

FOUR ITALIAN COINS IMITATING ANGLO-SAXON TYPES

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THE interrelations of coin-types as a result of trade is of course a regular feature in numismatic history. The four coins that form the subject of this paper seem more likely, however, to have originated from other causes. All are Italian; two struck at Lucca in Tuscany in the late eighth or early ninth centuries, two at Rome in the tenth century. I hope to show that the influence of Anglo-Saxon types in these cases is more likely to have arisen from religious considerations than from those of trade.

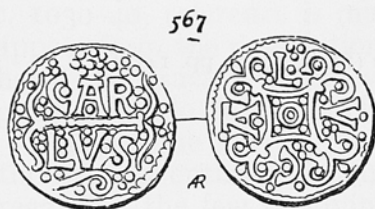


FIG. 1.



FIG. 2.

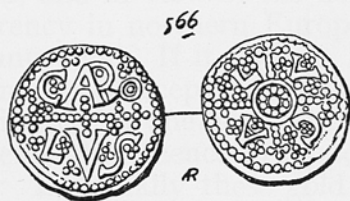


FIG. 3.



FIG. 4.

The first two coins are of Charlemagne, who after his defeat of Desiderius in 774 assumed the title of King of Italy. As will be seen, the first (Fig. 1) is an extremely close copy of a coin of his contemporary Offa by the moneyer Ahlmund (Fig. 2) as to both obverse and reverse types, though on Charlemagne's coin the king's name appears on what is the reverse of the English coin. Signore U. Monneret de Villard, who drew attention to the similarity of the two coins in the *Revista Ital. di Num.*,¹ records a specimen of the Charlemagne coin in the Museum at Brescia and the *Corpus Nummorum Italicorum* records one at Padua.² There can be little doubt that the Italian coin copies the English and not vice versa; the design is essentially Anglo-Saxon. Any remaining doubt, however, is dispelled by the fact that the Italian moneyer has regarded the final letter D of Ahlmund's name as part of the design of the coin, and copied it blindly on to his die.

¹ 1931.

² Vol. xi, p. 59, no. 12.

The second coin (Fig. 3), also of Charlemagne and struck at Lucca, is of the same general obverse type as the preceding coin with the king's name in two lines across the field with a bar between. A feature of these obverses, very characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon coinage and in no way so of the normal issues of Italy, is the liberal use of pellets to fill up the design in the field. The reverse copies quite closely a penny of Offa's, probably issued by the Bishop of London who died c. 787-9 (Fig. 4). There are specimens of this Lucca coin, essentially the same though differing in detail in the arrangement of the pellets, in the collection of the late King of Italy, the Vatican Museum, and the Fusco collection.¹

The two other coins to which I wish to draw attention are papal issues. Both bear the name of a Pope John and neither has the name



FIG. 5.



FIG. 6.

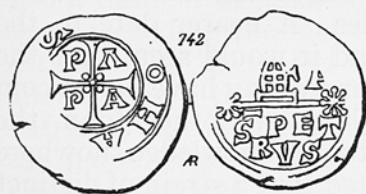


FIG. 7.



FIG. 8.

of the Emperor. A word should perhaps be said on the papal coinage at this time. From the time of Leo III, who was elected to the Papacy in 795, it was the custom for the names of both Pope and Emperor to appear on the coins. It will be appreciated that this has facilitated an accurate classification of the coins despite a fairly stabilized type and the recurrence of certain papal names. There are, however, certain rare coins on which the Emperor's name is omitted. These appear to have been struck either during imperial vacancies or at times when the Pope refused to give allegiance to the Emperor. These coins are more difficult to attribute with certainty, and as differences of opinion still exist on the subject, even among Italian numismatists, it is hoped that they may not consider it an impertinence on the part of a foreigner to attempt to offer some slight additional evidence that may help them to establish a definite classification.

The obverse of the first coin (Fig. 5) copies very closely one of

¹ C.N.I. xi. 59, nos. 9-11; *Revista Ital. di Num.* 1921.

the rare floral types that formed the reverse of coins of Edward the Elder (899-925) (Fig. 6). The reverse of the papal coins follows the Italian tradition. The second piece (Fig. 7) is less certainly a copy of an Anglo-Saxon type, but it seems likely to have been derived from the rare York coins of Æthelstan (925-39) which show the minster and the mint name in the upper part of the field and, below a line, the name of the moneyer (Fig. 8). The papal coin has a somewhat similar design with the name of St. Peter. The object above the line is, in the engraving given by Sambon¹ (from which the illustration is taken), of doubtful identification, but he describes it as a temple with a step below, which is no doubt what it is intended to represent. The coin was in his own collection.

