

## VIII

### The Bamburgh Hoard of Ninth-Century Northumbrian Coins

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#### SUMMARY

*The Bamburgh Hoard, recovered between 1999 and 2002, contains over 300 Anglo-Saxon stycas dating to the period c. 830–855. The paper summarises present knowledge of the styca coinage and its production and examines the make-up of the hoard. New die-combinations are recorded and attention is drawn to a British element in the coinage.*

#### RECOVERY AND ACQUISITION

During a period from the beginning of 1999 until early in 2002, over three hundred Northumbrian coins were recovered by members of the Ashington and Bedlington Metal Detecting Club at a site at Bamburgh. The site itself is recorded at the Museum of Antiquities, but it has been agreed that its exact whereabouts should not be published.

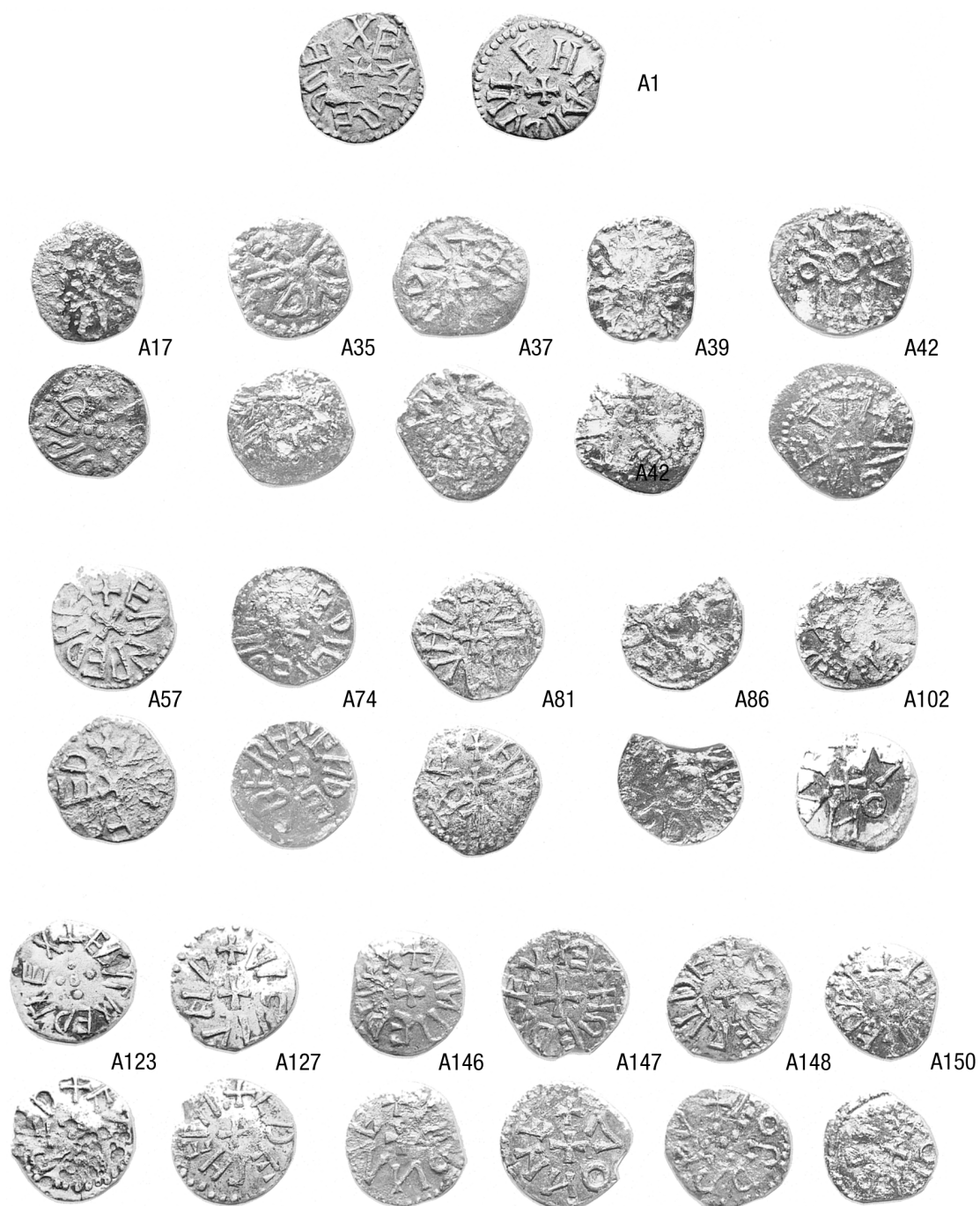
The material was reported in three separate lots, of which the first two are treated as one (Parcel A: Acc. No. 2000.1a). After preliminary examination, and some measure of cleaning of the coins at the Department of Coins and Medals in the British Museum, the parcel was the subject of an inquest by the Coroner for North Northumberland in December 1999. Once they were declared to be Treasure Trove, the specimens were purchased for the Museum of Antiquities by the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne.

