

Zeitschrift: Schweizer Münzblätter = Gazette numismatique suisse = Gazzetta numismatica svizzera

Herausgeber: Schweizerische Numismatische Gesellschaft

Band: 18-22 (1968-1972)

Heft: 72

Artikel: The Solothurn hoard re-assessed

Autor: Pagan, H.E.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-170880>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 28.03.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

THE SOLOTHURN HOARD RE-ASSESSED

H. E. Pagan

The correct dating of 10th century coin hoards from Western Europe is often difficult to establish. Only a minority of the issues represented in them carry a deliberate dating indicator in the shape of the name of the ruler actually ruling when the coin was produced. And the evidence even of these is of limited value, since one ruler may have the same name as his predecessor and successor, or, although he may be the only ruler of his name, he may rule for so long that the presence of his name on a coin is only the most approximate indication of date. Hoards from France are particularly difficult to date.

A striking exception to these remarks is the coinage of the kings of England. It is clear that when one king gave way to another the name carried on the coinage also changed, and the system is not complicated by kings of the same name reigning successively. In addition, the descendants of Aelfred were not long lived. This may have been unfortunate for the history of their country, but it does allow hoards of English coins to be dated with some confidence between narrow limits.

The numismatist's obvious move is to see how far it is possible to date coins less easy to fix by considering those hoards in which both English and non-English coins occur and where there are sufficient English coins for a date calculated on their basis to be applicable to the hoard as a whole. Unfortunately outside Scandinavia such hoards are rare. A recent article in the *British Numismatic Journal*¹ has discussed those found in England. A group from Italy, connected with the payment of Peter Pence, contain English coins and only the odd coin from elsewhere in Europe². Other hoards from the continent of Europe in which non-English coins predominate contain, in general, such scanty English material that no firm conclusions can be drawn from it. The hoard with which this note deals is the only hoard in this last category yet published to contain both English and non-English coins in any number; and since on its basis rather firmer datings for a number of 10th century coins can be given than has previously been possible, it is to be regretted that no similar hoards exist to give guide lines in other areas.

The hoard concerned was found in March 1762, in demolition work of the site of the collegiate church of St. Ours at Solothurn, preparatory to the erection of a new church. About 200 coins came to light and were dispersed among prominent inhabitants. Nearly a century later Rodolphe Blanchet, a prominent antiquary from Lausanne, made inquiries after these coins and published a list of 28 coins assumed to be from the hoard³. 17 of these, from the mints of Auxerre, Brioude, Limoges, Orbe, Toulouse, and (?) Troyes, and another mint not identifiable, were not datable, either because they carried no ruler's name or because they were of well-known *types immobilisés*. Another was described as an eleventh-century issue of the bishops of Basel, but carried no legible inscription. The remaining coins were these:

¹ BNJ 32, 1963, 75–87.

² NC 1961, 151–161 publishes a hoard of 35 coins found near Catania, Sicily, before 1914, and gives useful summaries of the contents of three similar hoards from Rome. One of these has now been listed in detail in BNJ 33, 1964, 7–29, and a full publication of the Rome (1883) hoard is eagerly awaited.

³ *Mémoire sur les monnaies des rois de Bourgogne-Transjurane* in *Mittheilungen der antiquarischen Gesellschaft in Zürich* 11, 1856, Heft 3, 51–73, especially 69–73. References to BMC in the list of coins that follows here are to British Museum Catalogue, Anglo-Saxon Series, vol. 2 (1893), ed. Grueber.

Kingdom of England

Eadred (946–955)

1. + EADRED REX Small cross within inner circle; a pellet in the field at the end of each limb of the cross.
HVSEBALD MO in two lines, ∴ above and below, + + + between lines of inscription.
A coin answering this description is in the British Museum (BMC 57). On a coin of Eadwig (955–959) the name Husebald is coupled with the mint signature HAN (Northampton oder Southampton).
2. + EA.DRED.REX Small cross.
DEODMAER M in two lines, ∴ and + + + as last.
Theodmaer is a well-known moneyer for this king (cf. BMC 90–98). His coins do not carry a mint signature, but he may be associated with the Midlands rather than Southern England.
3. + EADRED REX Small cross.
HANA MO in two lines, ∴ and + + + as last.
Hana or Manna may be associated with Eastern England, perhaps with Lincoln. BMC 67 is struck from a similar reverse die.
4. EADRED REX Small cross.
WILSIE in two lines, ∴ and + + + as last.
Coins of the moneyer Wilsig normally carry, instead of ∴ above and below the reverse inscription, a rosette of pellets, a feature typical of coins struck at mints in the North-West Midlands (Chester, Derby, Stafford, Tamworth). Either this coin is inaccurately described or it is an exceptional product.
5. + EDRED REX Small cross, M in field.
FERDICES MOT in two lines, rosettes above and below, + + + between lines of inscription.
Frethic is recorded as a moneyer at Derby under Eadger (959–975). The rosettes indicate a mint in that general area. The letter M may stand for Mercia. Compare BMC 42.

