

## 6. A HOARD OF ANGLO-SAXON COINS FOUND AT IONA ABBEY.

*The Discovery.*—While workmen of the Iona Community were digging a trench for a drain on 11 August 1950, they struck a hoard of Anglo-Saxon silver pennies some 21 inches below the present ground-level outside the S.W. corner of the Abbot's House. The exact spot, as recorded by Mr Adam Campbell, master mason, was 19 ft. 8 in. from outside of the south wall of the Reredorter of the Abbey, and 1 ft. out from the face of the west wall of the room connected with the cloister range. This wall is at that point founded on rough masonry from whose sloping face it is set back, leaving a scarcement 3 in. below ground-level. The coins were lying against the bottom stones of this foundation. It is unlikely that it was built after they were buried, otherwise they would have been found then. The hoard was in a pear-shaped clump, and underlay a layer of rough stones that extended over a wide area, a foot below ground.

The nature and date of the coins was soon recognised, and Dr George MacLeod sent them to the Inspector of Ancient Monuments. He in turn sent them to the National Museum of Antiquities for treatment, and informed the King's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, who claimed them for the Crown and rewarded the finders. After cleaning, the hoard was placed permanently in the National Museum, except for a few duplicates sent to the Iona Trustees and the British Museum.

*Description.*—Adhering to one another through corrosion, the coins were fragile and a number broke up in transit and cleaning. Most however responded

<sup>1</sup> For the latest summary of the evidence see C. M. Piggott, *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXIV (1949-50), 134-5.

<sup>2</sup> The writer sees no hope of carrying out further excavations himself, but will be glad to give all possible assistance to any competent excavator who wishes to continue the work.

well, and some even appear to be in mint condition. There must have been over 350, 343 of which it has been possible to catalogue and publish in full in the *Numismatic Chronicle*, 6.xi.(1951). They range in time from 9 of Athelstan (925-39) to 6 of Ethelred II (before 991; see next section). The intermediate kings are all represented except Edward the Martyr: Edmund (14), Edred (68), Edwig (26) and Edgar (204). There are also coins of the Viking rulers of York, Anlaf or Onlaf (4) and Eric Bloodaxe (1), 8 with meaningless inscriptions perhaps also from Danish Northumbria, and 3 of the type of Richard of Normandy (after 945).

Owing to the large number of moneyers who signed tenth-century coins, and the numerous dies they used, only twenty of the coins in the hoard are duplicates in the sense of being struck from the same dies as other pieces. About 115 different moneyers are represented. A few of them are hitherto unrecorded, including *Byrhtmoth*, whose single coin is a completely new type (fig. 8).

Along with the coins three small metal objects were recovered. One is a bar of silver  $5\frac{1}{4}$  in. long, one end tapered like a bracelet of common Viking type, bent into a pointed oval. Another is just a fragment of  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. gold wire  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. long, bent in a loop and cut off.



Fig. 8. Coin of Byrhtmoth. (†.)

[From "*Numismatic Chronicle*," 1951, by permission.]

The third is, however, of considerable interest, being a mounting  $1\frac{1}{2}$  by  $\frac{3}{4}$  in., ornamented most elaborately and probably Anglo-Saxon work of the tenth century (Pl. XIX, 1). On to a diamond-shaped silver plate with square expansions at the corners is fixed on edge a strip of silver forming a frame for a gold plate bordered with two beaded gold wires; on this gold plate there are, at either end, a silver pellet bedded in a ring of gold wire, and round the centre 14 gold pellets (the largest in pairs towards either end) on similar rings, all surrounding a gold setting, itself encircled with two pairs of fine gold wires twisted in opposite directions. In the setting is a globular green glass bead,  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. in diameter. Outside the frame is a border consisting of narrow silver strips flanked with beaded silver wire (once perhaps reddish gilt), the ends curled round silver pin-heads set in pairs on each of the four expansions; a small silver strip runs in the middle of each pair. On the back of the mounting are two stumps of a projecting loop or pair of staples.

