

AN UNPUBLISHED HOARD OF THE GREAT DEBASEMENT

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THE hoard published here was acquired by Format Coins of Birmingham in the summer of 1987. The coins were originally found 'a considerable number of years ago' somewhere in the Forest of Dean. They had then remained in the possession of the same family until they were sold to Format. Unfortunately it has not proved possible to ascertain any firmer information on either the date or the place of the original discovery. Thanks to the willing cooperation of Mr G. Charman of Format the writer was able to examine the coins prior to their dispersal and to have them weighed and photographed.¹ They are published here by Mr Charman's kind permission.

The hoard comprises a total of 37 coins with a face value of 10 shillings and 8 pence. The contents of the hoard may be tabulated as follows:

		<i>Tower</i>	<i>Durham House</i>	<i>Southwark</i>	<i>York</i>	<i>Canterbury</i>	<i>Bristol</i>	
Henry VIII 3rd coinage	4d	4	—	—	—	—	—	(4)
1544–7	2d	—	—	—	2	6	—	(8)
Edward VI in name of Henry VIII.	4d	3	—	5	2	3	—	(13)
1547–51	2d	—	—	—	—	6	1	(7)
Uncertain 1544–51.	2d	—	—	—	—	3	—	(3)
Edward VI 2nd coinage. 1549–50	1/-	1	1	—	—	—	—	(2)
		8	1	5	4	18	1	(37)

The likely date of deposition is early in the latter half of 1549, before the issues of Edward's new shillings had entered circulation in large numbers. It also seems likely that the hoard represents a chance loss or a group of coins extracted from circulation at a specific moment rather than a savings hoard. All of the coins belong to the debased issues of 1544 and later and they reflect quite closely the denominations that were circulating in the greatest numbers at the time (although half-groats do seem to be proportionately over-represented).² Testoons of Henry VIII are, as one would expect, not represented, having been drawn out of circulation by a series of government decrees issued on 10 April 1548, 31 January 1549 and 22 May 1549.³ That there was a contemporary prejudice against hoarding these base issues is attested by a remark of the Clerk of the Council when the reform of the currency was discussed in 1551. He said that people 'esteem it [*sc.* the base coinage] so little that they will employ it to great disadvantage rather than keep it'.⁴

¹ I am grateful to my colleagues Mrs J. Selwood and Mr D. Bailey for (respectively) weighing and photographing the coins.

² For the coinage in circulation see C.E. Challis, *The*

Tudor Coinage (Manchester, 1978), pp. 224–6.

³ Challis, p. 97.

⁴ J. Craig, *The Mint* (Cambridge, 1953), p. 110.

At some stage subsequent to their discovery the coins have been severely cleaned and they are now in a very fragile condition. Two (nos 6 and 30) were broken at the time of examination and, after they had been weighed, were glued back together prior to being photographed. A comparison of the weights of the individual coins with the notional weights for the denominations (given in the catalogue below) will show that many have suffered a severe loss of weight from the corroding out of the copper during burial and the subsequent removal of the corrosion products. A number of coins have also had their weights reduced by the loss of chips of metal from their edges and this is noted in the catalogue. Few of the coins show obvious signs of clipping. The coins were weighed in grams correct to three decimal places and these weights were then converted mathematically to grains, corrected to one decimal place.

CATALOGUE

Henry VIII, Third Coinage (1544-47)

Groats, Tower. (North 1844). Notional weight 40 gr./2.592g.

1. Lis. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Annulets in forks. 29.8gr./1.928g. 265°.
2. Lis. Bust 1 variant. Lombardic lettering. Annulets with pellets in forks. 23.5gr./1.524g. 220°.
3. Lis. Bust 3. Lombardic lettering. Annulets with pellets in forks. 23.5gr./1.521g. 160°.
4. -/lis. Bust 3. Lombardic lettering. Annulets with pellets in forks. 21.1gr./1.373g. (Chipped). 0°.

Half groats, Canterbury. (North 1852). 20gr./1.296g.