Eadwig (955–959)

6. + EADPIG REX I Small cross.
HERIGER MO in two lines, ∴ above and below, + + + between lines of inscription.
Heriger is a Lincoln moneyer, and three similar coins are recorded in BMC, nos. 27–29.

Dukedom of Normandy

Richard I. (942–996). Mint of Rouen.

7. + RICHARDVS Temple.
ROTOMAGVS Cross, centre voided, with pellet in each angle.

Dukedom of France

Hugues-le-Grand (923–956) or Hugues Capet (956–987). Mint of St-Denis.

8. + GRATIA DI DVX HVGO monogram in field.
SCI DIONVSII in two lines between two bars in field.

Kingdom of Burgundy

Conrad (937–993). Mint of (?) Orbe.

9. + CONRADVS PI Small cross.

Cross, centre voided, limbs terminating in letters forming inscription.

10. Similar.

Discussion of this hoard has been limited. A review of Blanchet's article by Poey d'Avant in the *Revue Numismatique* ⁴ pointed out that this is a 10th century hoard, not, as Blanchet was prepared to believe because of the presence of the coin of Basel, from the 11th century. A note by Eugène Demole in the *Revue Suisse de Numismatique* ⁵ assigned the hoard more firmly to the 10th century by identifying the coin of Basel as a 10th century coin of Conrad of Burgundy. There the matter has remained.

The only recent survey of 10th century European hoards is that given by M. Lafaurie in his important publication of the hoard from Le Puy, deposited about 1002 ⁶, where the deposit of the Solothurn hoard is dated to ca. 990. It is my submission that in fact the deposit may safely be dated to the decade 955–965 and probably to the first half of that decade, a view which coincides with the impressions of Poey d'Avant and Demole and which may help to solve one much disputed problem of attribution.

The English coins in the hoard were all produced between 946 and 959. They represent nearly a quarter of the coins Blanchet lists; this no doubt exaggerates the proportion of English coins in the hoard as found, since Swiss collectors would have preserved more of the English coins because they were to them the most novel element in the hoard, but the proportion is high enough for its evidence to be given weight whatever exaggeration is involved. As the proportion of coins of Eadred (946–955) to coins of Eadwig (955–959) is that of five to one, where one more like two to one could have been expected, the moment when the coins left England should have been nearer 955 than 959. Is there any reason why these considerations should not be taken into account when dating the hoard as a whole?

The single Norman denier is of good style and has a clear inscription. A run of Norman deniers of Rouen dated by hoard evidence to the period from 970 onwards has recently been illustrated by Mr. R. B. K. Stevenson in his catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon and contemporary coins in the National Museum of Scotland at Edinburgh ⁷. Even the earliest of these, from a hoard deposited on Tiree ca. 975, have every appearance of being subsequent in date to coins which, like that from Solothurn, have clear-cut designs and legends. One apparent complication is that Benjamin Fillon in his excellent *Etudes Numismatiques* of 1856 publishes three Norman coins of type similar to that listed by Blanchet which – according to Fillon's informant – had been found with English coins of the reigns of Aethelred II (978–1016) and Eadmund (1016). If so, coins of such types could have been still in circulation in the 11th century. Fortunately not merely can this complication be explained away but the coins in question can be attached with some confidence to this particular hoard from Solothurn. Fillon was writing at a time when Blanchet's investigations were bringing to public notice coins hitherto unregarded but now seen to be of value. Of

⁴ RN 1857, 367–371.

⁵ RSN 20, 1915, 5–16.

⁶ RN 1952, 59–169.

⁷ Sylloge of the Coins of the British Isles, National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, part I (1966) pl. 29, nos. 741–747 and 749–750.

the provenance of his three coins he says that they were communicated to him by M. Rousseau (a Paris collector) as having come from a find made in the *environs* of Basel. That two hoards containing both Norman and Anglo-Saxon coins and nothing else by which they could be dated should have been found in the same part of Switzerland and should have come to the attention of numismatists at the same time is difficult to believe. Considering also the fact that since Eadmund (1016) struck no coins those referred to must have been of Eadmund (939–946), it is not necessary to hesitate about treating these two hoards as one. Rousseau will have confused the similar names of Aethelred and Eadred, «Etelred» and «Edred».

