THE COINS OF QUENTOVIC FROM THE CUERDALE HOARD

IN THE MUSEUM OF BOULOGNE-SUR-MER

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The hoard from Cuerdale (near Preston, Lancashire), discovered on 15 May 1840, has already been the subject of many publications. Nevertheless, our knowledge of it is still not fully complete. Claimed as 'treasure trove', that is Crown property, the major part of the hoard was handed over to the chancellor and council of the duchy of Lancaster. The latter, intending to act in the best interests of science and archaeology, an attitude much applauded at the time, dispersed the hoard amongst various British institutions (at London, Cambridge, Oxford, Glasgow, etc.) and abroad, particularly in France, as well as to several private collectors of different nationalities. If those groups of some importance conserved in national collections are well known, others remain to be discovered, in Britain perhaps and certainly in France. In France provincial collections, often deregistered in order to hide them during the Second World War, are gradually resurfacing, dependent on the efforts of those responsible for their preservation and the work of local volunteers. Thus, just across the Channel, at Boulogne-sur-Mer, M. Pierre Leclercq has undertaken the task of reclassifying the coins and has been encouraged in this by the museum's conservateur, M. Claude Seillier. In the preliminary studies he came across a certain number of coins which were part of the Cuerdale hoard, as shown by the minutes of the meeting of 10 December 1842: 'M. Le Chancellier du Duché de Lancastre envoie pour le Museum de Boulogne 6 pièces de monnaie de Charles le Chauve et 36 pièces de monnaie de Cunetti qui ont été trouvées dans l'année 1840 à Cuerdale dans le Lancashire'. Twenty-two of these coins have been rediscovered, in two groups wrapped up in a single sheet of paper. Mr Peter Seaby examined these two groups in 1980, and concurred with our opinion that they belonged together, and thus that the provenance of the six Carolingian coins was sure: they are those extracted from the Cuerdale hoard to be given to the Boulogne Museum. It is these with which we are particularly concerned: the coins of Cnut/Cunetti and Cnut/Siefredus rediscovered are:

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We hope to find the twenty missing coins and to give later the full list of the coins from the Cuerdale hoard now in the Boulogne Museum.

No doubt as a result of deliberate choice by the duchy authorities, the six Carolingian coins in question were all struck at Quentovic. The very fact that the Boulogne Museum has retained six coins from Quentovic is interesting in itself; the various inventories of the Cuerdale hoard which have been published are based on that of Edward Hawkins and only include
a single denier of Quentovic, type GDR, weighing 1.18 g. We should note, however, an exception recorded by Dolley and Morrison; they, in addition to the denier conserved in the British Museum, give the following description: 'Gariel xiii,54 variety but obolus, Morrison and Grunthal 1372, Charles the Simple, Quentovic, 1, illustrated NC 1843'. In fact, the reference to Gariel corresponds to no.1371 of Morrison and Grunthal and not to no.1372; the latter corresponds to an obole of Melle conserved in the British Museum (no. 249 in the catalogue) and provenanced in fact from the Cuerdale hoard. There is some confusion and this obole of Melle has been given an erroneous reference to Gariel and hence a wrong mint. Furthermore, we find this same confusion in Morrison and Grunthal, p.375: 'Charles the Simple, Quentovic (1372) 1'. This obvious error (one seeks in vain for this obole of Melle in the two inventories) is nevertheless, in a certain sense, premonitory.

We must describe in some detail the Quentovic coins in the Boulogne Museum:

1. +GRATIA D-I REX, carolingian monogram, KRLS, chevron in centre. +QVVENTOVVICI, cross pattee with a pellet in 2nd and 3rd quarters. Denier, 1.74 g, Gariel xxxii,187; M & G 716.
2. +GRATIA D-I REX, carolingian monogram, HRLS, pellet in centre. +QVVENTOVVICI, cross pattee with a pellet in 2nd and 3rd quarters. Denier, 1.665 g, Gariel xxxii, 187; M & G 716.
3. +CRVTIV D-I REX, carolingian monogram KRLS, nothing in centre. QVVENTOVVICI, cross pattee. Obole, 0.45 g, Gariel xxxii, 190; M & G 720.
4. +CARLVS REX FR (S horizontal), carolingian monogram CRLS, inverted chevron in centre. +QVANT0VVIC0 (Q and 0 with pellet in centre, C square), cross with two pellets at end of each arm. Denier, 1.34 g, Gariel xlii,54; Poey d'Avant cliii,12; M & G 1371.
5. +CARLVS REX FR (S horizontal), carolingian monogram CRLS, inverted chevron in centre. +QVANT0VVIC0 (Q and 0 with pellet in centre, C square), cross with two pellets at end of each arm. Denier, 1.31 g, Gariel xlii,54, Poey d'Avant cliii,12; M & G 1371.
6. +CRATIA D-RIE+, carolingian monogram HRLS, nothing in centre. +QVVENTOVVICI, cross pattee with a pellet in 2nd and 3rd quarters. Denier, 1.35 g, Gariel --; M & G --.

