COINS OF THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD FROM REPTON, DERBYSHIRE: II

MARTIN BIDDLE, CHRISTOPHER BLUNT, BIRTHE KJØLBYE-BIDDLE, MICHAEL METCALF, AND HUGH PAGAN

The first eleven seasons of excavation, 1974–84, at the Anglo-Saxon monastery and Viking fortress at Repton produced ten coins of the pre-conquest period: two sceattas, a denier of Pepin the Short, a cut half-penny of Æthelred II, a broken half of a penny of Edward the Confessor, and a parcel of five three-line pennies deposited c. 873–4. The twelfth and thirteenth seasons in 1985–6 produced nine more: a third sceatta, a single three-line penny of Alfred, a penny of Harold I, a cut farthing of Edward the Confessor, and a second parcel of five three-line pennies. The 1985–6 finds are published here immediately, partly on account of their own importance, but also because of the light they throw on the previous discoveries, on the interpretation of the site, and on the whole question of coin-finds from graveyards.

1. A second parcel of pennies of the 870s from a grave at Repton

HUGH PAGAN

In 1985 a second parcel of three-line pennies was discovered in a grave at Repton. The first parcel was found in 1982 scattered among a great quantity of disarticulated human bones in a mass-burial below a mound in the vicarage garden. The second parcel was discovered in another part of the site, 80 m or more from the first discovery, in a single male grave cut down against (and hence later than) the foundations of the east wall of the north porticus of St Wystan’s Church (Grave 529: Trench 4, Layers 1804 and 1835). The five coins were found lying flat on the floor of the grave on the south side of the head and shoulders, accompanied by a gold ring (fig. 1) which was lying by the right ear. The burial had been in a wooden coffin, the decay of which was probably the cause of some movement and disturbance of the bones. Either this process or the decomposition of the body had spread the coins and the ring over an area of 350 mm by 100 mm, but there is no doubt that they were originally deposited together within the coffin and were a deliberate burial deposit, perhaps in a leather or textile bag, the possible presence of which was suggested by areas of dark staining. The coins may be described as follows:

Burgred.

1. BMC type A. Moneyer Cenred.

Obv. BVRGRED RE+ Bust r.
Rev. CENRED: MON: ETA: in three lines, MON and ETA contained in whole lunettes.
Die-axis: 180° Wt. 0.50g (chipped). Find no. 6292. (Pl. 1.)

2. BMC type A. Moneyer Ealdulf.

Obv. BVRGRED RE+ Bust r.
Rev. EALDVLF: MON: ETA: in three lines, MON and ETA contained in whole lunettes.
Die-axis: 270° Wt. 0.46g (chipped). Find no. 6273. (Pl. 2.)


3 This paragraph by Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle; see further below, pp.24-8.
Alfred.

1. *BMC* type ia var. Moneyer Biarnwulf.
   Obv. + [A]ELBRED/RE+ Bust r. dividing legend.
   Rev. BIARNV[L] F MON/ETA in three lines, the lunettes broken at top and bottom, as *BMC* type ia, and also broken at corners.
   Die-axis: → 90° Wt. 0.39g (fragmentary). Find no. 6276. (Pl., 3.)

   Obv. XAELBRD/REX Bust of crude style r. dividing legend.
   Rev. DDVDA/MON/ETA in three lines, MON and ETA contained in lunettes broken at the corners, the straight sides of the lunettes beaded.
   Die-axis: \(\varnothing\) 320° Wt. 0.48g (slightly chipped). Find no. 6272. (Pl., 4.)

   Obv. + [X?]ELBRED X Bust of very crude style r.
   Rev. DIAREL/MMON/ETA in three lines, the inscription divided by lines with hooked ends.
   Die-axis: \(\varnothing\) 230° Wt. 0.59g (fragmentary). Find no. 6277. (Pl., 5.)

The two coins of Burgred date from late in his reign, since both carry in the bottom right-hand corner of their reverse design the inverted pyramid of six pellets which is one of the characteristic features of coins struck c. 871-74. No die-duplicate has been traced of either coin, but the coin of Cenred is struck from dies analogous in style to those of *BMC* 174, and the coin of Ealdulf is struck from an obverse die similar to that of a coin of the same moneyer in the British Museum from the 1924 Beeston Tor hoard.

The three coins of Alfred are more unusual and add further to our knowledge of an obscure area of Alfred's coinage already brought to attention in connection with the coins found in the mass-burial excavated at Repton in 1982.

The evidence of the Croydon and St Albans hoards shows decisively that in 871-72 coins struck in Alfred's name were all of *BMC* type i, the type of Alfred identical in design to Burgred's type A. Coins of Alfred's *BMC* types ia, ib and ic do not seem to have entered circulation before c. 873, despite the fact that the issue of corresponding types of Burgred, respectively *BMC* types B, C and D, belongs in essence to the 860s and terminated c. 870. It has been argued elsewhere that part of the explanation for this lies in the fact that a number of the coins being struck c. 873 were imitative in character, and the nature of the coins listed here as of *BMC* type ib, moneyer Dudda, and of *BMC* type ic, moneyer Diarelm, adds additional weight to such a suggestion.

The coin of Dudda, as it happens, is a die-duplicate of *SCBI Cambridge* 542, a coin long ago recognised as irregular by the present writer; the appearance of this new and better preserved specimen reveals that the straight sides of the lunettes on the reverse are beaded, a feature paralleled on some of Burgred's coins of the 860s but otherwise unknown for Alfred. The Diarelm coin of *BMC* type ic presents other irregular features, most notably the obverse bust, which once more echoes Burgred coins of the 860s, and the curious omission of the word REX from the obverse inscription.

The coin of *BMC* ia, or more correctly a variant of *BMC* type ia, is by contrast well designed and has carefully spelled obverse and reverse inscriptions. Its moneyer, Biarnwulf, although not previously recorded for a coin of this kind, is a known moneyer in *BMC* type i, and there seems no reason to question the coin's official status. Indeed, it is becoming clearer with every new discovery that whatever view one may take of *BMC* types ib and ic, *BMC* type ia represents a proper grouping of officially struck coins belonging to the latter stages of the lunette coinage.

The evidence that this group of coins provides for the dating of the grave in which they

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4 'Repton Coins I', 117-19

6 There was a coin of this moneyer of *BMC* type i in the Croydon hoard, and at least one further coin of the moneyer and type seems to exist.
were found is decisive in one respect in that they point to a date for the making of the grave no earlier than 873.

