

MISCELLANEA

A MEROVINGIAN COPY OF A TREMISSIS OF JUSTINIAN I FOUND IN KENT



FIG. 1

THIS note is to record the finding of a copy of a tremissis of Justinian I (A.D. 527–65) in Kent during the summer of 1960. The coin was found by a holidaymaker in a sandbank known as 'The Street', off Tankerton and subsequently appeared in the London salerooms where it was catalogued as being Ostrogothic; it is now in the author's collection.

The Tankerton tremissis is of particular interest in that nothing quite like it has appeared before. It adds one more to the total of Byzantine-inspired gold coins found in England, a partial list of which appears in Sutherland, *Anglo-Saxon Gold Coinage in the Light of the Crondall Hoard* (1948), pp. 23–4. The findspots of these coins are concentrated in the eastern part of Kent, so the Tankerton provenance comes as no surprise.

Roach Smith illustrates no fewer than four Justinian imitations in his 'Collectanea Antiqua' all with Kentish findspots; of these four, three are solidi, and one a tremissis. The tremissis (op. cit., vol. i, pl. xxii, 7) closely resembles the Constantinople produced original and may well be a proper coin of Justinian and not an imitation. One solidus, from Ozingell (vol. iii, pl. v) has the normal type of a coin of Justinian but the facing figure of victory on the reverse is large and coarse with prominent rounded shoulders. The other two solidi (vol. i, pl. vi, 9 and pl. xxii, 4) are both

Visigothic/South France imitations with the obverse bust without shoulders and the figure of Victory pointing to the right which characterizes such Visigothic coins.

The Tankerton tremissis is clearly not far removed from the Byzantine original; the variations in legend and style are marked but they are compatible with an engraver unskilfully copying an original, rather than an engraver consciously varying an original: a hoard from Manneren (Moselle) dated by Lafaurie in *RN* 1959–60 to c. A.D. 580 contained coins of the same type two or more removed from the original. It seems probable that the original Constantinople coins did not circulate a great deal later than A.D. 565 so that the Tankerton tremissis cannot be dated much later than this.

Where was the coin struck? Lafaurie (op. cit., p. 181) is rather sceptical about the chances of establishing where such coins were struck. There are only three places in numismatic literature where any large numbers of Justinian imitations are illustrated for purposes of comparisons. Firstly, there is an article by Reinart in *Deutsches Jahrbuch für Numismatik*, ii (1939), pp. 37–56, where the Manneren hoard is published: this article is mainly concerned with coins with Victory right. Secondly, there is the older but none the less comprehensive survey in Belfort's *Monnaies Mérovingiennes*, 1892, vol. iv, pp. 73–110

(this book is usually referred to as Belfort although nearly all the material for it was collected by Ponton d'Amécourt and this particular section is probably entirely based on his notes). In neither of these two books is anything very similar to the Tankerton tremissis to be found: the imitations illustrated which have fullish legends and are reasonably close to the original, all have rather larger figures of Victory and distinct treatment of the hair and drapery. Even in Mr. Wallace J. Tomasini's more recent and comprehensive 'The Barbaric Tremissis in Spain and Southern France, Anastasius to Leovigild', *ANS Numismatic Notes and Monographs no. 152*, 1964, there is no strictly comparable specimen.

It is rather unlikely that the coin was struck in

those areas of France (Burgundy, Septimania, Provence) where, because the type had become well known under Anastasius (A.D. 491–518), imitations of Byzantine coins always carry Victory right. It is possible and perhaps likely, that the coin was struck in Gaul. The coin weighs 1.284 g. (19.8 gr.) which is quite reasonably Merovingian rather than Byzantine (1.40–1.50 g.) It seems clear that considerable numbers of Justinian imitations were struck in Gaul during the period A.D. 530–70 to judge from the number that have been found singly in modern France.

My sincere thanks are due to Dr. John Knowles for photographing the coin.

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A NEW COIN OF BALDRED, KING OF KENT

IN a paper on the coinage of southern England, 796–840¹ there were recorded a total of thirty-six coins in the name of Baldred, the last independent king of Kent, of whom little is known beyond the fact that Egbert of Wessex ousted him after the battle of Ellendun in 825. Of these thirty-six nearly half came from two major hoards—eight from Delgany in Ireland and nine from the Middle

Obv. +BELDRED REX LAN

A cross crosslet within an inner circle.

Rev. +DIYORYMOYDM (the lower arm of the initial cross rather longer than the others).

A plain cross within an inner circle.

Wt. 1.12 g. 17.3 gr. (Fig. 1).

Found in the mudbanks of the Thames at Lambeth in 1973. Writer's collection.



Fig. 1

Temple in London. For the remaining nineteen, findspots are recorded for seven as follows: Suffolk, two; one each from the Dorking hoard; from near Aylesford, Kent; from East Coker, near Yeovil; from near Guildford; and from Old Swindon. There is thus, if we except the peculiar Delgany hoard, as we properly may, a fairly clearly defined distribution area over the southern part of England and East Anglia.

It is now possible to add a further find spot in London which also provides a new variety of Baldred's coinage. The coin may be described as follows:

The obverse type, a cross crosslet, is found on a coin of Baldred's by the moneyer Swefherd (Ba 14 in the paper cited above). Two specimens are recorded but neither is from the die used by Diormod. The reverse corresponds to Ba 7 but is from a different die.

Diormod was an active Canterbury moneyer from the middle of Coenwulf's reign, when he issued the Pincer Cross, Cross Moline and Crescent Cross types, down to well into the reign of Egbert, when he issued the Bonnet and early Cross types and the later DOROB C monogram type. He is not recorded for Ceolwulf, but struck

¹ *BNJ* xxxii (1964), pp. 1–74.