*Date and Significance.*—The lists of seventh- to eleventh-century coins found in Scotland (pp. 173-4, repeated from *Num. Chron. cit.*) are notable for the scarcity of finds of single coins, even in the Northumbrian parts of Scotland. It may, of course, be accidental that scarcely any have been acquired by the National Museum of Antiquities or recorded in the *Proceedings* of the Society, but there is a striking contrast with the number of Roman coins recently tabulated by Miss Robertson. It may, however, be partly due to the isolation of Northumbria north of the Tees following the mid-ninth-century Danish conquests farther south, and the incorporation of Lothian into Scotland after 960 or so. Perhaps the seventh- to ninth-century *sceattas* (*stycas*) are too insignificant to be readily found in ones and twos

except where, as in the Viking grave finds in the west and on the well-combed Glenluce Sands in Wigtownshire, a sharp look-out is being kept.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the graves, the find-spots are on the mainland south of the Moray Firth. The tenth-century hoards contain a greatly increased number of coins and are sufficiently numerous for their distribution to be clearly significant. They occur preponderantly in the western and northern islands and seaboard, which formed the larger part of the territory occupied by the Norse Vikings. Single coins are scarce there, and this fact, together with the presence of larger or smaller quantities of silver objects buried with the coin hoards (sometimes greatly exceeding the coins in weight), seems to indicate that Anglo-Saxon coins circulated in our Norse territory as bullion rather than as currency.

The presence in the Iona hoard, and several others, of coins of Ethelred the Redeless suggests at first sight that the hoards come from Danegeld, paid out by this monarch in vast sums from 991 onwards. But this cannot be the case. For the hoards which admittedly derive from Danegeld, those found in Scandinavian countries,<sup>2</sup> in number and contents far larger than those in Scotland, contain very few coins of Ethelred's predecessors, whereas at Iona Ethelred is represented by only 6 out of over 350. We must also note that these 6 are all of the Hand of Providence type, which is recognised as belonging to the earliest third of Ethelred's long reign (979-1016), so that the hoard was probably formed before 991.

Danegeld ruled out, one may still think that the money in most of our tenth-century hoards was gained by the sword. The troubled periods in the century, when the Irish and northern Vikings were active in England and temporarily rulers of York, are however less well represented than the relatively peaceful reigns of powerful rulers, Athelstan and Edgar. But it is likely that the coins were collected in the raiding which followed quickly on their deaths. When they were buried would depend on local circumstances. For Iona 986 could be hazarded, when there was a sack of the Abbey by the Danes,<sup>3</sup> but it is best not to try to be over-specific.<sup>4</sup>

The wall against which the coins were found is too far from the early foundations adjacent to the nave of the Cathedral for the discovery to throw light on the relative chronology of the buildings.

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<sup>1</sup> Additional to *Num. Chron.*, 1951, and lists: *sceats* from Glenluce sands (a) unpublished, in Nat. Mus., Wigmund, Abp. York, mon. Coenred and Ethelweard, one each, and one blundered Ethelred II (?) of Northumbria; (b) Scottish Exhibition, Glasgow, 1911 (*Palace of History*, II, 333), Ethelred II of Northumbria (841-50), mon. Eardwulf, one.

<sup>2</sup> B. E. Hildebrand, *Anglo-Saxon Coins found in Sweden*, 1881.

C. A. Nordman, *Anglo-Saxon Coins found in Finland*, 1921.

Ed. H. Shetelig, *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain*. Part V. Sect. IV. "Coins of Western Europe found in Norway," 1940.

N. L. Rasmusson, *Fornvännen*, xxix (1934), 366-72.

S. E. Rigold, *B.N.J.*, xxvi (1949), 35-37.

<sup>3</sup> A. O. Anderson, *Early Sources*, I, 487.

<sup>4</sup> As, e.g., Grueber explaining the Douglas, Isle of Man, hoard (mostly Edgar with no recorded Ethelred) (*Num. Chron.*, 4, XIII). The pilgrimage and death of Anlaf Curan at Iona in 980 is, fortunately, too early to be connected with the Iona hoard, though his coins figure in it.

A couple of centuries later the people of the Hebrides are reported as burying all their movable property for fear of Sweyn (*Orkneyinga Saga*, ed. Taylor, p. 339).

