

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN  
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LXXV

for 1986

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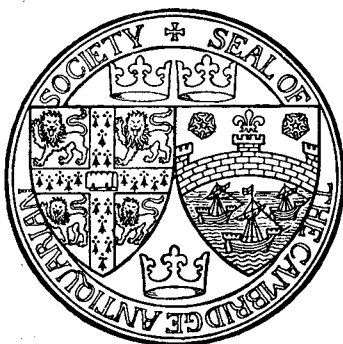
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COLIN F. PENDLETON: *A Gold 'hair-ring' from Wimblington Parish, Cambridgeshire.*

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## CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

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### VOLUME LXXV

for 1986

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## CONTENTS

*Officers and Council of the Society, 1985-6*

### Recent Publications

Obituaries – C. F. Tebbutt. H. K. Cameron. M. D. CRA'STER	1
Excavations at Great Chesterford, Essex, 1953-5. JO DRAPER	3
Wisbech and West Walton Highway Bypass: an Archaeological Survey. A. M. JOHNSON	43
Notes: A Penny of Eadgar from Castle Hill, Cambridge. MARK BLACKBURN and DAVID HAIGH	61
Excavations at Barnwell Priory, Cambridge. DAVID HAIGH	63
Dovecotes of South Cambridgeshire. E. M. DAVIS	67
<i>Index.</i>	91

## A PENNY OF EADGAR FROM CASTLE HILL, CAMBRIDGE

MARK BLACKBURN AND DAVID HAIGH

On the 21 May 1984 a silver penny of Eadgar (959-75) was recovered from a spoil heap associated with one of the construction trenches immediately to the north of the new Castle Court building on Castle Hill. The coin was discovered by Allen Webb, of the Cambridge Archaeology Field Group. The trench was approximately 0.75 cms deep and was cut along the line of Gloucester Street through disturbed nineteenth century deposits and a mass of service trenches. A brief investigation of the trench enabled us to confirm that the coin came from an area which had been disturbed during the construction of the new prison here in the early nineteenth century. Consequently it was impossible to decide on the original circumstance of deposition of the coin. The trench sections and the adjacent spoil heaps were also inspected with a metal detector by Michael Bonser who was able to confirm that there were no signs of other coins or of contemporary metal finds. The detailed archaeological evidence for the settlement on Castle Hill will be published in the forthcoming report on the excavations at Cambridge by Dr J. A. Alexander *et al.* It is sufficient to record that the coin came from an area of small ditched enclosures within the northern area of the post-Roman town and that these enclosures seem to respect the line of the main Roman road although the cross streets seem to have fallen into disuse. It has been impossible to confirm that the ditch round the Roman town was re-cleaned during this period as the ditch was re-cleaned during the Civil War.

The coin (Fig. 1) is of Eadgar's first Crowned Bust type (*BMC* type v) of East Anglian style.<sup>1</sup> It would have been struck 959-*c.* 973, and is likely to have been lost before the coinage reform of *c.* 973 in which all previous issues were reminted. The coin may be described:-

### *Obverse*

+EADGAR RE+ Crowned bust right

### *Reverse*

+FOLCHARD MONETA Small cross pattee  
Weight 1.50 g (23.1 gr.) Die axis 0°



Three other coins of Eadgar by the moneyer Folchard are known, all of this type. One can tell from the style of the bust that they were struck in East Anglia, and although the mint is not named, it was probably at Norwich. Fulchard is a Continental Germanic name and as such it is not common in English sources, but it occurs as a moneyer on non-mint-signed coins of Eadwig (955-59), and on Norwich coins of Ethelred II's *First Hand*, *Second Hand* and *Crux* issues (*c.* 979-85, *c.* 985-92 and *c.* 991-97). While there is no firm link between the Folchard named on Eadwig's, Eadgar's and Ethelred's coins, they are likely to be one and the same man – a career of thirty five years would not be exceptional for a tenth century moneyer and the only issue for which he is not recorded, *Reform Small Cross* (*c.* 973-79), is a relatively scarce one. In the mid-tenth century Norwich has probably the largest of the East Anglian mints. On the reverse of this coin there are three faint arcs visible to the naked eye, though they scarcely reproduce in a photograph. These represent guidelines drawn with compasses on the polished surface of the die to assist in laying out the design and the legend. The punch marks from which they were drawn are evident on the rims of the dies and lead trial plates from the Coppergate excavations in York.<sup>2</sup>