After an interval, during which access restrictions resulting from the foot-and-mouth epidemic prevented the detectorists from returning to the site, further searching – in 2002 – retrieved sixty-three more coins (Parcel B:

Acc.No. 2000.1b); these were deemed by the Coroner to be part of the same discovery and no other enquiry was held. The finders then generously donated the specimens to the Museum. It is principally because part of the material was bought and part was acquired by gift that the parcels have not been amalgamated and the contents of each have been listed separately. The catalogue, now deposited with the coins at the Museum, does include an addendum which provides cross-references for items in one parcel to related specimens in the other.

It should be recorded that the original total reported for Parcel A was 253 coins. Examination of the specimens, first in 2001 and again in 2003 (after further laboratory-work had been carried out), has resulted in four of the earlier finds now being rejected from the Northumbrian series, even though their present condition precludes definition of their true identity. Noted at the end of the list for Parcel A, they cannot now be regarded as anything other than an inadvertent recovery; possibly the remains of barbarous Roman coins, they are unrelated to the main find.

In all, three hundred and twelve Northumbrian stycas, struck in copper alloy during the years from c. 830 to c. 855, represent a hoard which has been disturbed and dispersed over a particular area. Such an identity as a hoard can well be sustained (even in the absence of evidence for its original container) for, had coins been scattered as singletons around a long-established, busy market or fairground site over a period of years, one would have expected the register of recoveries to have included examples of Northumbria's earlier silver issues from the sceatta series of the eighth



*Fig. 1 New, or unpublished, die-combinations, at a scale of 3:2. See opposite for key.*

century – perhaps, even, some contemporary Carolingian silver deniers. The latter are now known to occur, often as fragments, at sites which yield the Northumbrian coins; it seems probable that there was some acceptable exchange-rate between their fractional form and the northern copper. No such evidence has been discovered in the relevant area at Bamburgh.

Although there is no guarantee that the complete hoard has as yet been recovered, it seems clear that this northern find must be placed within the middle range of such caches. Neither a purse-hoard of between twenty and thirty coins (of which several are now recorded) nor a massive assembly of several thousand coins, similar to the finds from Hexham in 1832, and York in 1842, the Bamburgh deposit may be compared in size with two discovered near York Minster – first, in 1831 (Pirie 1994) and then in 1879. All three finds from York, and that from Hexham, have been included in a recent inventory: Pirie 2000; nos. 79, 77, 81 and 171, respectively.

#### OTHER STYCAS FROM BAMBURGH: THE CASTLE SITE FINDS

Current excavations at Bamburgh Castle, by a team from York, have not so far recovered any Northumbrian coins. Earlier investigations, by Hope-Taylor, first in 1960–1961, then in 1970–1972 and 1974, produced a very substantial number of stycas – surely indicative of the ninth-century settlement having been still a high status site. Although most of these coins remain to be examined in detail, it can be noted that their greatly corroded condition is much the same as that of many of the specimens from this new find. The soil conditions of a coastal site are hardly the best environment for preservation of base-metal objects. That a considerable number of the items in question are coins of irregular issues, and of relatively poor quality in the first place, inevitably means that they suffer most from corrosion and, without great care in the initial cleaning, the chances of recovering enough detail to ensure their identification are bound to be low.

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#### Key to fig. 1 (opposite)

##### *Parcel A. Phase Ib*

A1. Eanred: Hearduulf; dies not matched elsewhere

##### *Phase II: Group A*

A17. Aethelred II: Fordred; reverse, additional

A35. Irregular: Hexham variety; second die (? *Monne*), additional

A37. Irregular: Hexham variety; first die known (but unpublished) in Oxford; second die, additional

A39. Irregular: Hexham variety; dies not traced

A42. Irregular: Carlisle variety (double–reverse); Monne: Huaetred; *Huaetred* die, additional

##### *Group C*

A57. Ci. Eanred: Uulfred; new combination of known dies

A74. Ci. Aethelred II (1st reign): Uendelberht; reverse, additional

A81. Ci. Abp. Uigmund: Hunlaf; new combination of known dies

A86. Ci. Aethelred II (2nd reign): Earduulf (rev., retrograde); new combination of known dies (?)

