonum. As such it is a coin of the very greatest significance for historian and numismatist alike, and a reminder of the fact that no series can be regarded as worked over until such time as every minor collection, private as well as public, has been checked to ensure that everything in it is known and understood. It is with a certain sense of relief, though, that we can turn to the sixth and last of the coins in the Mont Saint-Michel parcel, a penny of Two-line type (Pl. VI. 6) with the exceptionally low weight of 14-7 gr. (0-95 g.). The problems presented by this piece are relatively minor for all that the legends appear to be completely blundered, albeit that with the eye of faith the obverse inscription does seem to essay the name and titulature of Æthelstan. In fabric and epigraphy this coin most closely resembles the products of 'insular' ateliers that are best known to us from British and Irish finds, though one must add that such pieces are more usually of Circumscription type, a circumstance that accords better with the hypothesis that the prototypes were coins of Æthelstan rather than of Eadmund. On the other hand, it could well be that this particular imitation is one of the very latest and so roughly contemporary with the penny of Anlaf Sihtricsson in the company of which it was found. If this late date could be established, it would indeed be tempting to suppose that the forger, if that is not too strong a term, muled an obsolescent 'Æthelstan' obverse with a new Two-line reverse in order to produce an imitation more in the idiom of the great bulk of the new coins of Eadmund that were coming from the English mints. However this may be, it is clear that the coin in question cannot well be dated outside the decade c. 933–c. 943 that is the effective bracket for the other coins in the company in which it was found.

The Mont Saint-Michel parcel, then, consists of six tenth-century silver pennies of which four can be regarded as official issues of the princes whose names appear on them.
Two are pennies of King Æthelstan of All England (924–39), both apparently from the latter part of the reign. One is a penny of Anlaf Sihtricsson attributable to his second reign at York (941–4), and the fourth a denier of Duke William Longsword of Normandy (932–42) which probably belongs to the last years of his rule, and which may well represent a distinct issue for the terra Britonum on the marches of which it was found. The fifth coin from the parcel is an imitation of a penny of Æthelstan which is either contemporaneous with its prototype or struck very soon afterwards, while the sixth and last of the coins is likewise imitative and dated c. 940 with a fair degree of plausibility. In other words, chronologically as well as geographically the coins are so tightly bunched that there seem no good reason why we should not treat them as constituting for all practical purposes a small hoard. The terminus post quem for the concealment would seem to be provided by the coin of Anlaf which it is difficult to date much earlier than 942, while the absence of English coins of Eadmund (939–46) may be thought indicative of bringing together if not of loss before c. 945 at the very latest. It could be significant that the flavour of the English element is of the eastern rather than the western half of England, and we would not exclude the possibility that the insular coins had been brought to Normandy by one or more of the followers of Thurmod and ‘Setric’ in 943, and especially if it could be demonstrated that the ‘Setric’ is the Sihtric presumptively expelled from York along with Anlaf in that very year when Regnald briefly occupied the Northumbrian capital. All this, though, remains speculation. What the new material from Mont Saint-Michel does provide is uncontestable evidence that the chroniclers are right when they record repeated comings and goings between Normandy and Brittany on the one hand, and England on the other, during that momentous decade c. 935–c. 945 which is seen in retrospect to have been critical for the futures of France and of England alike. It only remains for the present writers to express their gratitude to five scholars for assistance that made possible the writing of this paper, to Mr. C. E. Blunt, F.B.A., whose unrivalled card-indexes and expertise were always at our disposal, to M. Jean Lafaurie, the foremost authority on the sub-Carolingian coinages of France, and to Professors John Le Patourel and Lucien Musset, and to M. Pocquet of Haut-Jusse whose unequalled knowledge of relations between Normandy, Brittany, and England has convinced us that we were right after all in our own instinctive reaction that DV+IRB was to be interpreted as dux Britonum.