The presence among them of a coin of Alfred's BMC type ia, which other hoard evidence shows was struck late within the lunette coinage, may mean that the burial took place in 874 but would also allow the burial to have taken place later in the 870s, for it is uncertain how far into the 870s the striking of Alfred's lunette coinage continued. The effect is to leave it an open question whether the body in the grave was that of a Mercian dignitary buried before Burgred's deposition, or was that of a dignitary buried subsequently.7

One may properly indicate at this point the essential difficulty that confronts numismatists in connection with the dating of coins struck from 874 onwards. This is the fact that all the extant coins of Burgred's successor Ceolwulf II, who was installed on the Mercian throne by the Viking army in 874, and was still reigning in Mercia in 877, belong to a quite distinct period of coinage during which moneyers were striking coins of new, non-lunette types of fine silver and improved weight both for Ceolwulf and for Alfred.8 It is not likely that either king could have commenced the manufacture of a fine silver coinage of this character in the months immediately following Burgred's deposition, and it seems probable that if any coins were struck in England south of the Humber in 874–75 they were still of lunette design, and most likely those of BMC type ia mentioned above. Yet no hoards bracket the final stages of the lunette coinage and the beginning of the new fine silver coinage, and the date of the transition from one to the other cannot be specified, not least because there can be no certainty that Ceolwulf's fine silver coins belong to the period up to 877 for which his kingship is documented, rather than to the period from 877 into the early 880s during which he might still have been reigning in Mercia.9

A detailed study of the lunette coinage of the 870s must await the forthcoming publication by Miss M. M. Archibald of the 1968 St Albans (Abbey Orchard) hoard, but it may be convenient to conclude the present note with a summary listing of the known coins of BMC types ia, ib and ic of Alfred. (This listing does not take account of new coins of the type that have come to light since the text of this note was first composed).

7 But on this question, see further below, pp.25–8.
8 'Repton Coins I', 119 and n.14.
2. A new variety of sceat from Repton related to series J: type 36, with the reverse of type 85

D. M. METCALF

A sceat from c. 725 found during excavations east of St Wystan’s Church, Repton, in 1985, by the left hand of the probably male skeleton in Grave 524 (Trench 4, Layer 1161; Recorded Find 6282), combines two well-known designs, which have not previously been recorded in combination. The obverse is of type 36 (diademed bust right, cross in front of
Type 36 is a scarce coinage, of which there are probably fewer than a dozen specimens in existence. It occurs in two main styles, 'fine' and 'coarse'. The obverse of the Repton find is in the very distinctive 'coarse' style: the ear is V-shaped, and the eye is enclosed in a similar V which depends from the diadem (pl., 6). There can be very little doubt that it is by the same hand as a coin of type 36 in the British Museum – BMC 164 (pl., 7). The new specimen adds to our understanding of the design, because one can see clearly a double boat-shaped curve under the bust, which is obscure or off the flan in BMC 164. There is, on the other hand, no hand holding the cross on the Repton coin.

If the style of the reverse were equally distinctive and regular, one would have to describe the coin as a mule between types. It is not difficult, however, to decide that the reverse is irregular. Although almost all the elements of the bird-on-cross design are present, they are rather untidily disposed. If one makes comparison with the row of regular coins in pl. 4 of Rigold's corpus (B IIIB, 1–6), the Repton coin seems to differ in the following ways. The bird's wing makes a large, fat V. There are only two tail-feathers instead of three, and the pellets in which they terminate are out of the horizontal. As regards the annulets and groups of pellets on either side of the cross, they are out of balance: those on the right are distinctly higher than those on the left. The pellets are in groups of four whereas they should be in groups of three.

The coin, then, is from the workshop of BMC 164, but its reverse is a close and quite careful imitation of type 85.

If this were all, it would be puzzling enough, but there is more. The same distinctive obverse style, and design, are found in at least five specimens of type 3a (series G) (pl., 8–10). These clearly show stylistic decline, the later specimens being of careless workmanship (and very coppery). But even at its most devolved (pl., 10) the reverse keeps to the 'official' design of three crosslets and one group of three dots. Notice that the double boat-shaped curve of pl., 6 recurs on pl., 10, and that the version with a hand holding the cross (pl., 9), is from the same model as pl., 7. The former variety recurs on a coin (not illustrated here) found at Térouanne. The normal obverse style of type 3a, known from numerous specimens, is quite different – rounded and well-modelled, more Romano – and the best examples are of excellent silver.

We appear to have discovered, then, a run of coins by the same die-cutter, beginning with specimens imitating two or three different well-known reverses (the coin chosen in BMC to illustrate type 36 is evidently the imitation, not the original) before settling down to a more regular production of imitations of type 3a. The validity of this conclusion rests on the opinion that the coins in question are all by the same workman. The clinching detail is perhaps the hand holding the cross (pl., 9). The argument also involves the premises that the more careful coins (types 36/85 and 36) will be the earlier members of the series, and

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11 No. 3 is from the E. Elmore Jones collection, NCirc 78 (1970), illus. 99. Nos 4 and 5 are in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, ex Carter, and no. 4 is ex Lockett 214c (British Numismatic Society photographic record). Another specimen, ex Montagn, is illustrated in BNI 26 (1949–51), 277 and pl. 1, 18; and there is one from Térouanne (see below).
12 A. Hermand, Histoire monétaire de la province d'Artois (Saint-Omer, 1843), pl. 1, 5 and pp. 29, 523. Also a type 72. Line-drawings of both are reproduced in D. M. Metcalf, 'La traversée de la Manche (VIIIe – IXe siècles)' BSN 34 (1979), 311–15. The coin is very similar to pl. 5 except that the crosslets are aligned differently.
that the coins of type 3a are unlikely to be imitations by another hand in so far as the imitative specimens of types 85 and 36 are scarce and therefore unlikely to have attracted copying.

There is an element of contradiction between the types chosen to imitate, and the alloy of the imitations. Types 85 and 3a belong relatively early in the sceatta series,13 at a time when the alloy was still often better than 85 per cent 'silver' (Ag + Au + Pb). The relative dating of type 36 is less certain (there is no hoard evidence for it) but the one specimen which has been analysed was 67 per cent 'silver', perhaps implying a slightly later date.14 In contrast, the imitations, particularly those of type 3a, are very debased. The two Carter specimens (pl. 9-10) have been analysed and were found to contain c. 37 and 22 per cent silver respectively, with substantial amounts of tin (in the range c. 8–15 per cent).15 One would expect these imitations to be broadly contemporary with their prototypes; but if so why, one must ask, were coins of good silver and others with very little silver being made at about the same date? Were they fraudulent copies being put into circulation alongside 'official' issues, or were they being produced in another region with a less developed currency, where lower standards were acceptable?

Determining the region of origin of an official, substantive issue of sceattas is hazardous enough, for there are usually too few provenances to make a good distribution-map. Determining the source of a group of imitations is doubly hazardous, unless one has some insight into the reasons for the copying, or at least into the general background. The die-cutter was not necessarily located in an obvious commercial centre (he might even have been peripatetic), and the imitations may or may not have gained currency in the same region as their prototype.