I have been unable to find either of these coins in the monumental *Corpus* of the late King of Italy. This is particularly surprising in the case of the first coin as it is stated by Sambon to be represented by a unique specimen in His Majesty's collection.

The coin with the floral type is attributed by Sambon,² who follows Serafini, to Pope John XII and is treated as one of a small series issued by him without the Emperor's name between 955 and 962, this despite the fact that it omits the title *Dominus* which is found on the other coins of this series.³ If this attribution is correct, the original that was being copied was a coin that cannot have been issued less than thirty years earlier. The Roman coin bears all the signs of being a direct copy of the original type and not one made through one or more gradually degenerating intermediaries. A nearer date to the original would therefore seem probable, and it would seem that the possibility should be examined as to whether we may have here a coin of the imperial vacancy of 924-8 at which time another John, the tenth, was Pope. This floral type occurs, to my knowledge, nowhere else in the series, but it may perhaps be noted that a strain of distinct originality creeps at this stage into the otherwise fairly orthodox papal series. Other coins attributed by Italian numismatists to this imperial vacancy depict a city gate,⁴ a feature not found elsewhere in papal coins at the time and perhaps again indicating Anglo-Saxon influence.⁵

The second coin is attributed by Sambon to Pope John XI and the patrician Alberic (930-5), a date that conforms well enough with the original of Æthelstan (925-39) that it appears to copy.

Mention must be made of one further coin in the papal series on which foreign evidence may help in finding the correct attribution. It bears the name of Pope Leo and, like the coins just discussed, omits that of the Emperor. The coin, Sambon 758, is attributed by him to the Anti-Pope Leo VIII (963-5), an attribution that is accepted by the *C.N.I.* which notices the crudeness of the workmanship and suggests that the coins may have been struck in some city of the Patri-

¹ *Rep. Gen. delle Monete coniate in Italia*, Giulio Sambon, Paris, 1912, no. 742.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 121, no. 748.

³ *C.N.I.* xv. 92-3.

⁴ *C.N.I.* xv. 89.

⁵ Cf. *B.M.C.*, Pl. VIII, 13, 14.

mony of the Church independent of the Emperor at a time when Leo had to flee from Rome.¹

A specimen was found in the Delganey hoard, the deposit of which can be dated with reasonable certainty to *c.* 832 or 130 years before the time of Leo VIII. As Sir John Evans pointed out in his report on the hoard,² the evidence here supplied points very strongly to this being a coin of Leo III (795-814). This Pope was the first to couple the name of the Emperor with his own on the coinage. May it be that this coin was struck before the practice was inaugurated? These are questions that must be left to Italian numismatists for final decision.

We must now briefly consider the reasons for the appearance of these Anglo-Saxon coin-types on Italian coins at these two different periods. Trade, the normal cause of imitated coin-types, undoubtedly existed between the two countries, but were this the cause one might rather expect to find it reflected on the coins of the great commercial centres. Neither Rome nor Lucca falls into this category at this time. We have, on the other hand, abundant evidence of the pilgrim traffic to Rome and of the payment by the English Church of dues to the Holy See. There were two main pilgrimage routes to Rome, the one through Germany, the other across the Great St. Bernard Pass. These converge at Piacenza and pass through Lucca on their way to Rome. Signore U. Monneret de Villard, who makes this point in the paper to which reference has been made, mentions also a number of links between Lucca and England in Anglo-Saxon times including the fact that in 782 the priest Magniprando sold to Ætheltruda, "*Saxa Dei ancilla filia Adelwadi qui fuit rex Saxonum ultramarino*", the church of St. Dalmazio where she established herself, and that in the eighth and the beginning of the ninth centuries the name Saxo or Saxa occurs fairly frequently as a surname in Lucca. That the material from which copies could have been made was likely to have been available locally is suggested by the presence of two coins of Offa in the Ilanz hoard (Switzerland), another from Baggiovara near Modena, and the fact that his famous gold dinar was first bought in Rome. Similarly coins of Edward the Elder have been found in Italy, and it will be remembered that his unique gold penny was found by the Lake of Lausanne on the road to Rome. Thus it would seem probable that it was the religious traffic, whether in the form of pilgrims or of payments to the Holy See, that provided the originals from which these interesting copies arose.

In conclusion I must thank Mr. Lockett, who drew my attention to Signore Monneret de Villard's valuable article on the two coins of Charlemagne, and to Mr. Derek Allen, who first pointed out to me the two papal coins.

¹ *C.N.I.* xv. 95.

² *N.C.T.S.* ii. 78.