A102. Ci. Aethelred II (2nd reign): Monne; rev., additional

A123. Cii. Aethelred II (1st reign); Eanred; rev., additional

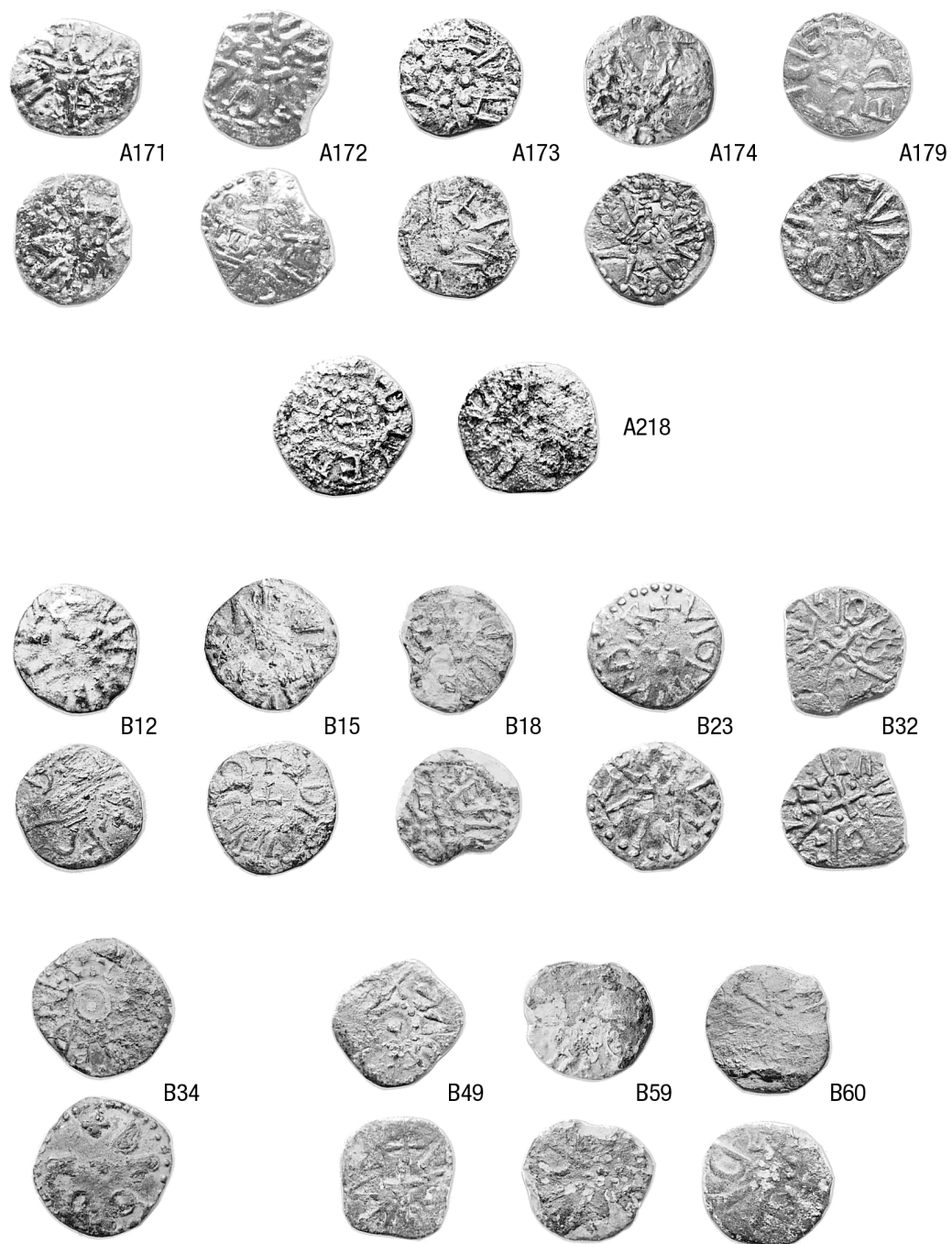
A127. Cii. Abp. Uigmund: Hunlaf; new combination of known dies

A146. Ciii. Eanred: Monne; die–combination known (but hitherto unpublished) from Whitby excavations of the 1920s

A147. Ciii. Eanred: Monne; rev., additional (?)

A148. Ciii. Aethelred II (1st reign): Fordred (as EORDRED); new combination of known dies

A150. Ciii. Aethelred II (1st reign): Fordred; new combination of known dies



*Fig. 2 New die-combinations, and others, at a scale of 3:2. See opposite for key.*



It is still, unfortunately, impossible to compare fully the range of coins from the present hoard with that of the material excavated at the castle. By chance, only sixty-seven specimens from Hope-Taylor's 1971 season were available for study in 1980, and the check-list composed then was compiled before the coins could be related exactly to those in any published catalogue. Photographs of only a few of the coins were added to the notebooks which form a data-base of known dies and die-combinations. Where coins from the same clusters are present in the hoard, the association is recorded in the registers for the parcels. The early record for 1971 now needs to be translated into post-1996 terms and, indeed, extended to cover all the relevant coin-finds from the site, before any adequate comparisons can be made. It will doubtless be a matter of referring to the hoard when the full report on the castle recoveries comes to be written.