5. No i.m. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Pellet in fourth quarter of reverse. Trefoil stops? Pierced cross ends. 15.1gr./0.981g. 120°.
6. No i.m. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Pellet in fourth quarter of reverse? Uncertain stops. Pierced cross ends. 9.9gr./0.639g. (Broken). 290°.
7. No i.m. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Spur in third quarter of reverse? Saltire stops? Pierced cross ends. 14.1gr./0.913g. 290°.
8. No i.m. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Spur in third quarter of reverse? Uncertain stops. Pierced cross ends. 12.5gr./0.809g. 145°.
9. No i.m. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Spur in third quarter of reverse? Uncertain stops. Pierced cross ends. 16.2gr./1.049g. 130°.
10. No i.m. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Sleeve stops. Open forks. 13.0gr./0.843g. 50°.

Half groats, York. (North 1853). 20gr./1.296g.

11. No i.m. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Spur at top left-hand corner of shield. Open forks. 10.5gr./0.678g. 340°.
12. No i.m. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Spur at top left-hand corner of shield. Open forks. 12.6gr./0.814g. 220°.

Edward VI, in the name of Henry VIII (1547-51)

Groats, Tower. (North 1871). 40gr./2.592g.

13. -/grapple. 1549. Bust 6. Roman lettering. Roses in forks. 27.0gr./1.751g. 315°.
14. K/-. 1547-9. Bust 5. Roman lettering. Crescents in forks. 29.1gr./1.887g. 250°.
15. K/K?. 1547-9. Bust 5. Roman lettering. Crescents in forks. 23.3gr./1.511g. 340°.

Groats, Southwark. (North 1872). 40gr./2.592g.

16. -/E. 1547-9. Bust 5. Roman lettering. Roses in forks. 23.0gr./1.491g. (Chipped). 200°.
17. -/E. 1547-9. Bust 5. Roman lettering. Crescents in forks. 26.2gr./1.695g. 160°.
18. -/E. 1547-9. Bust 5. Roman lettering. Uncertain in forks. 23.0gr./1.490g. 135°.
19. -/E. 1547-9. Bust 6. Roman lettering. Roses in forks. 25.9gr./1.680g. 135°.
20. -/E?. 1547-9. Bust 6. Roman lettering. Roses in forks. 20.9gr./1.354g. (Chipped). 65°.

Groats, Canterbury. (North 1875). 40gr./2.592g.

21. Rose, 1549. Bust 6. Roman lettering. Roses in forks. 19.7gr./1.279g. (Chipped). 85°.
22. No i.m., 1547-50. Bust 5. Roman lettering. Roses in forks. 22.6gr./1.466g. 20°.
23. No i.m., 1547-50. Bust 6. Roman lettering. Roses in forks. 18.6gr./1.207g. 90°.

Groats, Yorks. (North 1876). 40gr./2.592g.

24. No i.m., 1547-50. Bust 5. Roman lettering. Crescents in forks. 14.7gr./0.953g. (Chipped). 200°.
25. No i.m., 1547-50. Bust 6. Roman lettering. Roses in forks. 22.0gr./1.427g. 320°.

Half groats, Canterbury. (North 1881). 20gr./1.296g.

26. No i.m., 1547–50. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Lozenge stops. 11.3gr./0.732g. 355°.
27. No i.m., 1547–50. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Lozenge stops. 12.5gr./0.810g. 260°.
28. No i.m., 1547–50. Bust 1. Roman lettering. Pellet stops. 13.3gr./0.863g. 105°.
29. No i.m., 1547–50. Bust 1. Roman lettering. Pellet stops? 8.1gr./0.523g. 95°.
30. No i.m., 1547–50. Bust 1. Roman lettering. Lozenge stops? 10.2gr./0.663g. (Chipped, broken). 20°.
31. t/-. 1549–50. Bust 1. Roman lettering. Lozenge stops. 11.9gr./0.774g. 135°.

Half groat, Bristol. (North 1880). 20gr./1.296g.

32. -/TC monogram. 1549. Bust 1. Bristol lettering. Trefoils in forks, quatrefoils in reverse legend. Pellet in third quarter of reverse. 15.0gr./0.971g. 110°.

Uncertain half groats, Canterbury. (North 1852/1881). 20gr./1.296g.