The only recorded provenances for the 'coarse' style of imitations, apparently, are Repton, and Térouanne in northern France. The types copied—85, 36 and 3a—themselves remain problematic. In the last couple of years, specimens of type 3a have turned up at very widely-scattered localities in England,16 and also in excavations at the Benedictine abbey at Corbie in northern France,17 and the writer has had to retract his suggested attribution to Sussex in favour of an attribution to the other side of the Channel (where Quintovic is the obvious possibility).18 On the other hand, the distribution of type 85 (and 37) in England is still markedly peripheral,19 with relatively few specimens from east Kent or Hamwic. There is, of course, an earlier find of type 85 from Repton.20 A specimen recently excavated at Norwich, however, has prompted the comment that the up-dated distribution pattern may perhaps, after all, be more widespread in England, and that if one compares a distribution map of types 85 and 37 in England with similar maps for types which are certainly continental,21 the differences are not now as clear-cut as they once seemed. There is, indeed, a good number of finds of type 85 from the Continent.22 The Danish provenances of types 85 and 37 should also be taken into account, even if the coins

13 They are associated in the Garton-on-the-Wolds grave-find, and both types are known in specimens of good alloy.
15 D. M. Metcalf, 'Chemical analyses of English sceattas', BNU 48 (1978) 12–19, analyses 0.201–202. Also M.8 for a specimen of 'normal' style and very good silver. The Corbie find (below; not in the same style as the imitations discussed here) contained c. 30 per cent 'silver' and c. 9 per cent tin.
16 e.g. at South Ferriby (Humberside), Aylesbury (Bucks.), and at Corbie abbey (Picardy).
21 D. M. Metcalf, 'Sceat from excavations at Norwich (Fishergate)', East Anglian Archaeology (forthcoming).
in question are imitative. If such radical reappraisals can be discussed, one should hesitate to decide whether the little group of imitations of types 85, 36, and 3a is English or continental.

If the imitations were shown to be north French – which it should be emphasized is still very much an open question – the recent find would not be the only foreign coin to have been carried as far into the English midlands as Repton: there is also the recent find of a coin of Pepin there. Perhaps one should consider whether politically important sites on the fringes of the main area of circulation of sceattas in England tend to produce a higher proportion of coins that have been carried over long distances. Northampton might be a parallel, with its two imitations of type 3a (and nothing else), and one may also note specimens, in various styles, from South Ferriby on Humberside, Binbrook (between Caistor and Louth), Lincolnshire, and Wymeswold, Leicestershire. If type 3a should eventually be shown to belong to Quentovic, one might even go further, and envisage such inland finds from the midlands and the north as reflecting journeys to and from the Continent via Hamwic or the Wantsum channel – either route from Quentovic was possible, depending on the winds and tides.

We have not yet asked ourselves whether the reverses of the type 36 and type 3a ‘copies’ appear to be imitative. If in one case they were not, the connexion might serve to locate the workshop of the ‘coarse’ style we are looking at. Even a single pair of coins, with linked reverses, but with obverses in quite different styles, might be thought to be decisive. We should remember Stewart’s axiom, that whereas congruity of style may indicate that two coins are from the same mint, disparity of style certainly does not prove that they are from different places. One would, however, expect coins linked in this way to be congruous in their alloy, and as we have seen, the available analyses suggest that the imitative series falls to levels of silver contents far below those of the prototypes.

The reverses of the imitative version of type 3a offer only a simple, geometric design, the style of which is difficult to differentiate; but the prototypes have crosses in the margin, at the centre of each side of the square. The absence of at least one such cross can be seen very clearly at the left-hand side on pl., 9. The reverse of the imitative type 36, on the other hand, is very similar so far as one can judge from the published photograph to SCBI Glasgow 79 (type 36 in ‘fine’ style) and could be by the same hand. This may be a crucial link. Type 36 in ‘fine’ style, which is conceivable from the same workshop as type 37 (two facing profiles/whorl of four birds around cross), is provenanced only from North Elmham, Norfolk (misidentified until now, but cf. SCBI Glasgow 79 for the obverse and 80 for the reverse) and from Hamwic (Southampton). If types 85, 37, 36, and (apparently) the imitative series as well are all related, and from one region of England, provenances make it difficult to see where that region could be other than Mercia or Middle Anglia, since we can rather confidently exclude Kent, Wessex, and East Anglia, and probably also Essex.

Against this English evidence, however, we must set the finds of type 3a from Etaples, Terouanne, and Corbie, and from Sussex – and the virtual absence of the type from Hamwic. On the whole, a continental origin for type 3a now appears more plausible.

The fact that so many of the overlapping groupings of sceattas under discussion are subject to imitation and/or are debased or plated, even though they would seem to be of intermediate date, may eventually be seen to be connected with their fringe distribution, e.g. in Mercia, away from the main concentration of finds in south-eastern England. In

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23 Note an imitative specimen from Étaples, illustrated in Roach Smith, Collectanea Antiqua, ii (1852), pl. 44, no. 5.
26 See above, note 14.
places where plenty of good quality coins were available, debased varieties may have failed to gain currency. There may in that sense be something deceptive about their geographical pattern in England. For the present, one can only record the new material, with its parallels, and pose some of the difficult questions it raises.

3. **A single penny of Alfred from Repton**

**HUGH PAGAN**

This broken and incomplete penny was found in August 1986 in Grave 651 in the cemetery immediately east of the burial mound in the vicarage garden, in an area which formed the westernmost part of the graveyard in the later Anglo-Saxon period (Trench 10. Layer 448; Recorded Find 6886). The coin lay beneath the right knee of the ?female skeleton. It should probably be regarded as a casual loss or as a residual find disturbed from an earlier layer, rather than as a deliberate deposit.

The small fragment shows on one side the letter G followed by what can only be the left-hand limb of the letter V, with traces of horizontal lines above the G and below both letters. This would therefore be part of the moneyer’s name that occupies the central line of a coin of lunette type and, if this fragment is in fact part of the same coin as the major fragment, and it does appear just to fit to it, we get D MON/ G V [ | VN| ETA], the G V fragment belonging at the left-hand side of the reverse. The obvious supplement would be G V[DEM]VN, giving the name of a moneyer Guthmund, known for the late coins of Burgred, although not as yet published as a moneyer for Alfred.

The other side of the small fragment should therefore show the RE of AELB [RED], or a portion of these letters. The R is indeed clear, but only a very small part of the upright and top of the next letter can be seen before the fragment breaks off. It is impossible to be certain that this is an E, but it could be.

It also remains a difficulty that the letter before the VN of the moneyer’s name is only partly preserved. There is a clear upright and part of a return to the left at the top. By comparison with the M of MON immediately above, this could be the letter M, which it should be if the moneyer was Guthmund, but it is impossible to be certain.

If, however, these conjectures are correct, the description of the coin should be:

*BMC type i a. Moneyer uncertain (Guthmund?)*

**Obv.** AELBR[ED][RE] X Bust r., dividing legend.

**Rev.** G [V.M] VN/D MON/[ETA] in three lines, MON and [ETA] contained in lunettes broken at the top [and bottom].

Die-axis: ↑ 0° Wt. 0.34g (fragmentary). Find no. 6886. (Pl., 11.)

