

A PENNY OF EDWARD THE ELDER FROM LANSDOWN, BATH

BY J. W. GARDNER

I am indebted to Mr. E. A. Shore for permission to publish the silver penny of Edward the Elder found by him in February of this year on Lansdown, to the north of Bath. Mr. Shore has also provided the photographs of obverse and reverse shown in Fig. 1.

The details of this coin are: obverse, + EADVVD REX round cross patee in circle; reverse, FRIDEBRHT MO + in two lines, divided by three crosses patee, pellets above and below. The National Grid reference for the find-spot is 31/723698.

Mr. R. H. M. Dolley, Assistant Keeper in the Department of Coins and Medals in the British Museum, has kindly examined the coin and reports as follows:—

“The coin is a penny of the moneyer Fritheberht, who is known to have struck at “Hampton” under Aethelstan, and it has been argued that “Hampton” is almost invariably Northampton. Recent research by the present writer, however, proves that Fritheberht was a Wessex moneyer and “Hampton” in his case must be Southampton. It may be assumed therefore that the coin under consideration was struck in the Winchester locality, and this attribution is borne out by the style of the coin, which has absolutely nothing in common with the contemporary products of Mercia and the Danelaw. The new find-spot gives welcome if not decisive support for the view, as provenances for Fritheberht coins recorded hitherto were inconclusive.¹

“The style of the coin approximates very closely to that of B.M.C. 43, which is from an unpublished Irish hoard, but it is from different dies. The present writer would date the coin between c. 910 and c. 920 with a slight bias in favour of the second half of the decade. A significant feature is the small cross patee at the end of the reverse legend. The large cross patee on the obverse is found on a number of Wessex coins of the period, and may be taken to confirm the attribution to the Winchester area. The weight of 24.2 grains is just what one would expect, and the die-axis is as usual at this period irregular (135°).”

It will be of interest to recall the discovery of a late Saxon silver strap-end by Mr. J. P. E. Falconer some two hundred yards from the find-spot of this coin.²

¹Mr. Dolley states that two are from Ireland, and twenty-one from two hoards in Rome!

²See *Arch. News Letter*, Vol. 5, No. 12, 55, p. 252.