It is, perhaps, worth remarking that in 1980 it was the struggle to identify some of the castle's coins – and finding possible solutions not in the classic collection at York, but in the record of the Hexham find (Adamson 1834 and 1835) – which drew attention to details of Hexham's composition and then to the underlying pattern of the styca coinage as a whole.

## RECENT RESEARCH

Research, which in 1980 was at its earliest stages, benefited not just from re-assessment of hoard evidence but also from the opportunities to examine material excavated at a number of sites in York and in Carlisle, as well as that from single major settlements such as Whithorn and Flixborough (Pirie 2000: nos. 213 and 221). It became clear that production of the stycas developed in two phases and that, in both, work for the archbishops should be related to that for the kings, rather than being considered entirely separately, as before. Moreover, the output of Phase II could – and should – be classified to demonstrate the relationship of individual moneyers to each other.

Publication of the massive collection in the Yorkshire Museum at York (together with two minor collections in Leeds) was achieved in 1996: *Coins of the Kingdom of Northumbria, 700–867*. The volume, in which the coins are presented according to the Phase-and-Group arrangement, described below, had been long delayed because of considerable controversy – not least because of the present author's insistence on retaining the Northumbrian name-forms for the ninth-century individuals rather than observing the southern convention of transcribing personal names in the forms

### Key to fig. 2 (opposite)

#### **Parcel A.**

#### *Group D: Irregular issues*

- A171. Di. Double-reverse: Uulfred and Earduulf; both dies additional
- A172, A173 and A174: all struck from unrecorded dies (Di)
- A179. Dii. Struck from known obverse, paired with additional reverse

#### *Uncertain attribution*

- A218. Irregular (?): Earduulf; dies not matched

#### **Parcel B:**

#### *Phase II:*

#### *Group C*

- B12. Ci. Eanred: Uulfred; obverse as yet undetermined
- B15. Ci. Abp. Uigmund: Edilueard; rev., additional
- B18. Ci. Aethelred II (1st reign): Uendelberht; rev., additional (?)
- B23. Ci. Abp. Uigmund: Hunlaf; rev., additional
- B32. Ci. Osberht: Uniberht; rev., additional
- B34. Cii. Eanred: Brodr; rev., additional

#### *Group D*

- B49. Dii. New combination of known dies
- B59. Dii. Uncertain combination; the second die is used also for B60
- B60. Dii. Uncertain combination; the second die is used also for B59

