

THE ANGLO-SAXON COINS FROM MEOLS SANDS

[The following inventory is an appendix to the paper on "The Celtic, Saxon and Scandinavian Settlement at Meols in Wirral" by J. D. Bu'Lock, which appeared in *TRANSACTIONS* Volume 112.—Ed.]

THE nineteen Anglo-Saxon coins from Meols fall into four well-defined groups. The first two, *c.* 725 and *c.* 850, are quite unexpected and the five coins concerned certainly did not circulate freely in North-west England. The remaining two groups span respectively the last quarter of the tenth century and the third, fourth, fifth and sixth decades of the eleventh. They seem to reflect continual losses over the whole of those periods rather than two catastrophic disasters; the evidence of coin-hoards of the relevant time is that each class of penny was current for a few years only and was then demonetized, *cf.* *Anglo-Saxon Coins*, pp. 156-158 *etc.*, but the concentration *c.* 1030 could be significant. Further evidence in support of the theory of casual loss might seem to be afforded by the remarkably high proportion of cut halfpence (more than 20% of all coins and more than 27% of those not described as fragmentary). What is very surprising is the complete absence of coins from the period *c.* 900-973. At this period the newly-opened Chester mint was extraordinarily productive, while trade between Chester and Ireland flourished to judge from the incidence of Chester coins in Irish finds, *cf.* *JRSAI*, 1961, pp. 17 & 18. In conclusion I would like to express my indebtedness to Miss Elizabeth Pirie and to Mr. F. H. Thompson for answering my enquiries concerning possible Meols coins in the Chester collections—identification of the Potter coins (*cf.* *JAAHSC*, 1908, pp. 1-17) is not the easy matter it might be thought! Dr. D. M. Metcalf's paper cited below appeared after the paper was written, but it has been possible to indicate our principal divergencies of interpretation of evidence that is particularly untractable.

INVENTORY

(a) "SCEATTA" SERIES (*c.* 700-750)

1. *Cf.* *BMC* Type 5 *wt.* 7.0 grains 1865 *JLNS*, I. p. 14, and *TRANSACTIONS*, 1865-6, p. 215

2. Cf. *BMC* Type 4 wt. 17.0 grains 1867 *JLNS*, I. p. 19, and *TRANSACTIONS*, 1867-8, p. 107.

N.B. In *NC* 1942, p. 15 Dr. C. H. V. Sutherland has identified the second of these coins as of *BMC* Type 7 instead of Type 4 but reference to the Lindsay Plate cited by Ecroyd Smith will not be found to support this attribution. There seems, too, some confusion between the Meols Sands (Cheshire) and Meols (Lancashire), and a page reference is wanting.

(b) "STYCA" SERIES (c. 840-850)

ÆTHELRÆD II (841-844-849)

3. Moneyer Fordred wt. unrecorded Before 1861 *Ancient Meols*, p. 292
 4. Moneyer ? wt. unrecorded Before 1861 *Ancient Meols*, p. 292.

REDWULF (844)

- 5 Moneyer Coenred wt. unrecorded Before 1861 *Ancient Meols*, p. 292.

N.B. In the *Inventory of British Coin-Hoards* (p. 50, s.v. Dove Point) Mr. J. D. A. Thompson has assumed that all three coins were found together. The absence of a page-reference to *Ancient Meols* suggests, however, that the primary source was not consulted but only Heywood's note in *BNJ* VII (1910) p. 333. In *BNJ* XXX, i (1960), pp. 88-123 Dr. D. M. Metcalf has drawn attention to a number of finds from North-west England passed over by the *Inventory* which suggest that the *styca* may have been diffused more widely than has been supposed, and any assumption that all three coins necessarily were lost on the same occasion seems to go beyond the evidence.

(c) "REFORMED PENNY" SERIES (973-1066)

EADGAR (959-975)

"*Reform*" type (current Michaelmas 973-Michaelmas 979?)

6. York, uncertain moneyer cut halfpenny Before 1861 *Ancient Meols* p. 292 Cf. p. 288. and *JAAHSC*, 1908. p. 15.a.
N.B. On p. 112 of his recent paper Dr. Metcalf has suggested that this coin was of *BMC* type V by a moneyer

Eofermund. Admittedly Eofermund was a Chester-area moneyer, but a fatal objection must be the fact that *BMC* type V was not struck in North-west England.

ÆTHELRÆD II (978-1016)

“*First Hand*” type (current Michaelmas 979-Michaelmas 985?)

7. *Canterbury* Æthestan *wt.* unrecorded Before 1861 *Ancient Meols*, p. 292, and ?=*JAAHSC* 1908, p. 15, b.

8 ? ? ? fragment 1874 *TRANSACTIONS* 1874-5, p. 97.

“*Crux*” type (current Michaelmas 991-Michaelmas 997?)

9. *London*, - ric fragment Before 1861 *Ancient Meols*, p. 292 *N.B.* On p. 15 of the *JAAHSC* paper cited there is mention of a York penny of Æthelræd’s “Common” type (*Long Cross*?). If this attribution is correct the number of Anglo-Saxon coins from Meols becomes at least twenty.