4. **Two more late Saxon pence from Repton**

**CHRISTOPHER BLUNT**

These two coins were both found in graves. The Harold I penny of Jewel Cross type was found east of St Wystan’s Church in male Grave 245 (Trench 4, Layer 2152; Recorded Find 7053), lying flat on the floor of the grave by or below the upper part of the body. It may have been within the coffin originally and should probably be regarded as a deliberate burial deposit. The cut farthing of Edward the Confessor’s small flan type was found in the

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27 This paragraph by Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjælbye-Biddle; see further below, pp. 28-31.
vicarage garden, west of the church, in unsexed child Grave 4 (Trench 10, Layer 000; Recorded Find 5865) in the area of the knees. It is unclear whether this coin should be regarded as a casual loss, as a residual find disturbed from an earlier burial, or as deliberate deposit.  


*Obv.* Diademed bust left. *+HARO/LDF[|X*

*Rev.* 'Jewel-cross' type. *+DVRLFONNSTANFO*

Die-axis: 0° Wt. 0.91g Find no. 7053. (Pl., 12.)

A very fine coin, 'unpecked', from the same dies as *SCBI* Copenhagen 532, but a later striking. The O of ONN on the reverse has, on the new coin, become blocked out so as to become like a much enlarged stop.

Stamford was an active mint for Harold. It ranked fourth, after London, Lincoln and York, in Hildebrand's catalogue of the coins at Stockholm and is those at Copenhagen, but has been poorly represented in this country. In the British Museum *Catalogue* of 1893 (with of course a smaller total than either of the other cabinets) Stamford ranks tenth.


*Obv.* Diademed bust left *EDP--*

*Rev.* Short cross voided. *+LEC--*. Pellet under E.

Die-axis: 225° Wt. 0.17g (cut farthing). Find no. 5865. (Pl., 13.)

The moneyer's name begins LEO- but unfortunately the prototheme LEOF- is found on a number of names such as Leofnoth, Leofwic, Leofwine, etc., and also at a number of mints. A check with the coins of this type beginning LEO- in the British Museum and at Stockholm has failed to establish a die link and, unless one can be found, it will not be possible to identify the mint that produced this coin. Pennies cut into halves and quarters to provide small change are a well known feature of Edward's reign.

5. *The Repton coin finds: archaeological and historical significance*

**MARTIN BIDDLE AND BIRTHE KJOLBYE-BIDDLE**

The 1982 and 1985 finds of parcels of three-line pennies

The five three-line pennies from Grave 529 provide an immediate parallel for the suggestion made by us in 'Repton Coins I' that the five similar pennies recovered from the mass-burial in the mound in the vicarage garden were originally deposited in the coffin of the now vanished individual burial at the centre of that complex.

The 1985 season saw the completion of the excavation of the mound and other features associated with the mass-burial, as well as the continuing study of the bones of the 249 or more persons it contained. The view that the now vanished central burial was Viking seems confirmed by the non-Christian practices involved in the preparation of the site for burial and in the construction and subsequent treatment of the mound, but the origin of the bodies comprised in the mass-burial packed around the central grave remains elusive. Pending completion of the study of the physical anthropology of the bones, we can only say that the hypothesis which currently best fits the available information is that the
mass-burial represents the remains, not of a monastic population, but rather of those of the Viking Great Army who died of disease during the period of the winter camp at Repton in 873–74. After temporary burial elsewhere, presumably in individual graves but possibly in communal ‘winter graves’, their remains seem to have been disinterred and packed charnel-fashion around the cist burial of an important individual, the mound then being thrown up to seal the whole complex.

**Coins in graves: small parcels and larger deposits**

The Viking character of the mound burial in the vicarage garden at Repton raises the possibility that the deposits of silver pennies there and in Grave 529 east of the church might reflect Scandinavian practice. With few exceptions, the deposition of grave goods, including coins, had been abandoned by the Anglo-Saxons in the earlier part of the eighth century. The re-appearance of this practice one and a half centuries later in two separate burials on the same site, at precisely the moment when a Viking presence there is reliably documented, must raise the possibility that this was a Scandinavian trait. The custom does indeed appear in the North, for example at Birka, Sweden, where between the mid to late eighth and mid tenth centuries about 10 per cent of the eleven hundred burials were accompanied by one or two coins, and where five graves contained small parcels of coins. The gold ring from Grave 529 (Layer 1804; Recorded Find 6270; Wt. 2.71g.; fig. 1) may support this interpretation, for it is of a type known not only from Thetford (Norfolk) but also from Birka, while its presence in a grave is highly unusual in terms of known.

31 Anne-Sofie Graslund, *Birka*, iv, The Burial Customs (Stockholm, 1980), 75, discusses the difficulties of burying in the winter in the frozen soil near Birka and suggests possible Viking solutions to this as well as more recent ethnographic examples of storing bodies for final burial in the spring. Although such conditions would be very unlikely to obtain in England, necessity might have given rise to a custom which was observed wherever the circumstances.


33 The most convenient summary of the Birka coins is given by Anne-Sofie Graslund, ‘Charommyn i vikingatida-gravar’, *Tor* 11 (1965–66), 168–97. For detailed descriptions of the individual graves, see H. Arnbom, *Birka*, i, *Die Gräber* (Uppsala, 1943). Of the c. 1100 graves, 107 contained a coin or coins. Of these 107, fifteen contained only coins which had been converted to jewellery (omvandlade mynt). Of the remaining ninety-two graves, twenty-two were cremations and seventy were inhumations. Only five graves (out of the ninety-two (5.43 per cent) had more than two coins, if the coins used as jewellery are excluded: Grave 524, a male chamber-grave, had three dirhams with an end date of 900–10, found together at the waist on the left side, with a trace of a purse; Grave 737B, a male inhumation, had two dirhams with an end date of 883–8, found at the middle of the grave (it is also documented as an axe); Grave 750, a double male and female chamber-grave, had a Roman coin and four dirhams with an end date of 906–7 or 911–12, found in two purses which could probably belong to another body; Grave 854, another double male and female chamber-grave, had a dirham with the woman, one of which was worn as a brooch, with the other six in a leather purse placed in a box and with an end date of 913–32; and Grave 1057, a male inhumation, had three dirhams with an end date of 870–92, found in a purse by the head. Graslund (184–89) mentions other Swedish and Norwegian Viking graves with several coins, but points out that they are rare by comparison with graves with only one coin. For Viking graves in Norway with up to seven coins, see Jan Petersen, *British Antiquities of the Viking Period Found in Norway*, *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by H. Sletten (Oslo, 1940), pp. 146–52; and Kolbjørn Skaare, *Mynt i Norge* (Oslo, 1978), pp. 116–17. The only Viking graves in Denmark with more than one coin (again excluding those converted to jewellery) are the rider grave from Brøndstrup (Jytte Larsen, *Kuml* (1960), 90–103; cf. Kuml (1970), 99–107) and Grave CC in the Stengade II cemetery which contained fifteen coins struck between 905 and 923. Anne Kromann, ‘Sten imannsgravpladsen mønter’, in Jørgen Skaarup, *Stengade II. En tængelandsk gravplads megr grave fra romersk jernalder og vikingenid* (Langelands Museum, Rudkøbing, 1976), pp. 192–9.


