ENGLAND AND SPAIN DURING THE REIGN OF KING ÆTHELRED THE UNREADY

Abstract: This paper focuses attention on a small group of silver pennies of Æthelred II, king of England, minted c. 990, found at Roncesvalles in northern Spain, and a silver dirham of the caliph Hisham II of Córdoba, minted c. 1000, found on the site of an important abbey which flourished at the same time in south-western England. No direct connection can be made between the two finds; but their significance is explored here as evidence for contact of some kind between England and Spain in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.
Keywords: Æthelred the Unready, Ælfric of Cerne, Hisham II, Córdoba, Anglo-Spanish relations, pilgrimage, coinage.

Resumen: Este artículo presta atención a un pequeño grupo de peniques de plata acuñados hacia 990 por Etelredo II, rey de Inglaterra, y hallados en Roncesvalles (norte de España), y a un dirham de plata acuñado hacia 1000 en nombre del califa Hisham II de Córdoba y encontrado en el sitio de una importante abadía que floreció por aquel tiempo en la Inglaterra suroccidental. No se pueden hacer conexiones directas entre los dos hallazgos, pero aquí se estudia su relevancia como prueba de algún tipo de contacto entre Inglaterra y España a finales del siglo décimo y principios del undécimo. **Palabras clave:** Etelredo II, Ælfric de Cerne, Hisham II, Córdoba, relaciones angloespañolas, peregrinación, numismática.

Historians of Anglo-Saxon England might once have been predisposed, of their nature, towards an "insular" outlook on the past. Of course it has long since become axiomatic that any aspect of the subject is best approached not only in its British context but also in wider dimensions. It is in part a matter of direct contact: of Englishmen crossing the channel on journeys to foreign parts, under a variety of circumstances, and for whatever reason; or of missionaries, envoys, learned men and merchants travelling to England, again for one reason or another. It is also a matter of indirect influence: the impact on the English of whatever had been seen, absorbed, or brought in from overseas. It is a matter, furthermore, of analogies, contrasts, and similarities; of observing what questions or methods are driving historical enquiry in one context, and of considering whether anything similar might apply in England. The importance of the "continental" dimension is

self-evident already in the fifth century, and it remains so thereafter, indeed until the English eventually succumbed to it to 1066.

1 England and Spain about the year 1000

An historian of Anglo-Saxon England could venture overseas to Italy, France, Germany, the Low Countries, Scandinavia, Hungary, Byzantium, Jerusalem, even India—and find something to say (in certain contexts a great deal) about contacts, connections, contrasts, and analogies. Yet what about England and Spain? Although the works of Isidore, bishop of Seville (d. 636), of Julian, archbishop of Toledo (d. 690), and others, were well known in Anglo-Saxon England,[1] there is little if any evidence of *direct* contact between Visigothic Spain and any of the English kingdoms in the seventh or early eighth century. The landscape changed following the Arab conquest of the greater part of the Iberian Peninsula in the first half of the eighth century; yet it was well known that the Arabs had been halted by Charles Martel, at Tours, in 732,[2] and there must have been some awareness also of the Christian polities which survived or emerged in the north. The range of overseas contact during the reign of King Æthelred the Unready was mapped by James Campbell in 1978, raising questions which still await further exploration (Campbell 1986; see also Keynes 2006: 83–84, with references). My purpose here is to explore two pieces of evidence which are less visible, but which extend the horizons further. The evidence itself is numismatic; and attention was first drawn to it,

[1] Knowledge of learned works in Anglo-Saxon England is assessed by Lapidge 2006, on the basis of pre-Conquest book-lists, the contents of surviving manuscripts, and citations in the works of Anglo-Saxon authors which indicate direct knowledge of identified texts; see Lapidge 2006: 309–313 (Isidore) and 317–318 (Julian), with references. For Spanish influence on the early English church, see also Hunter Blair 1970: 130–138, 246.

[2] Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, v.23, conceivably (if updated after 731) with reference to Charles Martel's victory over the "Saracens" in 732; cf. Wallace-Hadrill 1988: 199.

in the 1950s, by Michael Dolley (Mateu y Llopis & Dolley 1952; Dolley 1957; Scarfe Beckett 2003: 55, fn. 39; and especially Naismith 2005: 207–209, challenging the received wisdom). In each case, however, the significance of the evidence depends not so much on the coins themselves, as on wider associations suggested by the context in which coins of this period were found. It is arguable, moreover, that the two pieces of evidence, though separate, inform each other, and that their significance is enhanced when they are assessed in combination.