33. No i.m. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Uncertain stops. 9.9gr./0.641g. 170°.
34. No i.m. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Uncertain stops. 8.2gr./0.530g. 200°.
35. No i.m. Bust 1. Lombardic lettering. Uncertain stops. 15.2gr./0.984g. 135°.

Edward VI, Second Coinage (1549–50)

Shillings. 80gr./5.184g.

36. Tower (North 1917). Arrow, MDXLIX, 1549. TIMOR DOMINI etc. 65.8gr./4.262g. 270°.
37. Durham House (North 1924). Bow, 1548–9. INIMICOS EIUS etc. 55.8gr./3.618g. 70°.

The final part of this note will be devoted to a review of the comparatively small number of other hoards of the period 1544–61 that have so far been discovered. They will be described in greater or lesser detail depending on how readily accessible the primary sources of information on them are.

1. *Unlocated, pre-1892.* (B & D, p. 22, no. EM1).⁵

Deposited c.1548. Published, L.A. Lawrence, 'On a Hoard of Groats of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', *NC Ser 3*, 12 (1892), 278–99. The coins had then been in the possession of Spink and Son for a number of years; from an uncertain source. Contained 72 groats, 19 half groats comprising:

Edward IV, Light Coinage: 12 groats (London 10, Bristol 2).

Henry VII: Facing bust issue – 23 groats, 5 half groats; Profile issue – 27 groats, 11 half groats.

Henry VIII: 1st coinage – 1 groat; 2nd coinage – 5 groats; 1st or 2nd coinage – 2 groats, 1 half groat; 3rd coinage – 1 groat, 2 half groats (including 1 of Bristol); Irish – 1 'full faced base groat of Dublin'.

B & D give the date of deposition as c.1544 but this cannot be correct. Lawrence's account of the hoard shows that it contained a half groat of Bristol and a Dublin portrait groat. The mint at Bristol did not begin work until May 1546.⁶ The description of the Dublin groat as a 'full faced base groat of Dublin' makes it clear that it belonged to the series of coins issued by Edward VI in Henry VIII's name, since Henry's own coinage for Ireland had the royal arms and a crowned harp on the obverse and reverse respectively. This Edwardian series from Dublin was issued with the same types, weight and fineness as contemporary English coins (although the groat actually circulated in Ireland as a sixpence).⁷ The Dublin mint was not reopened to begin this issue until 1548.⁸

⁵ Here and in the following descriptions B & D refers to I.D. Brown and M. Dolley, *Coin Hoards of Great Britain and Ireland 1500–1967* (London, 1971).

⁶ Challis, p. 94.

⁷ C.E. Challis, 'The Tudor Coinage for Ireland', *BNJ* 40 (1971), 97–119.

⁸ Challis, *The Tudor Coinage*, p. 315.

2. *Worksop (Lindrick Common), Yorkshire, 1907.* (B & D, p. 22, no. EM2; county incorrectly given as Derbyshire).
 Deposited c.1544–51. Only published reference, *Compte-rendu of the International Numismatic Commission* 10 (1960), p. 21, which reads ‘. . . (2) Small 16th. C. hoard found locally, . . .’. Sixteen coins from this hoard are in the Rotherham Museum.⁹ A seventeenth coin has been missing since at least 1958. As currently catalogued the coins can only be described as being full face groats and half groats of the period 1544–51. The group comprises 11 groats (Tower 2, Southwark 2, Bristol 2, Canterbury 2, York 3) and 5 half groats (Southwark 1, Bristol 1, Canterbury 2, York 1). The missing coin is recorded to have been a groat but no further information is known. (Although only this preliminary list can be published now it is hoped that a fuller description of the coins will be prepared for publication in a subsequent issue of this journal.) The hoard was discovered by workmen on Lindrick golf course in 1907. The date of 1958 given by B & D is a slip of the pen which presumably derives from the fact that it was in that year that information on the hoard was originally supplied to J.D.A. Thompson of the Ashmolean Museum by Rotherham Museum. It should also be noted that, although B & D record the number of coins found as 17+, the hoard actually contained about 160 coins, described as mostly groats and half groats of Henry VIII. The coins were originally identified and valued by Mr Elijah Howarth, curator of the Weston Park Museum, Sheffield. The treasure trove inquest was held at Rotherham on 19 December 1907.