The deniers 1 and 2, and the obole 3, are of a type called GDR by M. Jean Lafaurie, introduced shortly after the edict of Pitres (864) and characterised by the obverse legend GRATIA DEI REX. The coins of Quentovic almost always bear a cross pattee with two pellets, a peculiarity which is only found sporadically at Thérouanne, Cassel, Amiens, and Visé, as well as at Troyes, Bar-sur-Aube, and Vendeuvre. These places are grouped into two distinct geographical zones, both of them fairly small. Do the pellets constitute a difference having a numismatic significance, or do we have the simple copying of the type of a main mint by the others? It is curious to note that at Quentovic certain coins do not carry the pellets; for example, the obole from the Cuerdale hoard in the Boulogne Museum, where the light weight and defective legend lead one to place it at a date later than that of the two deniers. Coins of Quentovic of this type have been found in numerous hoards belonging to the end of the ninth century, in particular in fair quantity from the hoards of Glisy, Ablaincourt, Féchain, Compiègne, Assebroek, and Chalo-Saint-Mars.

The two deniers 4 and 5 belong to a rare type: Morrison and Grunthal record one specimen at Brussels and one at Paris (acquired in 1849 from the
Rousseau collection. In fact the Brussels example (Inv. 27) is not of this type, but of a similar one (Poey d'Avant, cliii,9); we are grateful to M. Van Keymeulen for this information. Gariel gives an engraving of a specimen which is none other than that of the French Cabinet, although he does not indicate its location, contrary to Poey d'Avant who also describes it. A further example figured in the Meyer collection (no.352, not illustrated). This rarity is not just an apparent one; the coins that we have been able to see, the two from Boulogne and that in Paris, come from the same pair of dies and have the same die-axes. Even if the dies exhibit signs of wear on some coins, it is certain that the issues cannot have been abundant. This rarity, the peculiar character of the epigraphy, and the typology itself have contributed to the hesitation over classification that one can sense; Gariel attributes the type to Charles the Fat, Prou to Charlemagne, Morrison and Grunthal to Charles the Simple, coming back to the former attribution of the Cabinet at Paris still recorded on its ticket. Such attributions have not, in any case, always been justified. Gariel, in fact, follows Longpérier (Catalogue of the Rousseau collection, 1847, p.196) who explains his attribution as follows: 'In order to class these two coins under Charles the Fat, I base myself on the relationship of their style with that of the deniers discovered at Cuerdale..., which carry the name of a Danish sea-king'. It is indeed an odd coincidence, and Longpérier probably would have considered his attribution as assured by the presence of this very type in the Cuerdale hoard. Prou classes this denier to the second period of the reign of Charlemagne (781–800) perhaps because of the titulature CARLVS REX FR and also because the name of the town is not apparently followed by a determinant (civitas, portus...). In reality this determinant is 'vicus', contained in the very name Quentovic. Clearly the spelling QVANTOVVICO with an A is unusual and may pass as an archaism. We have only found four deniers that resemble it:

+ CARLVS REX FR, carolingian monogram CRLS.
+ QVANTOVVICO (C square), cross.
Poey d'Avant cliii,10.
+ CARLVS REX FR, carolingian monogram CRLS.
+ QVANTOVVICO (C square), cross with four pellets.
Poey d'Avant cliii,9.
+ CARLVS REX FR, carolingian monogram KRLS, pellet in centre.
+ QVANTOVVICO (C square), cross.
BN 1965–1100, 1.55 g.
+ CARLVS R[EX FR], carolingian monogram KRLS inverted, inverted chevron in centre.
+ [QVA]NTVVICO (C square), cross with two pellets at end of each arm.
Poey d'Avant cliii,11.

It seems certain that these types are nearly contemporary. The presence of one of them in the Cuerdale hoard permits one to set aside the attribution to Charlemagne; it would be by many years the oldest coin in the hoard. The types find no place in the coinage of Charles the Bald of whom we know the major issues, which are on average much heavier. There remain the possibilities of Charles the Fat or Charles the Simple, between whom it is difficult to choose. The possibility of their being imitations struck in Britain has been suggested to us by Mme F. Dumas and Professor P. Grierson.

The denier 6 is of the same type as deniers 1 and 2. In particular we may note the transposition of letters in the legend: D-R I EX for D- I REX. It is, however, different from them, both to the eye and to the touch; its diameter is larger, 22 mm compared with 20/21 mm, and the style of the engraving is completely different: the monogram, the cross, and the letters are large, flat, without relief. These characteristics and the light weight
prompt one to place it distinctly after the reign of Charles the Bald. It can be compared with two examples in the Paris Cabinet (Prou 199 and 200) which weigh 1.38 g and 1.25 g. Mme Françoise Dumas points out their similarities with several deniers in the British Museum (nos 303, 307, 308) of which the weights are not useful (broken flans) but which derive from the Inchkenneth hoard. She places the manufacture of all these pieces towards the middle of the tenth century, earlier than those present in the Fécamp hoard. In fact, the denier from Cuerdale and the two cited from the Paris Cabinet differ slightly from the pieces in the British Museum by style and details of execution which show their earlier date; in particular the initial cross is a cross pattee, while on the Inchkenneth coins it is formed of four triangles. In the Cuerdale hoard, as in the one from St Denis, they lie alongside deniers from Arras with the legend ATREBAS CIVI with the same flat style, which are found equally in the Assebroek hoard dated to the reign of Charles the Simple. Thus it is to this reign that we should attribute these Quentovic deniers.

The discovery of the Carolingian coins from the Cuerdale hoard in the Boulogne Museum does not modify fundamentally our view of the hoard. On the contrary it is a vital source for our understanding of the coinage of Quentovic at the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries.

NOTES

1. E. Hawkins, 'An Account of Coins and Treasure found in Cuerdale', NC 5 (1842-43), 1-48, 53-104. See also NC 1964, pp.218-82.
2. Hawkins, p.58 no.39, Pl.6 no.76.