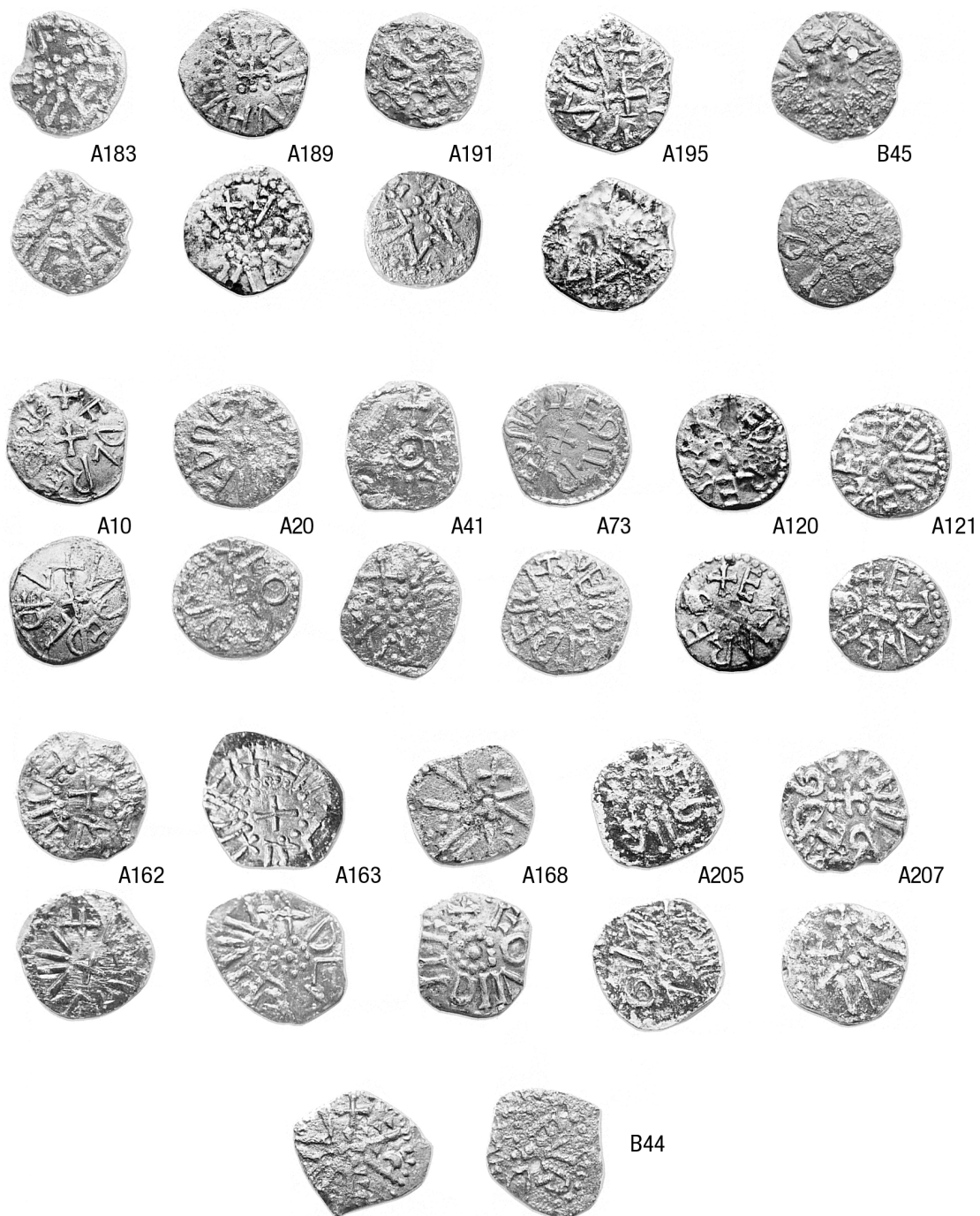


Fig. 3 Some partial attributions; some better specimens, at a scale of 3:2. See opposite for key.

known from twelfth-century Wessex. In-so-far as the York collection is based entirely on discoveries from the city and its neighbourhood (in Deiran territory), the catalogue of some 4500 coins, representing over two thousand die-combinations, does not include all the known issues but it does now provide a reference-base for registering material present in recent finds, either as varieties already recorded or as additional combinations of dies.

### STYCA COINAGE

At the end of the eighth century, by which time the kingdoms of Southumbria had adopted the large, broad-flan, silver penny as their preferred form of money, Northumbria chose to retain the small size of earlier coins for its own new issues. Unlike the preceding sceattas, however, which named only the kings and the archbishops of York, the new stycas bore the names of individual moneyers as well.

This coinage, beginning during the second reign of Aethelred I, *c.* 790–796, was first made in silver; issues appear to have been occasional (as and when required) rather than constant in output. About 830, a break in normal production occurred. It is now thought that the

available supplies of silver were then used for making pennies – of which one example is known to survive – of southern type, which King Eanred presented to the king of Wessex as a diplomatic gift (Pirie 1997). During the next five years, the last of the early moneyers for the king, and for Archbishop Eanbald II, struck stycas in copper alloy, for use within Northumbria itself.

After an interval of some two years, 835–837 – identified by there being no coins known for Archbishop Uulfsige – coin-production, in copper alloy, was resumed by new moneyers, and continued until *c.* 855, early in the reign of Osberht. Throughout this second phase, minting was clearly both constant and intensive; very large numbers of coins have been recovered. Their details indicate that, in addition to official issues, many unauthorized, irregular, coins were also in circulation. This may well have been the result of political turmoil which led up to, and followed, the brief usurpation of the throne by Reduulf, about 843. It must have been the sheer quantity of irregular issues in use which eventually caused the whole coinage to crash, and production to cease. Yet there is some evidence to suggest that the existing coins remained acceptable tender until 867, when the Vikings overran York (Hall 1986).

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#### Key to fig. 3 (opposite)

##### i) *Partial attributions (from Dii)*

- A183, A189, A191 and A195: exact attributions are indeterminate  
B45. Exact attribution is indeterminate

##### ii) *Better specimens*

##### *Parcel A:*                      *Phase II:*                      *Group A*

- A10. Aethelred II (total reign): Leofdegn (Ai, for reign)  
A20. Aethelred II (total reign): Fordred (Aii, for reign)  
A41. Irregular, Carlisle variety: double–reverse; Wernuth: Antedi

##### *Group C*

- A73. Ci. Aethelred II (1st reign): Uendelberht  
A120 and A121: Cii. Aethelred II (1st reign): Eanred; the coins are die–duplicates

##### *Group D*

- A162 and A163: Di. Specimens struck from the same obverse die  
A168. Di. Irregular issue  
A205. Dii. Irregular issue  
A207. Dii. Irregular issue