35 H. Arnbom, *Birka*, i, *Die Gräber* (Uppsala, 1943); six graves had a ring very like that from Repton, five of silver and one of copper-alloy, the latter from a female cremation, Grave 902. Of the five silver rings, one came from an unsexed cremation, Grave 352; one from the fill of a male chamber-grave, Grave 727; one from an unknown position in a chamber-grave with both male and female burials, Grave 731; one from a female chamber-grave, Grave 908; and one which is probably like the Repton ring from a female inhumation, Grave 1037. All but the last also contained a coin or coin fragment, in the case of Grave 731 with an end date of 901–24.
Anglo-Saxon practice in the ninth and tenth centuries.36

There are at least six other discoveries in England where coins of the ninth and tenth centuries are recorded as having been found in specific graves; and in four cases, as in Repton Grave 529, the coins were found near or under the skull.37 Three of these finds belong to the late ninth century:

St Mary's Churchyard, Reading, Berks. 11 (?) coins, deposited c. 870–71, 'in a coffin'.38

Hook Norton, Oxon. 13 coins, deposited c. 873, 'found under the bones of a human body'.39

36 There is no survey, but to take one example, of the 743 graves of the late seventh to eleventh centuries excavated around the Old Minster at Winchester between 1962 and 1970, only two contained objects (a silver pin in one case and a pair of garter hooks in the other) apart from the remains of clothing such as gold thread from textiles: Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjöller-Biddle, The Anglo-Saxon Mummies at Winchester, Winchester Studies 4.1 (Oxford, forthcoming).

At Exeter, in Grave OB2 (in a Middle Saxon cemetery with many charcoal burials) a gold ring of eighth or ninth century date lay on the floor of the grave close beside the upper right arm, in a position comparable to that of the ring in the Repton grave and presumably also deliberately placed: James Graham-Campbell, 'A Middle Saxon Gold Finger-Ring from the Cathedral Close, Exeter', Antiquaries Journal 62 (1982), 356–7, Pl. Ill. At Repton in the late tenth or early eleventh century, and in three other graves have produced objects (other than clothing) which were certainly deposited with the burial. Immediately south of Grave 529, an iron knife, its handle bound with silver wire, was found by the right thigh in Grave 203; to the south of the crypt and chancel, Grave 83, one of a pair in a double grave of chamber-grave proportions, had a simple copper-alloy ring on the second finger of the left hand; and in 1923, in digging at the re-entrant angle between the crypt and south aisle of the church, a Viking axe had originally probably been deposited in Grave 68. If 43–5; D. M. Wilson, 'Archaeological Evidence for the Viking-Age Burials of England — Some Problems of Interpretation', in Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries 1979 edited by P. A. Rahtz et al. (BAR 82 Oxford, 1980), pp. 379–82.

37 Paul Robinson, 'Saxon Coins of Edward the Elder from St Mary's Churchyard, Amesbury', NC 144 (1984), 198–201. The Amesbury find must be excluded from the present discussion for there is no evidence to say whether or not it was directly associated with any one burial, and if it was, in what way. No other cases of 'hoards' of ninth or tenth-century coins specifically associated with individual graves are at present known to us from England. The only Scottish example, three stycas from a Viking grave at Kiloran Bay, Colonsay, is excluded here because the two surviving coins are pierced: Elizabeth J. E. Pirie, 'Finds of "Sceattas" and "Stycas" of Northumbria', in Anglo-Saxon Monetary History edited by A. S. Blackburn (Leicester, 1986), pp. 67–90, at p. 83. Two possible cases from Ireland have both been dismissed: J. A. Graham-Campbell, 'The Viking-age Silver Hoards from Ireland', in Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress, Dublin, edited by B. Almqvist and D. Greene (Dublin and London, 1976), pp. 39–74, at p. 61 with further references. There are two possible cases from the Isle of Man: The Kella in Kirk Christ Lézarye parish and a lintel grave at Kencill Fheallic, Ballafernich, but the first has been dismissed by D. M. Wilson, The Viking Age in the Isle of Man: the Archaeological Evidence (C. C. Rain Lecture, Odense, 1974), pp. 18, 44, 46, and nothing specific is known about the latter; see James Graham-Campbell, 'The Viking-age Silver Hoards of the Isle of Man', in The Viking Age in the Isle of Man, edited by Christine Felt et al. (London, 1983), pp. 53–80, at pp. 56–57, 74. It may be that several of these possibilities should be re-examined in the light of the evidence presented in the present paper.


39 BM, Department of Coins and Medals, Accessions Book, 26 July 1948. The surviving records of this discovery are contained on this page of the Accessions Book and in a series of letters and minutes copied into the Department's Minutes. The statement on the circumstances of the find in C. E. Blunt and R. H. M. Dolley, 'The Hoard Evidence for the Coins of Alfred', BNJ 29 (1959), 220–47, at p. 221, is a paraphrase of only one of these records, copies of which were very kindly sent to us by Miss Marion Archibald. The primary record appears to have been a letter (now lost) of 21 July 1848 from a Mr William Colegrave to Edward Hawkins of the Medal Room which was read before the Trustees of the Museum on 22 July 1848 when they decided to purchase the five coins then before them for £8 5s. 'and as many more of these discovered as at reasonable prices could be had for £11 15s.' (Hawkins was directed by the Board a fortnight later to note 'purchases had already exceeded the funds at the disposal of the Trustees down to next Christmas.' No more coins from the Hook Norton hoard were in the event bought.) It was presumably from Colegrave's letter, which was known to the museum, that the coins were found', that the details given in the entry for 26 July 1848 in the Accessions Book were taken.

Since it was from William Colegrave that the Museum purchased the coins, it is probable that he was the finder. This seems to be clear from a letter of 19 July 1848 from Samuel Davis of Swerford Park, Oxon., one of the principal proprietors in the village of Hook Norton, which introduced Colegrave to the Museum as a 'person' who 'digging a
Leigh-on-Sea, Essex. 23+(727+) coins, deposited c. 893, 'in a hollow of the left shoulder of a skeleton which had been buried with horse and sword'.

The Reading and Leigh-on-Sea finds have both independently been associated with Viking activity, namely the Viking wintering at Reading in 870–71 and the campaigning bases in Essex in 892–95, but not specifically with Scandinavian rather than English practice. The Leigh-on-Sea burial, however, if correctly reported by Brooke, can only be Viking since, moreover, burials of this date in excavated churchyards outside the principal areas of Viking activity, such as the Old Minster at Winchester, have not produced burials associated with coins, there must be a reasonable presumption that the Reading and Leigh-on-Sea finds at least are actual Viking burials. The Repton and Birka finds support this view.