The coins referred to were these. All three are illustrated by Fillon and by Poey d'Avant ⁸.

1. + RICHARDVS Temple.
+ ROTOMACVS Cross, centre voided, with pellet in each angle. 1,30 g.
2. + RICHARDVS Cross with pellets in angles.
+ ROTOAGVS Karolus monogram. 1,14 g.
3. + RICHARDVS Cross with pellets in angles.
+ ROTOMAGVS Karolus monogram. 1,55 g.

The effect of these additions is to strengthen the element in the hoard certainly datable to the third quarter of the century. Even if the additions of coins of Eadmund to the hoard may be somewhat doubtful (Eadmund too being an error for Eadred or Eadwig?), a very substantial element in it can now be said to have been struck before 970. For the other coins in the hoard there is little or no dating evidence. The coins of Conrad cannot be associated with any particular period in his reign and the coin of «Hugo Dux» may be either of father or of son. M. Lafaurie ⁹ has pointed out, though, that the coins of Brioude here are of an earlier epoch than those in the Le Puy hoard, and his publication of a hoard from Rennes ¹⁰ has shown that the Brioude type was already being struck in the second decade of the century; so there is no reason why the coins found at Solothurn should not date from the middle of the century. Similarly, the coins of Limoges ¹¹ and Orbe are of types not present in the Le Puy hoard and since stylistically superior to the coins from those mints that do appear in Le Puy they must date from well before 1002.

There is then something for and nothing against a date of deposit ca. 960. If the hoard represents the property of a traveller come from England via Normandy to Switzerland there is no reason to suppose that the deposit of the hoard was after ca. 957. If it represents the savings of an inhabitant of Solothurn to which chance has added the property of such a traveller, the date of deposit might be somewhat later, but not in any case later than ca. 965, because the proportion of coins of England and Normandy to coins of other mints is so high (Blanchet lists more English coins [six] than the total [five] he lists for the Continental mint best represented, Auxerre) and because the high silver content of such coins would have led to their disappearance into the melting pot as incompatible with coins locally current.

One conclusion follows. Coins in the name of «Hugo Dux» from St-Denis have been associated with Hugues Capet (Duke of France from 956) rather than with his

⁸ Fillon, *op. cit.*, 156–158 (illustrations in text); Poey d'Avant, *Monnaies Féodales de France* (1858), vol. 1, pl. III, nos. 17–19.

⁹ Lafaurie, *op. cit.*, 145.

¹⁰ RN 1965, 262–305, particularly 287–290.

¹¹ RN 1952, 142–144. All the coins of Limoges in the Le Puy hoard have the reverse legend LIMOVICAS CVS; the found at Solothurn the legend LIMOVICAS CIVI.

homonymous father (Duke until 956). This attribution arises from a wish to concentrate the issue of «Dux» coins in the years immediately before Hugues Capet became king because of their rarity and the claim to quasi-regal power that the adoption of such a type and inscription makes¹². The evidence of this hoard shows that one coin of «Hugo Dux» at least was struck before 965, and therefore the argument that associates all with Hugues Capet because he struck coins as king fails. It remains probable that the bold adoption of this type and inscription reflects the ambitions of its issuer. I suggest that the ambitious issuer is likely to have been Hugues-le-Grand in the years before 956 and not Hugues Capet in the period from 956 to 965 when the star of the Carolingian house was again in the ascendant.

Ascription of the coin to Hugues-le-Grand would have the additional advantage that it would have been struck at just the right time for a traveller crossing from England to Normandy soon after Eadwig's accession to find it in circulation in Northern France; the normal processes of trade did not bring such coins to the frontiers of Switzerland. While on this point, it is perhaps worth noting that we know the name of one man who made the cross-channel journey at this time and whose route took him into Switzerland: Bishop Aelfsige of Winchester, who set out for Rome in 958 to receive the pallium due to him as archbishop-designate of Canterbury, but died of cold in the Alps on his outward journey.

What does this all add up to? The date of the hoard's deposit has been fixed in the decade 955–965, and the attribution of one coin has been revised in the light of this. Three coins not previously recognized as part of the Solothurn hoard have been shown to come from it. Each of these is an important step forward. What is more important, though, is something of which this article hardly treats and the full significance of which there are others better fitted to discuss. We now have a fixed point in the chronology of the *types immobilisés* issued at six separate mints, four of them (Auxerre, Brioude, Limoges, Toulouse) of the first importance. In addition we have a fixed point in the chronology of the coinage of Conrad of Burgundy. The help that this is going to give in the elucidation of the coinage of the mid 10th century will be considerable.