##### *Parcel B:*    *Group D*

- B44. Di. Double–reverse; Uulfred: Earduulf

Analysis of the dies (spelling of names, style of lettering, and choice of motif) indicates that both the irregular and the official issues were regional in origin. York cannot have had the only mint for the entire production – even of the authorized work – during Phase II. Several groups of concurrent issues can be identified. Although the number of finds from York, and the kingdom's southern province, Deira, result in the predominance of one group (Group C, with Group D for its related irregulars), coins within the smaller Group A are believed to have been made at centres – certainly more than one – in the northern province of Bernicia. That Bamburgh itself might have been the site of a small mint was a very early suggestion; that Carlisle might have had the necessary status has been mooted as a further possibility. There is as yet, however, no definitive evidence which identifies places of minting in the north. Coins which are attributed to the minor Group B may have had their source just south of the Tees, which formed the provincial border. The material of Group C can already be divided into three sections (dependent mainly on the form of Aethelred II's name): one large block (Ci) and two smaller ones. As the principal part of the regular, authorized, coinage, Group Ci is almost certainly the material struck at York itself; it may, in due course, be capable of further stylistic divisions, which might attest the presence of more than one workshop within the main mint. The workshops for Cii and Ciii could well have been based in other Deiran townships.

Throughout the phase, there is extensive die-linking in the official coinage. This occurs both within the work of an individual moneyer by repeated use of the tools which bore his name for the reverses of the coins, and between the work of two or more men by their sharing obverse dies naming the king. (Remarkably, few instances are known of moneyers sharing dies naming the archbishop, Uigmund.) Such links, which were once interpreted as incontrovertible evidence for there being only one mint (and that, unquestionably, at York) now seem to underline the reality of major moneyers

having been on the move between one centre and the next.

Most, if not all, of the irregular issues are also heavily die-linked into a number of tight clusters of coins.

Evidence within all three sections of Group C points to there having been a break in the official pattern of production about the time of Aethelred's deposition by Reduulf. Obverse dies, naming Aethelred and known to have been used normally by moneyers such as Uulfred and Earduulf, are found combined with poor-quality reverses naming other men such as Monne, Odilo and Leofdegn. The relevant coins have come to be termed descendants. That one of the *Odilo* dies is also known in combination with an obverse for Reduulf affords some indication of date; it has been suggested that the main descendant issues were struck for Aethelred, by his supporters, during the months that Reduulf was in power. That short period was almost certainly the flash-point which triggered the spate of undeniably irregular coins, in Deiran territory at least.

The material now attributed to Group D comprises one long, tightly-knit, chain of die-linked coins (Dii) together with several small clusters (Di) which are waiting in the wings until such time as further new die-combinations can be recorded which may lead them into the main complex.

The surviving irregulars which seem to be related to the work of Group A are fewer in number and have not yet been classified in quite the same way. The Hexham hoard has long been known as a source of distinctive nonsense varieties which rarely occur in the southern finds. During the last few years, excavations at Carlisle have recovered examples whose characteristic style is now differentiated from that of Hexham by use of the term *Carlisle*. Most of the relevant specimens are double-reverses. One known die, however, shows Aethelred's name in the form EDFLRED (note, especially, that the *D* is the characteristic Northumbrian form of *D*; the *F* is seen as a runic *A*) which indicates that this class of irregular was very probably attempting

to reflect Aethelred's official coinage in the subgroup Aii for his reign, where that spelling was used.

The Carlisle varieties are not altogether unknown in Deiran finds but are there extremely rare in comparison with the common occurrence of irregulars from Group D.

#### COMPOSITION OF THE HOARD: NEW DATA

Continuing study of this Northumbrian series must involve constant monitoring of the finds as they occur so that understanding of the issues may be clarified and refined. Every new discovery – however large or however small – is capable of yielding some further information: about distribution of issues; about new, as yet unrecorded, dies; or new combinations of known dies. Some specimens may be in better condition than duplicates known from elsewhere and it is then possible to confirm or complete the reading of a legend or, at least, to consider an alternative.

The only major hoard so far recorded from Bernician territory has been that discovered at Hexham in 1832. In a sense, we have been waiting for another northern hoard, so that its range of material might be compared with that of Hexham, on the one hand, and with that of the more numerous southern finds, on the other.

The following inventories of the Bamburgh hoard may suffice here to supplement the fuller lists at the Museum of Antiquities.

#### PARCEL A

249 coins

**Phase Ib**, c.830–35 (1): EANRED: Hearduulf, 1.

**Phase II**, c.837–55 (248): **Group A** (47): EANRED (2): Brodr, 2. AETHELRED II (total reign: 25): **Ai** (13): Leofdegn, 9; Monne, 4. **Aii** (12): Fordred, 5; Brother, 1; Eanred, 2; Monne, 3; Wihtred, 1. Abp. UIGMUND (4): Coenred, 4. *Irregular issues* (15): Hexham varieties, 8; Carlisle varieties, 7. *Contemporary forgery*, 1. **Group B** (7): EANRED (2): Aldates, 2. AETHELRED II, 1st