Only five other coins of the Anglo-Saxon period are on record as having been found in Cambridge. The earliest is an imitation gold solidus of Louis the Pious of mid-ninth century date found in the Cam at Magdalene Bridge.<sup>3</sup> This coin is one of

considerable intrinsic value, and would not have circulated in the normal sense, though it may have been used as a store of wealth. It could have been lost at any time during the ninth century. A coin of the *Two line* type in the name of Alfred but struck in the Southern Danelaw c. 890-5 by the moneyer Simon (= Sigemund?) is said to have been found in Cambridge, but the precise location is not specified.<sup>4</sup> Two coins of the succeeding St Edmund Memorial issue were found in 1968 excavations of the Rigeons Gardens site to the west of Huntingdon road.<sup>5</sup> They were found in a rubbish pit within one of the small ditched enclosures, a network of which had been laid out in the fortified Roman town during the Early or Middle Saxon period, possibly by the Danes themselves. Both these coins and the Alfred imitation are likely to have been lost before c. 920. Finally there was a penny of Ethelred II's *Crux* type (c. 991-97) from the London mint, found in Free School Lane. It is likely to have been lost before c. 1000.<sup>6</sup> The coin finds from Cambridge are really too few to develop a significant pattern. It may be significant that the three finds within the Roman town belong to the period c. 900-75, whilst only one from the lower town to the south of the river is from the tenth century. None of these are coins from the Cambridge mint, active c. 973-c. 1110.<sup>7</sup>

#### Acknowledgements:

We are grateful to A. Webb, A. Taylor, C. E. Blunt, J. A. Alexander and J. Pullinger.

#### REFERENCES

1. The coin is further discussed in M. A. S. Blackburn and M. J. Bonser, 'Single Finds of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Coins - 1', *British Numismatic Journal*, 54 (1984), 63-73, 64-5.
2. E. J. E. Pirie, 'Post-Roman Coins from York Excavations 1971-81', *The Archaeology of York* 18/1, 33-41.
3. Now in the Fitzwilliam Museum; P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage, with a catalogue of the coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*, (CUP 1986), 1, No. 753.
4. Also in the Fitzwilliam Museum; *ibid.*, No. 1367.
5. See the forthcoming report by Alexander *et al.* The coins are published in Grierson and Blackburn, *op. cit.*, Nos. 1395A-B.
6. The coin was presented to the Antiquarian Society before 1847 by Churchill Babington, and transferred to the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1886; P. Grierson, *Sylloge of the Coins of the British Isles. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Part 1*, (London, 1958), No. 662.
7. K. A. Jacob, 'The Mint of Cambridge', *Seaby's Coin and Medal Bulletin* 1984, 34-43, 72-6 and 134.

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## CONTENTS

### Recent Publications

Obituaries – C. F. Tebbutt.  
H. K. Cameron.

M. D. CRA'STER 1

Excavations at Great Chesterford, Essex, 1953-5.

JO DRAPER 3

Wisbech and West Walton Highway Bypass: an Archaeological Survey.

A. M. JOHNSON 43

Notes: A Penny of Eadgar from Castle Hill, Cambridge.

MARK BLACKBURN and DAVID HAIGH 61

Excavations at Barnwell Priory, Cambridge.

DAVID HAIGH 63

Dovecotes of South Cambridgeshire.

E. M. DAVIS 67

Index.

91