¹² Among recent scholars only Dieudonné (RN 1927, 236) has upheld the attribution to Hugues-le-Grand first made by A. de Longpérier, *Collection Rousseau*, 1847, 261.

Nouvelle étude du trésor de Soleure

Il est toujours difficile de dater un trésor du dixième siècle, car les pièces de cette époque sont rarement datables avec précision; la plupart sont des types immobilisés, frappés durant de longues périodes.

Les trésors découverts en France sont particulièrement malaisés à dater pour ces raisons. Le monnayage d'Angleterre, par contre, présente une remarquable exception à cette règle. Non seulement toutes les frappes portent le nom du souverain, mais la plupart des descendants d'Aelfred (871–900) n'ont eu que de très brefs règnes – sept souverains entre 900 et 979.

La trouvaille de Soleure est une des rares comportant à la fois des pièces anglaises et des continentales. Découverte lors de démolitions en vue de l'érection de la nouvelle collégiale de Saint Ours à Soleure, en 1762, elle comptait environ 200 pièces, qui furent distribuées entre les patriciens. Un siècle plus tard, le numismate lausannois Rodolphe Blanchet réussit à en repérer 28. Un quart d'entre elles sont anglaises;

l'auteur en conclut que l'on peut les utiliser avec une grande confiance pour dater le trésor: troisième quart du dixième siècle, plus vraisemblablement 960.

L'auteur termine son étude par une remarque intéressante: la pièce HUGO DUX, de Saint-Denis, devrait être attribuée à Hugues Capet (956–987) plutôt qu'à son père Hugues le Grand (923–956).

Signalons encore, pour notre part, l'intérêt de cette datation plus précise du trésor de Soleure. Elle permettra de reprendre le travail d'E. Demole sur les monnaies frappées par les évêques de Bâle (RSN 20. 1915, p. 5) et ceux relatifs aux pièces attribuées à Orbe, portant la légende TADERNA.

Colin Martin

NUMISMATISCHE MISZELLEN — MÉLANGES NUMISMATIQUES

Un dinaro coniato nel primo anno del terzo regno di Mohammed ibn Qalaun
(A. H. 709 = A. D. 1310)

Nel 1250 d. C. il potere in Egitto era stato assunto dai mamelucchi, ossia da quelle milizie di origine servile, turche in buona parte, che gradualmente si erano elevate sino a raggiungere il controllo dello stato.

Era questo l'inizio di un dominio che, giuridicamente, sarebbe terminato nel 1516 ma che, di fatto, sarebbe durato sino all'epoca di Napoleone. Fra i primi sultani mamelucchi, i più noti sono Baybars I e Qalaun, gli antagonisti dei Crociati, e il figlio di quest'ultimo, Khalil, che conquistò Acca ponendo termine al dominio cristiano in Terrasanta.

Khalil nel 1293 rimase vittima di una congiura ordita da Lajin e da Baidara.

I nobili, fra i quali Kitbugha, rimasero fedeli al sultano defunto, uccisero Baidara ed elessero al trono Mohammed, fratello di Khalil, che aveva solo nove anni.

Il primo regno di Mohammed non ha testimonianze numismatiche e non ha storia: durò solo un anno, al termine del quale Kitbugha prese il potere e relegò nella cittadella del Cairo il sultano deposto.

Kitbugha regnò sino al 1296, in un'epoca afflitta da una terribile crisi economica; fu soppiantato dal biondo Lajin, che era forse un ufficiale teutonico.

Quando Lajin fu ucciso, all'inizio del 1299, i capi più influenti dei mamelucchi, Baybars e Salar, richiamarono al trono il giovane Mohammed.

Il secondo regno di Mohammed fu solo nominale poichè il governo era in realtà nelle mani di Baybars e di Salar, che dovettero far fronte all'invasione dei Mongoli, sui quali riportarono vittorie decisive.

Questo periodo è attestato da pochissime monete, sulle quali si rilevano due sole date certe: il 701 ed il 707 A. H. ¹. Nel 1309 Mohammed abdicò: un'abile mossa politica che raggiunse il suo scopo; infatti, dopo un breve regno di Baybars II, il sultano riprese il potere, non solo nominalmente, ma nella pienezza dei suoi diritti.

Il suo terzo regno, durato sino al 1341, fu un'epoca di illuminate riforme e di prosperità economica.

¹ Queste, e le altre notizie numismatiche, derivano dall'opera fondamentale di Paul Balog, *The Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria*, New York 1964 (Numismatic Studies, No. 12). La parte storica è basata sul IV. vol. dovuto a G. Wiet, di: G. Hanotaux, *Histoire de la Nation Egyptienne*, Paris 1937. La trascrizione delle parole arabe è stata semplificata per evitare difficoltà.