3. *Nynehead, Somerset, pre-1922.* (B & D, p. 22, no. EM5).
 Deposited c.1549. Only published reference, Sotheby’s sale catalogue, 27–28 July 1922. The coins formed Lot 191, described as ‘The Property of a Nobleman’. The catalogue entry reads:

‘A small find of base Money of Henry VIII and Edward VI. Henry VIII, Groats, ‘Posui’ (6), m.m. lys (3), illegible (3); ‘London’ m.m. E (4), illegible or none (5), and Half Groat m.m. E; ‘Bristolie’ m.m. TL (mon.), and illegible (2); ‘Cantor’ (5), and Half Groats (2); ‘Eboraci’ Groats (2). Edward VI, Testoons, 1549 (6), m.m. arrow (4), one with legends on reverse sides, and Y (2), with legends on reverse sides, all reading TIMOR &c., and another, m.m. bow, legend on proper sides, rev. reading INIMICOS EIUS, &c., rare, uncleaned, and many in good state for these coins.

35.

∴ Found near the School House at Nynehead, Somerset.’

A manuscript note in the British Museum’s copy of the sale catalogue records that the lot was purchased by Baldwin’s for £6⁵0.¹⁰ The TL monogram mentioned is clearly a misreading of TC.

The Nynehead hoard, with 35 coins with a face value of 15 shillings and 10 pence,

⁹ I am grateful to Ms J.A. Ely, Keeper of History and Antiquities at the Museum for supplying information on the discovery of this hoard and on the surviving coins. The information is published here by kind permission of the

Museum

¹⁰ I am grateful to Miss M.M. Archibald for making this and other reference material available and for other assistance during the preparation of this note.

presents the closest parallel to the group from the Forest of Dean. This can be shown more clearly if the contents of the Nynehead hoard are tabulated in the same way:

		<i>Tower</i>	<i>Durham House</i>	<i>Southwark</i>	<i>York</i>	<i>Canterbury</i>	<i>Bristol</i>	
Edward VI in name of Henry VIII. 1547-51.	4d	-	-	4	-	-	1	(5)
	2d	-	-	1	-	-	-	(1)
Uncertain 1544-51	4d	6	-	5	2	5	2	(20)
	2d	-	-	-	-	2	-	(2)
Edward VI 2nd. coinage, 1549-50.	1/-	6	1	-	-	-	-	(7)
		12	1	10	2	7	3	(35)

As will be seen from a comparison of the two tables there are several differences between the two hoards. Nynehead has a stronger representation of coins from Southwark and a smaller number from Canterbury. Half groats also appear in much smaller numbers. The lack of coins directly attributed to Henry VIII can, however, be explained by the impossibility of allocating many of the coins to a particular type on the basis of the information given in the sale catalogue – all that can be done is to list them as ‘Uncertain, 1544-51’. Finally the inclusion of more shillings of Edward VI suggests that the Nynehead hoard was deposited a little later than that from the Forest of Dean.

4. *Five Ashes, Sussex, 1944.* (B & D, p. 22, no. EM4).
Deposited c.1551. Published, J.B. Caldecott, ‘A Find of Edward VI Testoons’, *NC Ser 6*, 5 (1945), 79. Found during ploughing at Inwood Farm, 7 (not 5 as incorrectly stated in B & D) ‘young head’ testoons; corroded into a lump and badly struck but the dates 1549 and 1551 could be distinguished. Suggested to be part of a larger pot hoard but no further coins and no potsherds were in fact found.
5. *Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, 1860.* (B & D, p. 22, no. EM9).
Deposited c.1546-9? Published, F. Worship, ‘Discovery of Silver Groats of Henry the Eighth’, *Norfolk Archaeology* 6 (1864), 72. The coins were found on a sand hill on the North Denes two days after a great storm which occurred on Tuesday, 28 February 1860. A man searching for stones as building materials found ‘a decayed leathern bag containing seventy silver groats of Henry VIII’. Worship actually saw about 40 of the coins and commented –
‘They are of feeble execution, are a good deal worn, and in some instances have been clipped. The obverse of all presents the King’s head almost full-faced, inclining to the left, with the legend HENRICUS D.G. ANG. FRA. Z HIB. REX. The reverse has the Royal arms . . . with the nearly universal legend of POSUI DEUM ADJUTOREM MEUM, though there are some few with CIVITAS CANTOR. CIVITAS EBORACI and CIVITAS LONDON, and I have seen one with CIVITAS BRISTOLIE. I have nowhere met with a mint-mark or a date . . . The silver is of inferior quality. . . .’