APPENDIX A

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE DISCOVERY

The architect who first undertook the work of restoration of the great western substructure was a certain Edouard Corroyer. A report of his to the Ministry of Fine Arts was dated 18 April 1876, and is preserved in the Historical Monuments Archives under the heading ‘Manche’ and sub-heading ‘Mont Saint-Michel’. The portion relating to small finds occurs in File 771 where it occupies pp. 33 and 34 together with fig. 24. It has also been printed as pp. 133–5 (with figures 45–7) of the Description de l’abbaye du Mont-Saint-Michel (Paris, 1887). Mention is made in it of the discovery of only seven coins, two deniers of St. Martin of Tours, two deniers of Mans, a denier à la tête blésochinoise, a denier of Charles of Anjou, and a gros au K of Charles V.
Corroyer was succeeded as architect by a certain Paul Gout. Included in File 776 of the same series of archives is Gout's 1902 inventory relating to small finds and to the abbey museum, the inventory being entitled a description of the objects brought together in the muniments room and in part displayed in a case made for the purpose in 1900. Three columns record (a) the date of finding, (b) the description of the find, and (c) remarks. For 1875 the entry in the second column runs ‘Coins, 11 silver and 11 copper, found in the Abbey Church’, and that in the third ‘The more interesting of the pieces found would be in the hands of M. Corroyer’.

Also preserved in File 776 is a letter dated 29 September 1913 and addressed by M. Gout to the Secretary of State for the Fine Arts. Reference is made to its being accompanied by ‘the little catalogue of the different objects which have been found scattered throughout the abbey and which I have deposited in the room (recently restored) which served as the eleventh-century monks’ dormitory’. This catalogue is doubtless to be identified with eleven unnumbered pages of typescript accompanying the letter and headed ‘CATALOGUE // of the ancient objects preserved in the Abbey // MUSEUM // (Ancient dormitory of the monks in the XIth century)’. The entries numbered 89–136 were all on exhibition in the showcases. That numbered 134 occurs on the eighth of the sheets and runs:

134. Coins found in the abbey

1. Xth-century coin in the name of William, Duke of Brittany
2. Penny struck by the abbey of St. Ouen, probably under Louis IV (936–954)
3 and 4. The same
5. Xth-century Anglo-Saxon penny
6. Penny in the name of ANLAF (941–952)
7. Fulkes IV or Fulkes V (1060–1129)
8. Æthelstan: legend on the reverse largely illegible because of damage
9. Penny of Æthelstan (925–941)
10. The same
11. Penny found at the centre of the crossing of the transepts
12. The same

Fourteen more coins, numbered 13–26, are from the Renaissance or Modern Series and though found in the abbey do not concern us here.

Nos. 11 and 12 in the above list are undoubtedly the two coins which Gout had described on p. 406 of the second volume of his book Le Mont-Saint-Michel (Paris, 1910) as ‘found by us beneath the pavement at the very centre of this crossing of the transepts’. He goes on to tell us that ‘they were contained in a cavity which had preserved the cubic form of the box which had enclosed them and of which the wood had powdered away’, and the text-blocks (nos. 241 and 242) which illustrate them are captioned ‘1908 Excavations’. A note on the same page informs us that the identifications were the work of two of the most eminent French numismatists of that period, Henri de La Tour and the Marquis Henri de Castellane, and there is some reason to suppose that the identification of all 26 of the coins listed in the 1913 catalogue had been entrusted to the same two gentlemen. When one of the present writers (J. Y.) was working on the coins in 1966, only 23 could be found, the first 12 of the pieces described above but only 11 of those numbered 13–26. Curiously all these last are of copper—it will be remembered that Gout’s 1902 note had claimed that the coins found in 1875 had
numbered 22, 11 silver and 11 copper. No less curiously, though, the 1913 list does not appear to include a single one of the 7 silver (or billon) coins listed by Corroyer in his 1876 report.