A. TENTH- TO ELEVENTH-CENTURY COIN FINDS IN SCOTLAND.

Place. (See references on p. 175.)	Year found.	Coins and ornaments, etc.	Single.	Ethelred I (d. 871).	St Peters, York.	Sitric.	Onlaf and Anlaf.	Eric (d. 954).	Unintelligible.	Edward Elder.	Plegmund Abp. Canterbury.	Athelstan (d. 939).	Edmund.	Edred.	Edwig.	Edw. Martyr.	Edgar (d. 975).	Ethelred II.	Canute.	Other countries.	Nat. Museum whole or part
Skall, Sand- wick, Orkney <sup>1</sup>	1858	C, O	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7 Samanian 4 Abbasid 8 Kufic frags.	W
Trotternish, Skye <sup>2</sup>	1891	C, O	..	..	?2	..	..	..	..	32	1	57	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	17 Samanian 1 Abbasid	?W
Mackrie, Kil- daltan, Islay <sup>3</sup>	1850	C, ?O	..	..	1	..	1	..	4	..	..	5	3	5	2	..	83	..	..	1 Kufic	P
St Helen's, Cockburns- path, Berwickshire <sup>4</sup>	c. 1842	C	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	x	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Knowe, Islay <sup>5</sup>	1852	C	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	1	..	..	2	..	..	..	?W
Tarbat, Ross- shire <sup>6</sup>	1889	C, O	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	10 Louis le Begue of France (877- 79)	P
Galson, Lewis <sup>7</sup>	?1923	..	S	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	W
Tiree <sup>8</sup>	1782	C	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	x	x	x	x	x	..	..	..	P
Garthsbanks, Quendale, Dunrossness, Shetland <sup>9</sup>	1830	C, O	..	??	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	x	..	x	x	..	..	P
Inchkenneth, off Mull <sup>10</sup>	1830	C, O	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	7	..	1 Sitric III of Dublin 1 Richard II or III of Nor- mandy 1 Quentovic 1 Louis IV of Strasbourg 6 Carolingian	P
Burray, Orkney <sup>11</sup>	1887	C, O	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	3	..	..	?W
Iona, off Mull <sup>12</sup>	1950	C, O	..	..	..	..	4	1	8	..	..	9	14	68	26	..	204	6	..	3 Normandy	P (x)
Caldale, Kirk- wall, Orkney <sup>13</sup>	1774	C, O	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	300	..	..
Bongate, Jed- burgh, Rox- burghshire <sup>14</sup>	c. 1827	C, O	..	? ?	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Monymusk, Aberdeen- shire <sup>15</sup>	1823	..	S	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1 Moroccan dinar, A.D. 1098	..

B. SEVENTH- TO NINTH-CENTURY COIN FINDS IN SCOTLAND.

Place.	Date found.	Burial.	Coins and ornaments.	Single.	A.-S. thrymsa and sceats.	A.-S. R pennies.	Other coins.	Nat. Mus. whole or part.	References and remarks.
Buston Crannog, Ayrshire	1880	..	..	S	Anon.: late seventh plated <i>M</i> over <i>Æ</i> ? —1	..	..	W	<i>Arch. Coll. Ayr. and Wigtown.</i> , III, 46 (1882); cf. Sutherland, <i>A.-S. Gold Coinage</i> , pl. iii, 8-19 (1948).
Paisley, Renfrewshire	1782	..	C	..	? Aethelred I of Northumbria (774-96) and others	..	..	..	Lindsay, <i>Coinage of Scotland</i> , 262 (1845). "Considerable number."
Kiloran Bay, Colonsay	1882-3	B	..	..	Illeg. ? Eanred (807-41?) Rev. <b>RDBE</b> <b>VL</b> —1 Wigmund Abp. York (837-54?), mon. Coenred—1 Lost—1	..	..	P	<i>P.S.A.S.</i> , XII, 447.
Kingscross Point, Arran	?1908	B	..	..	Wigmund, Coenred—1	..	..	W	<i>P.S.A.S.</i> , XLIII, 371-5.
Lindores, Fife	1814	..	C	..	..	Egbert (802-38) and others	..	..	Lindsay, <i>Coinage of Heptarchy</i> , 121 (1842). "A number of coins including some of Egbert."
Croy, Inverness-shire	1875	..	C, O	..	..	Coenwulf of Mercia (796-822)—1 Aethwulf of Wessex (838-58)—1	..	W	<i>P.S.A.S.</i> , XI, 595, XX, 96, and LXXXIV, 217; cf. Brooke, pl. vi, 2; cf. <i>B.M.C.</i> , II, 16, 42.
Jedburgh, Roxburghshire	1859	..	..	S	Osbert of Northumbria (849-67)—1	..	..	W	<i>P.S.A.S.</i> , III, 300-3.
Talnotrie, Kirkcudbrightshire	1912	..	C, O	..	Osbert of Northumbria—1 Wulfhite Abp. York (854-900)—2 Unidentified—3	Burgred of Mercia (852-74)—4 (2 mon. Eadulf)	Carolingian—1 Kufic (?Abbasid)—1	W	<i>P.S.A.S.</i> , XLVII, 16.
Burghead, Morayshire	?1861	..	..	S	..	Alfred (871-901) ?Æ ( <b>D</b> ) <b>VINI</b> —1	..	W	<i>P.S.A.S.</i> , IV, 377-8.