The terminus post quem for the deposition of this hoard seems to be the opening of the Bristol mint in 1546. The probable absence of Edward VI shillings suggests a latest date of deposition in early 1549.

6. 'Sneldwich' (?), 1848. (B & D, p. 22, no. EM6).

Deposited? The only reference to this hoard occurs in *Numismatic Scraps*, a scrapbook kept by Sir John Evans and now preserved in the Ashmolean Museum.¹¹ The account of the discovery, which is on folio 113 verso, is as follows:

'TREASURE TROVE. – During the past week a labourer found in Perry Wood, Sneldwich, about five pounds in weight of silver coins of Henry VIII and Edward VI. They had been concealed in a crock just below the surface, and it is supposed the late rains had washed the earth from them, leaving them exposed'.

The entry is annotated 'Oct. 1848'.

The location of 'Sneldwich' is a mystery since no place with this name seems to exist. However, Dr Margaret Gelling has suggested (pers. comm.) that it may be an error for Sheldwich, which lies to the south of Faversham in Kent, although it must be admitted that there is no obvious record of a Perry Wood in Sheldwich.

7. *Tresco, Scilly Isles, 1946*. (B & D, p. 22, no. EM7).

Deposited? Published, J.D.A. Thompson, 'A Sixteenth-Century Forger's Hoard from the Scilly Islands', *NC Ser 6*, 8 (1948), 100–103. Nine copper forgeries of Edward VI Profile shillings, 2 preserving their silver plating. Found on the surface under a large slab of granite, some stuck together. In the earth below were copper filings and potsherds. All the coins were dated 1549 and had TIMOR DOMINI etc. as the reverse legend. The i.m.s represented were arrow (3), Y (1), Y/arrow (1), t (2), ? (2).

8. *Willesden (Wormwood Scrubs), London, 1840*. (B & D, p. 22, no. EM8).

Deposited? Published, *Gentleman's Magazine* 2, 14 (1840), ii, p. 415. The full entry reads:

'On the 28th Aug. a man named Gibbs, and others, engaged in excavating a ditch on Wormwood Scrubbs [sic], near Shepherd's Bush, for the purpose of draining the ground, found a quantity of ancient silver coins of the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Queen Elizabeth, embedded in the earth, in a state of good preservation'.

9. *Scarborough, Yorkshire, 1960*. (B, p. 148, no. EM10).¹²

Deposited c.1550. Briefly described in the proceedings of the British Numismatic Society meeting of Tuesday, 24 January 1961 – see *BNJ* 30 (1960–1), 374. This records a paper read by J.P.C. Kent on 'The Scarborough Hoard of Groats of Henry VIII and of Edward VI in Henry's name'. The hoard was found on 2 June 1960, during demolition work in St Thomas Street. The 224 coins, mainly base groats, were deposited in a Siegburg jug.

10. *Little Wymondley, Herts., 1973*.

Deposited c.1547. Noted in *Coin Hoards I* (London, 1975), p. 98, no. 383. A total

¹¹ Shelfmark Arch. Ash. fol. MS. 1. I am grateful to Dr D.M. Metcalf for supplying the text of the entry for this hoard and to the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum for permission to reproduce it here.

¹² I.D. Brown, 'First Addendum to the Bibliography of Coin Hoards of Great Britain and Ireland 1500–1967', *NCirc* LXXXI.4 (April 1973), 147–51.

of 652 silver coins were found below the floor of a mediaeval house. The hoard comprised:

Henry VI: Half groat (1).