Before looking more closely at this evidence, it might be helpful to compare England and Spain in general terms. In the middle of the *eighth* century, at about the time when the Arabs became firmly established in Spain, the peoples known collectively as the English were distributed among seven identifiable polities: the "Anglian" kingdoms of the Northumbrians, the Mercians, and the East Angles; the "Saxon" kingdoms of the West Saxons, the East Saxons, and the South Saxons; and the kingdom of Kent (Keynes 1995, 1999, 2014). The power of the Mercian kings was nearing its height; but the balance began to change in the 820s, and by the middle of the ninth century the rulers of the West Saxons had extended their authority south-eastwards into Kent, Sussex, and Essex. The seven kingdoms were thus reduced to four: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, and an enlarged kingdom of Wessex (with its south-eastern extension). Not long afterwards, in the 860s, the position was changed by the intensification of the Viking raids; and by 880 the Anglian kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia and East Anglia had succumbed to the Danes. In Wessex, King Alfred had managed to fend off the invaders, and had been recognised as king in what remained of the kingdom of Mercia; indeed, he was described by contemporaries in the later 880s, and in the 890s, as king "of the Anglo-Saxons," reflecting the emergence during these years of a new polity, somewhere between the kingdom of the West Saxons and the kingdom of the English. Alfred's son Edward the Elder and his grandson Æthelstan built upon these "Alfredian" foundations,

taking the frontier up to the river Humber, in 920, and further north to the river Tweed, in 927, in this process turning Alfred's kingdom "of the Anglo-Saxons" into Æthelstan's kingdom "of the English." Needless to say, there were difficulties, and complications. For the twenty years which followed the death of King Æthelstan, in 939, little could be taken for granted; but the unified kingdom of the English was re-established with the accession of King Edgar in 959, and became more securely grounded in the 960s. A map representing England, *c.* 1000, shows a basic distinction between an area regarded as "English" and an area regarded as "Danish;"[3] and while all manner of tensions and complications lurked beneath the surface, the degree of political unity which had been achieved by that time was impressive.

The "Spanish" analogy for Anglo-Saxon England in the tenth century lies in part with the Christian kingdoms of northern Spain, and in part with the caliphate of Córdoba in the south.[4] A visitor coming from England would have passed from south-western France into the territory of the kingdom of Pamplona/Navarre (Collins 1999: 687–691, 2012: 205–213; for Catalonia, see Zimmermann 1999: 440–449 and Jarrett 2010). The story of this kingdom is told in terms of rulers who stand in a clear line of succession from 905 onwards, though the written record is meagre. It is interesting to note, at the same time, that the Benedictine monastery at San Martín de Albelda, was founded apparently in the early 920s by Sancho Garcés I (905–925), and became a centre of some significance in the second half of the tenth century.[5] Salvus,

[3] Keynes 2001; a series of maps representing various stages in the development of Anglo-Saxon England is available on the "Kemble" website (www.kemble.asnc.cam.ac.uk).

[4] For Spain in this period, see Kennedy 1996, Kennedy 1999, Collins 1999, and Collins 2012, all with further references. For Catalonia, see Jarrett 2010 and Collins 2012: 224–237. See also Gerli *et al.* 2013.

[5] For the monastery at Albelda, see Bishko 1948, with Ubieto Arteta 1960.

abbot of San Martín in the 950s, was important not only as an author in his own right, but also through his pupils, who were responsible for the production of the renowned "Codex Vigilanus (Albeldensis)," written and illuminated at Albelda by the monk Vigila, and others, in the mid-970s.[6] A visitor from England might travel further west from Pamplona/Navarre through the county of Castile into the kingdom of León, perhaps reaching as far west as Santiago de Compostela (Collins 1999: 670–687, 2012: 138–165 on León and 238–256 on Castile; for the charters, see also Collins 1990: 124–125). The written record is richer, providing a basis for deeper understanding of dynastic complications, of driving narratives (including interaction with the caliphate), and of the operation of royal government. During the last two decades of the tenth century, the Christian north was attacked frequently by the forces of the caliphate of Córdoba, including the sack of León in 988 and the sack of Santiago de Compostela in 997;[7] but in the early eleventh century the caliphate itself began to collapse from within. Sancho Garcés III "the Great" (1004–1035), ruler of the kingdom of Navarre, was able to take advantage of the situation, extending his power to east and west.