reign (4): Alghere, 3; Leofdegn, 1. AETHELRED II, 2nd reign (1): Eanred, 1. **Group C** (104): **Ci** (60): EANRED (7): Monne, 1; Uulfred, 1; Fordred, 3; Aldates, 1; *aberrant*, 1. Abp. UIGMUND, *temp.* Eanred (3): Edilueard, 3. AETHELRED II, 1st reign (12): Earduulf, 4; Monne, 3; Uendelberht, 3; Wihtred, 1; *Descendant*, 1. Abp. UIGMUND, *temp.* Aeth. – 1st (4): Hunlaf, 4. REDUULF (1): Cudberht, 1. AETHELRED II, 2nd reign (25): Eanred, 1; Leofdegn, 1; Uulfred, 1; Earduulf, 16; Monne, 4; *aberrant*, 2. Abp. UIGMUND, *temp.* Aeth. – 2nd (2): Hunlaf, 2. OSBERHT (3): Uiniberht, 3. Abp. UULFHERE (3): Uulfred, 3. **Cii** (30): EANRED (4): Fordred, 2; Aldates, 1; Brodr, 1. AETHELRED II, 1st reign (6): Eanred, 4; Cunemund, 1; Leofdegn, 1. Abp. UIGMUND, *temp.* Aeth. – 1st (5): Edelhelm, 5. AETHELRED II, 2nd reign (11): Leofdegn, 1; Monne, 2; Eanred, 3; Fordred, 5. Abp. UIGMUND, *temp.* Aeth. – 2nd (1): Edelhelm, 1. OSBERHT (3): Edelhelm, 3. **Ciii** (14): EANRED (2): Monne, 2. AETHELRED II, 1st reign (5): Fordred, 3; Monne, 2. AETHELRED II, 2nd reign (1): Uulfsic, 1. OSBERHT (6): Monne, 2; Eanuulf, 4. **Group D** (51): *Di* (16): Miscellaneous irregulars, 16. *Dii* (35): the main, 5-strand, complex of southern irregulars: Reflectives I, 8; Background I, 5; Reflectives II, 8; Background II, 1; Reflectives III, 13.

**Uncertain issues** (in total): 39.

#### PARCEL B

63 coins

**Phase II**, c.837–55 (63): **Group A** (7): EANRED (2): Aldates, 1; Monne, 1. AETHELRED II (total reign: 3): **Ai** (2): Leofdegn, 1; Eanred, 1. **Aii** (1): Brother, 1. OSBERHT (1): Uulfsic, 1. *Irregular issue* (1): Carlisle variety, 1. **Group B** (2): AETHELRED II, 1st reign (1): Alghere, 1. AETHELRED II, 2nd reign (1): Eanred, 1. **Group C** (33): **Ci** (24): EANRED (4): Monne, 2; Uulfred, 1; *aberrant*, 1. Abp. UIGMUND, *temp.* Eanred (2): Edilueard, 2. AETHELRED II, 1st reign (6): Earduulf, 1; Monne, 1; Uendelberht, 1; Uulfred, 1; Wihtred, 1; *Descendant*, 1. Abp. UIGMUND, *temp.* Aeth. – 1st (2): Edilueard, 1; Hunlaf, 1. AETHELRED II, 2nd reign (7): Earduulf, 6; Monne, 1. Abp. UIGMUND, *temp.* Aeth. – 2nd (1): Hunlaf, 1. OSBERHT (2): Uiniberht, 2. **Cii** (7): EANRED (1): Brodr, 1. AETHELRED II, 1st reign (1): Fordred, 1. AETHELRED II, 2nd reign (5): Monne, 1; Eanred, 3; Fordred, 1. **Ciii** (2):

AETHELRED II, 2nd reign (1): Uulfsic, 1. OSBERHT (1): *double-reverse*, 1. **Group D** (13): **Di** (2): miscellaneous irregulars, 2. **Dii** (11): Background I, 1; Reflectives II, 4; Background II, 1; Reflectives III, 5.  
**Uncertain issues:** 8.

These coin-lists span the quarter-century from c. 830, when issues in silver were abandoned, to c. 855. In this respect, the hoard differs from Hexham, both in having none of the first issues, in silver, and then in having coins of Osberht and of Archbishop Uulfhere, for Hexham opened early and closed early. The Bamburgh deposit is, as far as the time-span is concerned, on a par with the southern Deiran caches, yet, in composition, it is not entirely similar to them. As always, the official coinage of Phase II's largest section, Group C, predominates, yet there is a good proportion of work from the much smaller Group A (as is the case with Hexham). As always, there is a large number of irregulars, but that both Hexham and Carlisle varieties from the north, as well as the Deiran range, should all be represented is perhaps quite distinctive.