It would seem that in 1902 Corroyer still held a total of 22 coins, 11 silver and 11 copper, which Gout believed had come to light in 1875, but which it is possible derive from a later phase of the very extensive works for which Corroyer had been responsible. His retention of them need not have been irregular, and may well have been thought fortunate inasmuch as the 7 coins which he reported to the Ministry in 1876 appear to have vanished without trace. The 22 coins are not described by Gout in his exhaustive book of 1910, and their self-evident importance is such that we must suppose that Gout had still to see them. Indeed, it could well have been the publication of Gout's magnum opus which prompted their rediscovery. Theoretically, of course, coins 1–12 in the 1913 list need not have come from Corroyer and could all have been found by Gout himself between 1910 and 1913, but the probability is that 11 of them (nos. 1–6 and 8–12) were in Corroyer's possession in 1910 and in 1902. That they derive from the works carried out at the abbey in the last third of the nineteenth century must seem a very reasonable supposition. What may seem open to question, though, is whether the coins were in fact found quite as early as 1875. One would give much to know whether Gout was drawing an inference or perhaps had positive information to this effect which we are denied.

It only remains for us to thank Mme Berce, the most helpful Librarian and Archivist of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. The archives in her care are extraordinarily extensive, but there are many lacunae. For example, no trace can be found of Gout's detailed documentation in respect of the 1908 excavations which have furnished us with the only exact findspot for any of the coins recorded in the 1913 catalogue.

APPENDIX B

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE FIND OF TENTH-CENTURY COINS AT MONT SAINT-MICHEL

911 Rollo receives Upper Normandy by the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte.
925 The ‘Baioasses’ ravage the territory between the Seine and the Dive (Flodoard, *Annals*, p. 30).
c. 930 Death of Rollo.
931 Juhael, Count of Rennes, leads a Breton army against Normandy. It is brought to battle at (?) Caen by the Normans under a leader called Flestan or Félecan, but the latter is killed and the Normans are driven back as far as (?) Ouistreham (Prentout, pp. 284 and 288, basing his account on that of P. le Baud (*Histoire de Bretagne* (ed. d'Hozier, Paris, 1638), p. 132) who had access to annals now lost). Prentout had expounded his views in a paper ‘Les limites de la Bretagne et de la Normandie au xie siècle. La bataille de Caen (931)’ published in the 1912 volume of the *Bulletin de géographie historique et descriptive du Comité des Travaux historiques* (pp. 268–73), but more recently, in a paper ‘La victoire de Cancale remportée par les Bretons sur les Normands en l'année 931’ printed in the *Mémoires de la*
William Longsword is granted terram Brittonum in ora maritima sitam (Flodoard, Annals, p. 55), i.e. the Cotentin and the Avranchin. The background to this grant is Charles the Bald's 867 cession to Count Salomon of the county of Coutances with all its dependencies (Annals of St. Bertin, ed. G. Waitz, pp. 87 and 88), a cession which by definition included the Avranchin. It would seem, though, that in fact Breton penetration of the area extended beyond the strict limits of the county of Coutances, and that the Bretons had pushed as far as the Orne and even the Dive. Many place-names in Lower Normandy attest this Breton settlement (H. Prentout, Etude critique, etc., p. 286), but Breton domination had been largely overthrown by the groups of Normans who from 919 onwards had invaded the whole of Brittany, and who had driven into exile Breton leaders such as Matuidoi and Alan Wrybeard (ibid., p. 287— we are concerned with a virtual invasion of Brittany by the sea-borne Normans who take Nantes and ravage the whole country—cf. chapters xxvii and xxviii of the Chronicle of Nantes (ed. R. Merlet, Paris, 1896), etc.). William Longsword's grant of 933 was doubtless the consequence of a vigorous and successful campaign in the Cotentin and Avranchin, though Flodoard (op. et pag. cit.) records his homage to the French king (cf. Prentout, op. cit., p. 291; A. le M. de La Borderie, Histoire de Bretagne, etc., ii, pp. 378 and 379).

933–4 Rioul, the Norman captain of the Cotentin, revolts from William Longsword (Dudo of Saint-Quentin, De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum (ed. J. Lair, Caen, 1865), pp. 187–9), but is overthrown at Pré-de-la-Bataille near Rouen.