The other three finds of coin ‘hoards’ in burials belong to the mid tenth century:

**Bath, Avon.** 42 coins, deposited c. 950–55, ‘in a box under the occupiet of a skeleton and possibly within a coffin’.41

**Honedon, Suffolk.** 200–300 coins, deposited c. 953, ‘in a grave, near a skull’.42

**Kintbury, Berks.** ‘Some hundreds’ of coins, deposited c. 957–60, ‘under a skull in a churchyard’.43

These three finds form a tight chronological group and it is striking that all three are said to

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40 Blunt and Dolley, pp 235–38 (including Ingatestone, Essex, 1895, as part of the same find). For the description of the discovery quoted above, which seems not previously to have been taken into account, see G.C. Brooke, ‘Treasure Trove’, **BNJ** 20 (1930), 279–87, at p. 283, note 1.


have been found under or near a skull in an existing or former churchyard, although these records were all made in the seventeenth or eighteenth century and must therefore be viewed with some reserve. All three are also allegedly large or very large deposits by comparison with the ninth-century finds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Late ninth-century deposits</th>
<th>Tenth-century deposits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hook Norton</td>
<td>Bath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13(?)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leigh-on-Sea</td>
<td>Hundenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23+ or ?27+</td>
<td>200-300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Kintbury</td>
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<tr>
<td>11(?)</td>
<td>Some hundreds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repton 1982</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Repton 1985</td>
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<td>5</td>
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Two classes of deposit seem to be involved: type A, mid to late ninth century, with relatively few coins (five and multiples thereof?), and type B, mid tenth century, with large or very large numbers of coins. The type A deposits have plausible links with Viking activity and in date and number of coins are perhaps comparable to some of the coin finds in graves at Birka and elsewhere in Scandinavia. Type B deposits belong to the period of peace which marked the middle decades of the tenth century and have no obvious Viking associations. The circumstances behind their deposit in such widely differing places but over a very short space of time remain obscure, as do the reasons for such large deposits in consecrated ground. But type B deposits are striking by their similarity in date, size of deposit, and burial in graves. Their exceptional character becomes even more noticeable as controlled excavations in contemporary churchyards fail to produce parallels to them. As a pointer to further discussion, it may be worth noting that all three contained a significant element of coins minted in the midlands and the north. This may reflect no more than 'a reasonable cross-section of the currency circulating respectively on the southern borders of Mercia and in East Anglia around the middle of the tenth century', but the exceptional nature of the deposits might equally suggest that their composition reflects rather the area(s) in which they were put together. If this view were maintained, the implication would be that the burials might have been those of persons of Danelaw origin who died while travelling and were buried, for some reason which still eludes us, with a deposit of coins in much the same way (if more lavishly) as some of their forebears had been buried with coins in both England and Scandinavia two or three generations earlier. Whatever the conclusion of this debate, it is surely necessary to draw a clear distinction between hoards concealed in churchyards with a view to subsequent recovery (see below, p.31) and 'hoards' deposited in graves in such close association with the body that subsequent recovery can scarcely have been contemplated.

**Single coins in graves**

Of the nine single finds of coins of the pre-conquest period from Repton, (a) four were

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43 See above, note 33.
44 Blunt and Pagan, pp. 28–32, esp. p. 32. We are greatly indebted to Christopher Blunt, who has advised on all aspects of the numismatic discoveries at Repton since the beginning of the work there in 1974, for pointing out to us the importance of the midlands and northern element in these three deposits.
45 These words were written before we had the opportunity, through the kindness of Mark Blackburn, of seeing in proof the conclusions reached on these ‘type B’ deposits by D. M. Metcalf, ‘The Monetary History of England in the Tenth Century in the Perspective of the Eleventh Century’, in *Anglo-Saxon Monetary History* edited by M. A. S. Blackburn (Leicester, 1986), pp. 133–57, at p. 155. We have come independently to virtually identical conclusions and we are much indebted to Michael Metcalf for allowing us to refer to his paper in advance of publication.
found in graves, (b) two came from layers over the cemeteries, and (c) three were found in soil layers which were probably not of graveyard origin:

   Alfred, penny, Grave 651, ? female
   Harold I, penny, Grave 245, ? female
   Edward the Confessor, cut farthing, Grave 427, child

b. Æthelred II, cut half-penny
   Edward the Confessor, broken half-penny

c. Sceat, series J
   Sceat, series L
   Pepin the Short, denier

None of the coins in group a, although found actually in a grave, was certainly a deliberate grave deposit. This emphasises the difficulty of the problem: any or all of them could have been in the soil dug out to form the grave and subsequently filled back into it.

Finds of this kind are called by archaeologists 'residual' and are a very common occurrence with finds of every kind, to the extent that residual material may account for the greater part of the finds in any given deposit, a circumstance which is not perhaps always given sufficient weight in the interpretation of numismatic discoveries. Examples of such residual finds are provided here by several of the coins in groups b and c, such as the sceat of series L, the denier of Pepin the Short, and the Æthelred II half-penny.

Even so, the sceat in Grave 524, which was found among the bones of the left hand, must seem a probable deliberate deposit; while the Harold I penny lying flat on the floor of Grave 245 must seem another. But among the late ninth to eleventh-century coins of groups a and b, the sceat from Grave 524 falls uneasily. No burials of eighth-century date have yet been identified in this area of the cemetery north-east of St Wystan's Church, although the burials there are cut down into what are probably layers of that date. In these circumstances, the possibility cannot be ignored that the sceat in Grave 524, even though it was found among the bones of the left hand, may be derived from earlier layers on the spot and be a residual inclusion in the fill of the grave rather than a deliberate contemporary deposit.

The penny of Alfred lay in fragments, with a considerable part missing, below the right knee of the ?woman in Grave 651. It was in position when found, i.e. it was not accidently disturbed in excavation, but although a careful search was made the other fragment(s) were not found. Since the penny was not cut, it was probably already broken and incomplete when it reached this position. This may therefore be an example of the placing of a coin fragment in a grave, as has been noticed at Birka, but it is equally possible that it is a residual find, broken in the course of redeposition. The dating of the graves in this part of the cemetery has not yet been worked out, but it seems at present rather unlikely that burial began here as early as the later ninth century. On balance, therefore, the penny was probably not a deliberate deposit in the grave.

The cut farthing of Edward the Confessor found lying near the knees of the child in Grave 427 is also best regarded as a residual inclusion in the fill of the grave, derived from the contemporary topsoil or from the soil into which the grave was dug. If so, it is striking that a farthing and two half-pennies, one cut and the other broken and folded, should have been found in layers in or over the cemeteries. What kind of activity led to the loss of this small change? Unfortunately it is impossible yet to be sure whether we see here the result of two processes – the deliberate deposition of single coins in graves and the casual loss of coins in the cemetery area – or of one process, for it must be clear that casual losses could be incorporated in graves just as easily as coins in graves could be distributed throughout the soil by the subsequent cutting of graves into earlier burials.