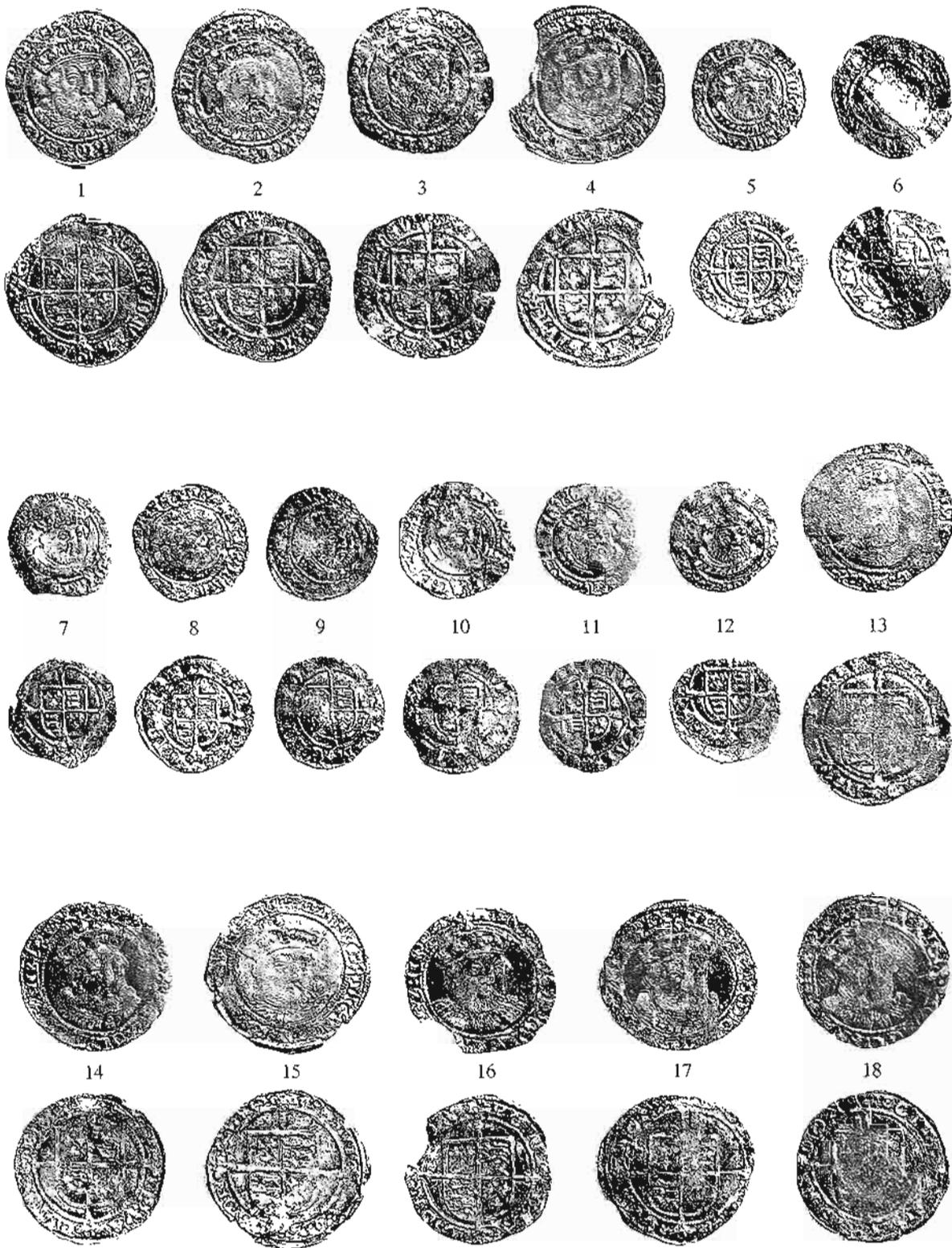
Edward IV: Groats (2), half groats (4), pennies (2).

Henry VII: Groats (3), half groats (40), pennies (23), forgery (1).

Henry VIII: First coinage – groats (4), half groats (7), pennies (10). Second coinage – groats (271), half groats (171), pennies (52). Third coinage – groats (32), half groats (4), pennies (8).

Henry VIII (posthumous): Pennies (8).

Uncertain: Pennies (pre-Henry VII, 2; Henry VII–VIII, 7).



SYMONS: DEBASEMENT HOARD (1)



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