936 Death of the French king (14/15 January). Embassy to King Æthelstan of England from the magnates who wish to have Louis IV as their king. Louis lands at Boulogne and is crowned at Laon (19 June). Later the intervention of Æthelstan secures the return of the Breton exiles headed by Alan Wrybeard (Flodoard, Annals, p. 63; Chronicle of Nantes, pp. 82, 83, 88, and 89; Dudo of Saint-Quentin, De moribus, etc., pp. 193 and 194 with confusion between the French king's return and that of Alan Wrybeard, the latter clearly involving William Longsword's agreement, cf. de La Borderie, op. cit. ii, pp. 409 and 410; P. Lauer, Le Regne de Louis IV d'Outremer (Paris, 1900), p. 80).

937 Alan Wrybeard captures Dol and expels the Normans (Chronicle of Nantes, p. 89; Flodoard, Annals, p. 68; cf. D. Morice, Histoire civile et ecclésiastique de Bretagne, i, p. 60). A general liberation of Brittany follows.

939 The Bretons defeat the Normans (1 August) at Trans near St. Malo (Flodoard, Annals, p. 74; Chronicle of Nantes, p. 91, n. 2; cf. le Baud, op. cit., pp. 134 and 138; Lauer, op. cit., p. 81).

940 William Longsword and Louis IV meet in the neighbourhood of Amiens (Flodoard, Annals, p. 75—Dudo confuses this interview with that of 942; cf. Lauer, op. cit., pp. 50 and 51).

942 William Longsword welcomes Louis IV to Rouen. There are present on this occasion William of Poitiers and the Breton leaders, these last doubtless including Iuhael Berenger, Budic, and Alan Wrybeard (Flodoard, Annals, p. 94; cf. Lauer, op. cit., p. 80 and n. 3). The treaty of peace concluded between the Bretons and Normans could explain the presence of the Breton leaders at Rouen (cf. Flodoard, Annals, p. 94; Lauer, op. cit., p. 117). At the end of the year (17 or 20 December ?) William Longsword is assassinated at Picquigny. Minority of Richard I.
Louis IV crushes a revolt by pagan Normans led by a certain Turmod. However, a fresh descent on the coast under the leadership of a certain Sétic impels Turmod to relapse into paganism. Louis IV brings them to battle, and both are slain (Flodoard, *Annals*, p. 88). According to Richer, Sétic must have come up the Seine with a very sizeable force, cf. Lauer, op. cit., pp. 100, 101, 272, and 275; F. Lot, *Les Derniers Carolingiens* (Paris, 1891), p. 5.

Quarrel between Alan Wrybeard and Berenger brings anarchy to Brittany from which the Normans profit. Brittany is invaded and Dol captured. The Bretons retake the city after a second battle goes in their favour, but the Normans win the third and generally triumph. The Bretons are expelled, and Normans newly arrived from overseas are settled in their place (Flodoard, *Annals*, p. 94; Lauer, op. cit., p. 117 and notes 2–4—he believes that these Normans *qui nuper a transmarinis advenerant regionibus* were most probably those who had arrived the previous year). Louis IV sets out for Normandy and arrives at Rouen. Hugh the Great lays siege to Bayeux, but Louis IV orders him to desist. Hugh obeys, and Louis is received at Bayeux (Flodoard, *Annals*, p. 95).

Hagrold, the commander at Bayeux, seeks a meeting with the king, but the interview at Salines-de-Corbon on the banks of the Dive near Corbon-en-Auge is in reality a trap. Louis IV succeeds in escaping (13 July) and takes refuge at Rouen where, however, he is taken prisoner by the Normans of that city who hand him over to Hugh the Great (Flodoard, *Annals*, pp. 98 and 99; Dudo de Saint-Quentin, *De moribus, etc.*, pp. 239–41—where Hagrold is styled a Danish king; cf. Prentout, op. cit., p. 359, etc.; Lauer, op. cit., pp. 133 and 287).