CNUT (1016-1035)

“*Quatrefoil*” type (current Michaelmas 1017-Michaelmas 1023)

10. *Chester*, Ceolnoth *wt.* 13.3 grains ? Grosvenor Museum, Chester.

11. *Chester*, Le(of)—fragment 1867 *JLNS*. II, p. 43, and *TRANSACTIONS* 1867-8, p. 110, and ?=*JAAHSC* 1908, p. 15, e.

N.B. Eckroyd Smith and now Dr. Metcalf have interpreted the reverse legend of this coin “EGILR . . . NL”, and give the coin to London where however an “Ægel-” moneyer is not known for the type. I would interpret Smith’s reading “+LE . . . NLEG”.

“*Pointed Helmet*” type (current Michaelmas 1023-Michaelmas 1029)

12. *Chester*, Gunleof *wt.* unrecorded Before 1861 *Ancient Meols* p. 293.

“*Short Cross*” type (current Michaelmas 1029-Michaelmas 1035)

13. *Chester*, Leofwine *wt.* unrecorded 1872 *TRANSACTIONS*, 1872-3, p. 128, and ?=*JAAHSC* 1908, p. 15, d.

14. *Shrewsbury*, Etsige wt. unrecorded Before 1861 *Ancient Meols*, p. 293.
 15. *Winchester*, Spileman wt. unrecorded 1861 *Ancient Meols*, p. 293, and *JLNS*, I, p. 10.

HARTHACNUT, *sole reign* (1040-1042)

“*Arm-and-sceptre*” type (current summer 1040-Michaelmas 1042?)

16. *Chester*, (Leofn)oth cut halfpenny c. 1870 *TRANSACTIONS* 1874-5, p. 97, and ?=*JAAHSC* 1908, p. 15. f.
N.B. Eckroyd Smith attributes this coin to Cnut, but cf. *BNJ*, XXVIII, i(1955) pp. 111-146. I also assume it to be the same coin as that described in *TRANSACTIONS* 1870-1, p. 144 and attributed to the Confessor.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR (1042-1066)

“*Pacx*” type (current Michaelmas 1042-Michaelmas 1044?)

17. *London*, ? cut halfpenny Before 1861 *Ancient Meols*, p. 293 cf. p. 288.

“*Small Flan*” type (current Michaelmas 1048-Michaelmas 1050?)

18. *Southwark*, Æ1 (f)wine wt. 7.0 grains 1867 *JLNS* II, p. 44, and *TRANSACTIONS*, 1867-8, p. 110.
N.B. As late as 1873 Eckroyd Smith still clung to the view that the very light-weight coins of this class were third-pennies but their status as pennies is incontrovertible cf. *Anglo-Saxon Coins*, ed. R. H. M. Dolley, London, 1961, pp. 186 & 275, where it is assumed both by Miss G. van der Meer and by Mr. P. Grierson without discussion.

“*Sovereign/Eagles*” type (current Michaelmas 1056-Michaelmas 1059?)

19. *Chester* (?) ? wt. unrecorded 1869 *JLNS*, II, p. 51, and *TRANSACTIONS*, 1869-70, p. 275 (?=*JAAHSC* 1908, p. 15, g.)

(d) UNCERTAIN

On p. 293 of *Ancient Meols*, Hume and Eckroyd Smith, and on p. 94 of his recent paper, Dr. Metcalf attribute to “Canute”

two "silver half pennies", one apparently anepigraphic and one mis-struck and illegible. The types of the first are inconsistent with the attribution, and both are dismissed by Eckroyd Smith on p. 46 of *JLNS*, II. The smaller would seem to have been the centre from an Anglo-Saxon penny of the Xth-XIth centuries—and my experience is that *Last Small Cross* coins of Æthelræd II (current *c.* 1009-1017?) are particularly prone to fracture round the inner circle. The larger for which a weight of 18.5 grains is recorded remains completely mysterious. It is described as "thick, of rude execution" and I wonder if it might not be Hiberno-Norse. In the Grosvenor Museum there is a cut half-penny (?=JAAHSC, 1908, p. 15, h) of "Ballylinan" type which, if a local find, might well be from Meols though it seems unlikely to be the Hume coin, and the Chester area would be the most likely point in England to throw up Hiberno-Norse coins which are recorded from Man and the Scottish Isles. On the other hand there is some evidence to suggest that *c.* 1000 the Severn ports supplanted Chester as the principal route by which trade with Ireland was conducted—*cf.* *NC* 1960, pp. 191-193.

Abbreviations

<i>BNJ</i>	<i>British Numismatic Journal.</i>
<i>JAAHSC</i>	<i>Journal of the Architectural Archaeological and Historic Society for the County, City and Neighbourhood of Chester.</i>
<i>JLNS</i>	<i>Journal of the Liverpool Numismatic Society.</i>
<i>JRSAI</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.</i>
<i>NC</i>	<i>Numismatic Chronicle.</i>

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