These considerations show something of the problems involved in the interpretation of
coin finds from even a carefully excavated cemetery. At Repton there may be at least three different processes at work: the deposition in graves of small parcels of coin (see above, pp.25-8), the deposition of single coins, and casual losses. There is no sign so far at Repton of a fourth process, the deliberate concealment for subsequent recovery of hoards of coin buried close to readily identifiable features of the cemetery such as grave-markers, crosses, or boundary walls, or beside specific parts of the church such as the tower or chancel.47 Nor is it possible to say whether any of the coins represented 'valedictory offerings thrown into the burial shaft', as suggested by Paul Robinson as a possible explanation for some of the coins found in cemeteries.48 Such offerings would in fact be very difficult if not impossible to distinguish from casual losses, except perhaps where many examples occurred in one cemetery and the pattern of their distribution in the graves and grave shafts was consistent, or where more than one coin was found in each shaft in combinations which might appear unlikely to result from the chance inclusion of casual losses or of coins disturbed from earlier graves. It must indeed be emphasised that there is as yet (known to us) no certain evidence that individual coins found in late Saxon graves were ever deliberate deposits, either with the body49 or as 'valedictory offerings'. Nor is there known to us any reasonable explanation of the practice at this period of depositing single coins with burials or of throwing valedictory offerings into graves.50 The discoveries at Birka have suggested that a single coin or a fragment of a coin in a grave might be interpreted as Charon's obol.51 This is it possible to say whether any of the coins represented 'valedictory offerings thrown into graves.50 The discoveries at Birka have suggested that a single coin or a fragment of a coin in a grave might be interpreted as Charon's obol.51 This would perhaps be an attractive explanation of the discovery of single coins and coin fragments in English graves, but the rarity of the practice and the apparent absence as yet of any consistency in the position in which such coins are placed may argue against the adoption of such an interpretation, at least in England.

A more likely explanation for the presence of individual coins in cemeteries, and especially for the loss of half-pennies and farthings, might be the holding of markets in and around churchyards on either a regular or occasional basis. As late as the thirteenth century some markets were held in churchyards and 'Sunday trading appears to have been normal in pre-conquest England' since both Athelstan and Æthelred tried unsuccessfully to suppress it.52 There is in fact widespread evidence for trading congregationes not only on Sundays but also at festivals, and much of the evidence relates to hundredal centres with early monasteries or churches, and not least to places where such markets 'were defended by the power of saints'.53 'The pilgrim was often also a trader.'54

Repton qualifies on all these grounds55 and stands naturally beside places like Lichfield

47 Robinson, p. 200.
48 Robinson, p. 200.
49 Although we regard the penny of Harold I in Grave 245 at Repton as very likely to be a deliberate deposit.
50 For a suggested interpretation of the finds of sceattas in graves, see Rigold, 'Two Primary Series', p. 8.
51 Graslund, 'Charonsmynt', provides the essential information on the Birka finds. Taking only the ninety-two graves with coins which had not been converted into jewellrty (see above, note 33), and dealing first with the seventy inhumation graves: in twenty-two instances the coins were in partially surviving leather purses, eighteen of which contained only a single coin or a fragment of a coin. In sixty-three of the seventy inhumation graves the find-spot of the coin is known: in fifty-five cases (87.3 per cent) the coin was found at the middle of the body or above the middle. Partly because in seventy-five of the ninety-two graves with coins there was only one coin (six graves) or less than one coin (sixty-nine graves), and because only five graves (5.43 per cent) had more than two coins, Dr Graslund suggests that the coins may be Charon's obols. She also points out that coins are not in general uncommon in graves of the Viking period in Scandinavia. For some further aspects of this discussion, see Ola Kyhlberg, 'De Arabiska Silvermynten, Strälighet', in Birka, svarva jordens Hamnomr&de, edited by Bjorn Ambrosiani et al, Riksantikvarieinstitutet Rapport C1 (Stockholm, 1973), pp. 200-5, at pp. 204-5, and Brita Malmer, Nordiska Mynt före År 1000. Acta Archaeologica Lundensia, 8th ser. 4 (Bohn and Lund, 1966), pp. 174–75, 183–86, 201–19, Tab. 33 and 34.
53 Sawyer, p. 161.
in Staffordshire only twenty miles away where there is early evidence for a market held on
Sundays.56 By 1330 Repton’s market was held on a Wednesday and was claimed on the
grounds that it had been held from time immemorial,57 but by this date it may have been
moved to a weekday as a result of the preaching of reformers against the abuse of trading
on Sundays.58 There was also an annual fair held on 1 July and both market and fair were
presumably held in the open space immediately south of the churchyard where the market
cross has stood since the middle ages.59

If finds of single coins, halves and quarters in churchyards can be interpreted as a
reflection of marketing, they will take on an added importance (and increased problems of
interpretation) as evidence for the circulation and use of coinage in the pre-conquest
period.

Coin finds in churchyards: a suggested typology

As an aid to precision in the discussion of coin finds from churchyards (we do not attempt
here to deal with the question of coin finds from inside churches), it may be helpful to set
out a simple typology of the different kinds of finds discussed here, beginning with types A
and B already defined:

Type A Small or relatively small purses of between five and thirty coins deposited with the body, usually(?)
close to the head. There seem to be two quite distinct groups: (i), graves with sceattas dating to the
late seventh and early eighth centuries (not discussed here);60 and (ii), graves of the mid to late ninth
century which have here been interpreted as distinctively Viking.

Type B Large ‘hoards’ of up to several hundred coins deposited with the body, usually close to the head.
Those so far recognised belong to the mid tenth century and have been tentatively interpreted here as
Danelaw-related, if not actually Viking.

Type C Hoards concealed in churchyards for subsequent recovery and usually therefore deposited close to
some obvious feature of the church or churchyard. These hoards need careful listing and critical
analysis. It may be significant that they are notably present on the Isle of Man61 and in other Viking
areas, but in any study a strict distinction will have to be paid to the date of deposition, since
post-conquest hoards of this type may have been deposited under quite different stimuli.

Type D Single coins in graves (and perhaps pairs). These also demand careful listing and critical analysis. It
could be possible, at least with discoveries made under controlled archaeological conditions, to
distinguish at least tentatively between (i) those probably deposited with the body, (ii) those possibly
thrown into the grave as offerings, and (iii) those which are residual inclusions.