## REFERENCES TO TABLE A.

- <sup>1</sup> *P.S.A.S.*, III, 249-50, x, 575.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XXVI, 225-36.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 74-81. Specimens to B.M., Newcastle, Hunterian, etc. Total find not recorded.
- <sup>4</sup> *New Stat. Acc.*, II, 305. Considerable number of coins, with a rosary.
- <sup>5</sup> *P.S.A.S.*, I, 218.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, XXIII, 314-7. Two unidentified.
- <sup>7</sup> *P.S.A.S.*, LVIII, 19 and 202. Habitation site.
- <sup>8</sup> Don. Soc. Ant. Scot., 1 Oct. 1782. 90 Anglo-Saxon coins. Lindsay, *Coinage of Scotland*, 261: "Urn . . . 15 to 20 ounces of A.-S. silver pennies."
- <sup>9</sup> Don. Soc. Ant. Scot., 11 April 1831. *P.S.A.S.*, x, 584. *Num. Chron. (Proc.)*, 1850, 6. In a horn; nos. unspecified.
- <sup>10</sup> Don. Soc. Ant. Scot., 24 Jan. 1831. 8 coins but 3 undescribed. Fragment of silver wire chain and 19 coins in B.M. Lindsay, *Coinage of Scotland*, 268 (1845), reports 22 unspecified coins found 1833.
- <sup>11</sup> *P.S.A.S.*, XXIII, 318-22. Plus 2 fragments.
- <sup>12</sup> *Num. Chron.*, 1951, 68-90. Plus fragments. (x) all but duplicates.
- <sup>13</sup> R. Gough, *Cat. Coins of Canute (1777)*. *P.S.A.S.*, x, 584.
- <sup>14</sup> *New Stat. Acc.*, III, 13 (1845). Jeffrey, *Hist. Rox.*, 277 (1864). Over 90 pennies, including also Egbert. Jeffrey speaks of two finds, but the *New Statistical Account* includes in this find the ring he reports from a second.
- <sup>15</sup> *New Stat. Acc.*, XII, 464 (1845). W. D. Simpson, *Province of Mar.*, 89 and 154 (1942).

## NOTES TO TABLE B.

1. For Egbert see also previous list A, *s.v.* Jedburgh.
2. The coins of Ethelred mentioned from Garthsbanks and Jedburgh were more probably E. II than E. I; see previous list A. A few silver coins, including one of Ethelred (II?), are said to have been found in a stone cist at Kilmartin, Argyll (*New Stat. Acc.*, VII, 560).
3. Sutherland in *Num. Chron.*, II, 58 (1942), refers to a *secat* found in Scotland, but it has not been possible to trace this.
4. It is said that a greatly defaced Byzantine bronze coin, *c.* late sixth century, as well as others unrecorded or earlier, was found at the site of the Pictish silver hoards at Norrie's Law, Largo, Fife; *P.S.A.S.*, XVIII, 246-7, where a seventh-century date is given by mistake—682 for 582.
5. See footnote, p. 172, for additions.



1. Silver and gold mounting from the Iona hoard. ( $\frac{1}{3}$ .)



2. The Kinblethmont Stone.

[Photo: F. T. Wainwright.]