It may be worth remarking that, since Bamburgh is a coastal site, some part of the Group C material might have reached the area by sea-borne traffic, rather than overland. This is almost certain to have been the case for coins of Archbishop Uulfhere and of King Osberht at the end of the period. The relevant issues are known from both the hoard and the castle's excavation-finds; two, in the hoard, are irregulars (Parcel A, nos 206, 207). These late strikings are not known from Whitby (*Inv.* 152), on the Deiran coast. Indeed, it is the absence of coins from the time of Osberht but the presence of many of the Deiran irregulars at Whitby which serves to confirm the view that the latter are not so late in date as was once thought to be the case. There seems to be a *tranche* of sites, besides Hexham and Whitby, at which no stycas issued later than 850 have been recovered: Wearmouth (*Inv.* 173), Jarrow (*Inv.* 174) and Newcastle Black Gate (*Inv.* 177). At Lindisfarne (*Inv.* 183), just to the north, the Northumbrian coin-list is still incomplete; as yet

the site shows no evidence of the latest issues. Further north still, in East Lothian, excavations at Dunbar (*Inv.* 187) and detector-finds from Aberlady (*Inv.* 188) have not produced evidence of coins later than the reign of Aethelred II. The reason for the absence from some sites of the last stycas issues can probably only be deduced, rather than determined exactly, yet if we may assume a considerable degree of civil unrest in territory adjoining the provincial border at least, if not more generally wide-spread, it follows that, at the beginning of the new decade, contact between York in the south and the northern stronghold at Bamburgh would have been more easily achieved by sea than by land.

As at Whitby, where excavations in the 1920s produced well over a hundred stycas, coins of the usurper, Reduulf, are rare at Bamburgh: only one is known in the hoard (Parcel A, no. 82) and, so far, none has been recognized among finds from the castle. The hoard does, however, have two of the specimens known as descendants (A77 and B21). Although it contains, also, a number of specimens whose condition precludes any identification, and others whose attribution remains uncertain, it does afford evidence of several new die-combinations which are illustrated here (figs. 1–3), and listed in the key.

For issues already known, there are also some specimens whose condition is, in some respects, better than that of their die-duplicates known elsewhere. One such is the irregular double-reverse (Parcel A, no. 41) which is still identified as one naming Uernuth and Antedi. Admittedly, detail of the first die is considerably worn, yet the retrograde legend of the second is clearer than on other examples of its use. Identification of the first name, with its second element as *-nuth*, was originally made in relation to another coin on which the name seemed to read as *Edilnuth*, although *-nuth*, as such, does not appear as part of any name registered in the *Liber Vitae* of Lindisfarne. This Bamburgh specimen seems to show that the fourth letter may be *M* rather than *N*, which would attest the rendering of the name as Uermuth; in this reading, the first element is

seen as *Uerm-*, which is known as well as *Uer-*, and the second as *-uth*, which may be a contraction for the known form *-uith*. Certain identification of the fourth letter is still not feasible: the cross-bar is undoubtedly high on the upright strokes, yet whether it is formed in one section (for *N*) or in two (for *M*) is not clear. The possibility of the die itself having become flawed, so that the impressions it made were faulty, cannot be overlooked. It would be as well, perhaps, to reserve judgement on the reading options. (The transcription in the site-list is *Wernuth*, to reflect the irregulars' use of *wen* rather than *U* for the initial.)

#### INTERPRETATION OF THE COINAGE

The *Wernuth* die (A41) is known in several other combinations; this particular one has the sole occurrence of the *Antedi* die, so far. The name, which has antecedents recorded on coins of the Celtic tribes – Dobunni and Iceni – serves to draw attention to a number of factors which together indicate the presence in ninth-century Northumbria of a strong, native, British community. Other such names may have been derived from British sources: Hoaud, Teuen and Roen; stylistic traits, principally the nodose lettering for many of the legends on the irregular issues, and their choice of motifs, are also pointers to recognition of there being observed traditions much older than those of the post-Roman Anglian and Saxon cultures.

A long-standing assumption that the early coinage of Northumbria is an idiosyncratic manifestation of the prevailing Anglo-Saxon currency – or is even just Anglian in identity – seems to have put blinkers on many studies of the series, with unfortunate results for its interpretation. One would argue, strongly, that pre-Viking Northumbria should properly be regarded as an Anglo-British realm, and its coinage as Anglo-British in character.

Distribution of recorded finds, which is widespread throughout Northumbria itself and also south of Humber, points to the little copper stycas of low value having had a very practical

purpose for all people of the northern kingdom – much more so, perhaps, than had the earlier silver coins of higher intrinsic worth which may have been of use only to a very limited part of the community.

It would appear that the styca coinage, with both authorized and irregular issues during its heyday in the second quarter of the ninth century, provided Northumbria with a robust monetary economy.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It remains for me to thank Miss Lindsay Allason-Jones and her colleagues in the Museum of Antiquities for their kindness on the occasions when I was there to study the coins for my own records. I am grateful to her for willingly making the material available to me in Edinburgh once I was working on this paper. That the specimens were, for a time, in the Coin Room at the Royal Museum of Scotland puts me in debt to Nicholas Holmes; it is a pleasure to thank him, too, for having shared his work-space with me.

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