The parcel of pennies from Grave 529 and the date of the north porticus of St Wystan’s
Church

The dating of the coins in Grave 529 to the period between 873 and c. 877 is of crucial
significance in relation to the date of the north porticus of St Wystan’s Church, and thus for
the date of the extension of a pre-existing church eastwards to incorporate the originally
detached mausoleum as a crypt below the new east porticus (chancel). Grave 529 was cut
down against the foundations of the east wall of the north porticus. These foundations
were therefore already in existence by c. 873–77. The wall of huge ‘waterstone’ blocks
which sits on these foundations is probably of the same build with them and was also
therefore in existence by c. 873–77. The date of the wall of smaller Bunter sandstone

56 Sawyer, p. 162.
57 Bryan E. Coates, ‘The Origin and Distribution of
Markets and Fairs in Medieval Derbyshire’, Derbyshire
58 Sawyer, p. 162; cf. Harmer, p. 357, note 3, for such a
change at Blandford Forum (Dorset) in 1217–18.
59 Robert Bigsby, Historical and Topographical Descrip-
tion of Repton ... (London, 1854), pp. 261–62.
60 See above, note 32.
61 Graham-Campbell, ‘Viking-age Silver Hoards of the
Isle of Man’, pp. 56–61 and note 9; cf. A. M. Cubbon and M.
Dolley, ‘The 1972 Kirk Michael Viking Treasure Trove’,
Journal of the Manx Museum 8.89 (1980), 5–20, at p. 10. We
are most grateful to James Graham-Campbell for bringing
some of these references to our attention and for discussing
the problem generally.
blocks (part of the so-called ‘brownstone’ church) which sits on the Keuper megaliths has usually been regarded as secondary, but recent work suggests that its distinctive character is due to the reuse of stone from a pre-existing church to the west which was partly demolished in the course of this rebuilding and extension to incorporate the previously detached mausoleum.\(^{62}\)

The evidence of the coins in Grave 529 shows that this extension eastwards, with the addition of the north and presumably the south porticus, is to be dated before the Viking wintering at Repton in 873–74. This conclusion has long been urged because the defences of what is interpreted as the Viking winter camp of 873–74 incorporate the extended church in their line and would be pointless without it. The coins in Grave 529 confirm this conclusion and render untenable the hypothesis recently advanced by Eric Fernie, without reference to the archaeological evidence, that the extension of the church eastwards should be dated to the tenth century, after the Viking episode.\(^{63}\)

**APPENDIX**

**A third find of a denier of Pepin the Short from England**

**MARTIN BIDDLE**

When Professor Philip Grierson published a denier of Pepin the Short (751–68) from Repton in 1986,\(^{64}\) only one other coin of the first Carolingian ruler was then generally known to have been found in England, at Richborough in Kent in or before 1880.\(^{65}\) A third example had in fact been found in 1982 near Bere Regis in Dorset, and promptly published in the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* by Mr Laurence Keen, the County Archaeological Officer.\(^{66}\) Since his note is not mentioned in the contents of the volume, nor indexed, the information was all too easily overlooked, as indeed happened. With Mr Keen’s help, Professor Grierson’s encouragement, and M. Lafaurie’s interpretation of the mint monogram, the opportunity is taken here to place the Bere Regis find on fuller record and to complete the statement on these finds made in ‘Repton Coins I’.

The denier was found by Mr K. R. Farnham of Bournemouth, Dorset, in 1982, while using a metal detector at National Grid Reference SY 83459664, in a field north of the Bere Regis bypass, then under construction, just north of the line of the Roman road from Dorchester to Badbury Rings. The discovery was reported by Mr Farnham and was the subject of an inquest before the East Dorset County Coroner at Bournemouth on 30 November 1982 (Item R) when it was declared not Treasure Trove. It was subsequently shown to the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum and identified by Miss Marion Archibald. Mr Farnham later generously gave the coin to the Dorset County Museum.\(^{67}\)

\(^{62}\) Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle, 'Repton 1985', *Bulletin of the CBA Churches Committee* 22 (Summer 1985), 1–8, at p. 2.


\(^{64}\) ‘Repton Coins I’, 127–30.


\(^{66}\) *Proceedings* 105 (1983), 151.

\(^{67}\) Acc. no. 1987.77. Mr R. N. R. Peers, the Curator of the Museum, kindly arranged for the coin to be photographed and provided information on it and on its discovery. Miss Archibald’s identification formed the basis of Mr Keen’s original note.
The coin may be described as follows:

Obv. Monogram RP filling the field, with contraction mark above and pellet to right. Pearl border.

Rev. Monogram reading ANDE, filling the field, with cross to left.

A semi-circle of pellets encloses the curve of the D. The pearl border is mostly off the flan, being present in part only in the upper right quadrant.

Wt. 0.99g Die-axis / 230°. Diam. 16mm. (Pl., 14.)


The coin is intact and little worn. The obverse differs from those illustrated by Gariel, Prou, and Morrison and Grunthal in having no pellet between the R and P. The reverse differs from those illustrated by Gariel and by Morrison and Grunthal in having no pellet or other mark inside the A and no pellet below the cross. The coin is closest in style to Prou 922, and the reverse is the same although not a die-duplicate. The reverse is also the same as those on coins of Carloman (768–71) and Charlemagne (768–814), to which Gariel drew attention in asserting that his specimen of the Pepin coin was false, while accepting with a query the view of earlier numismatists that the monogram referred to Andegavis civitas (Angers). This view was not shared by Prou or Morrison and Grunthal, but Professor Grierson has kindly informed me that M. Lafaurie interprets the monogram as reading ANDE and accepts the earlier attribution to Angers. Other examples of the type have been found at the Great St Bernard (now in the museum of St Maurice d’Agaune) and near Tours.

The discovery of a mid eighth-century coin beside the now abandoned line of the Roman road from Dorchester to Badbury Rings is of considerable interest because it may suggest that the road was still in use at this time. This view is strengthened by the discovery only 300m away at National Grid Reference SY 83279654 of a second eighth-century coin, a penny of Offa, which like the Pepin lay no more than 150m from the road. The possibility that the road remained in use into the Anglo-Saxon period is supported both by the field-name ‘Kingsway’ on the line of the road further east, just north of Mapperton, and by the observation that the road near Ashley Barn, to the west of the area in which the coins were found, is accompanied by hollow ways to north and south which, if experience elsewhere is any guide, are likely to have formed after the Roman period.

When in the time of King Brihtric of Wessex (786–802) the northmen first landed on the south coast, at Portland, the king’s reeve rode out from Dorchester to compel them to go to the king’s residence under the mistaken and in the event fatal impression that they were traders rather than enemies. The reeve’s expectation and the discovery of these coins on another road leading out of Dorchester may suggest that traders had been seen before in these parts and were perhaps a not infrequent sight on the roads about the royal vill.

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69 Gariel II, pl. IV.2; Morrison and Grunthal, p. 83.
70 Gariel II, pl. V.6; Morrison and Grunthal, p. 228.
71 Gariel II, pp. 46-47.
72 Identified by Miss Archibald as Blunt Group II. of the Canterbury moneyer Dud. Wt. 0.95 g (fragment), and published by Mr Keen, above, n.64.