Further to the south lay the caliphate of Córdoba, under its Umayyad rulers. Abd al-Rahman III was emir from 912 and caliph of Córdoba from 929 until his death in 961 (Kennedy 1996: 87–99, 1999: 646–651; Collins 2012: 130–137 on the expansion of Córdoba and 166–174 on Abd al-Rahman). He came to be renowned for his patronage of learning, and for the development of firm institutions of government; he was also the builder (from *c.* 936) of the great palace complex at Madinat al-Zahra, about 8 kilometres west of Córdoba, in the foothills of the Sierra Morena, commanding a

[6] For the contents of the "Codex Vigilanus" (El Escorial, MS. Escurialensis d.I.2), see Antolín 1910–1923: i.368–404; see also Díaz y Díaz 1979: 63–70.

[7] See below, fn. 9.

fine view south across the Guadalquivir valley.[8] Abd al-Rahman III's son, al-Hakam II, caliph from 961 until his death in 976, presided over a period of stability, and also proved to be an effective and even an enlightened ruler; he is said to have accumulated a library comprising many thousands of books, and to have written a history of al-Andalus (Kennedy 1996: 99–106, 1999: 651–653; see also Collins 1990: 110, 2012: 174–185, and 190–191 about the library). Al-Hakam II was succeeded by his son, Hisham II, born in 965 and caliph from 976 to 1009, and again from 1010 to 1013 (Collins 2012: 185–187, 189, and 199–201). Hisham was, however, overshadowed by his *ḥājib* (Grand Vizier) Ibn Abi Amir, known later as al-Mansur ("the Victorious"), and by other officers of state (Kennedy 1996: 109–122 and Kennedy 1999: 653–656; Collins 2012: 185–195). It was al-Mansur who masterminded the aggressive policy (*jihād*) adopted in the 980s and 990s towards the Christians in the north, culminating with the sack of Santiago de Compostela in 997.[9] He was also responsible for extending greatly the capacity of the magnificent tenth-century mosque at Córdoba, and for the construction of a new palace complex, at Madinat al-Zahra, east of the city;[10] the reconstructed remains of the caliphal baths, in Córdoba, show modern tourists where more of the plotting and scheming might have taken place. No less extraordinary are the surviving *objects* from the period of the tenth-century caliphs, including several closely associated with the caliphs themselves (Holod 1992, with Dodds 1992: 190–213). At the same time a

[8] On the building, destruction and rediscovery of Madinat al-Zahra, see Vallejo Triano 1992 and 2005: 11–26.

[9] For the campaigns of al-Mansur in the 980s and 990s, see Smith 1988: 76–79 and Melville & Ubaydli 1992: 56–59. See also Kennedy 1996: 109–122, Isla 2001 and Collins 2012: 191–194.

[10] Dodds 1992a. The arches make their impact even (or perhaps especially) as they survive incorporated within the later Christian cathedral, following the "reconquest" of al-Andalus in the thirteenth century.

Christian community continued to thrive at Córdoba in the later tenth and early eleventh centuries,[11] and is represented, for example, by the funerary inscription for a 75-year-old woman, dated 1020, from Haza de los Aguijones.[12] Yet al-Mansur had also weakened the prestige of the Umayyad dynasty itself; and in the eleventh century the caliphate fragmented into *taifas* (Kennedy 1999: 656–662; Collins 2012: 194–195, 201–204).

An historian of Anglo-Saxon England straying into this territory notices much that is quite naturally or more strangely familiar, whether in terms of the nature and quality of the available evidence or in terms of the driving forces behind the unfolding patterns of events. The physical remains of the tenth-century caliphate of Córdoba which await the modern visitor to southern Spain are more impressive than anything available for the tenth-century monarchy in Anglo-Saxon England;[13] but of course equivalent buildings do not survive in the English context. In other respects, the Anglo-Saxonist feels almost at home. The position of Córdoba, with its magnificent Roman bridge across the Guadalquivir river (and Seville further downstream), evokes the particular significance of London, and the river Thames, in the development of the kingdom of the English in the tenth century. There are analogies for King Æthelstan and King Edgar, for aspects of government, and for the problems likely to arise when a youthful king came to the throne in the aftermath of a period of strong rule, surrounded by older family members, and holders of high office, all pressing their own interests. Whether there was any direct contact between England and the Iberian peninsula is of course a different matter. It may be that

[11] On Christians in Córdoba, see Hitchcock 2008: 41–51.

[12] The inscribed stone is on display in the Archaeological Museum at Seville. For such inscriptions, see Collins 1990: 113–114.

[13] The quality of the buildings and objects of the tenth and eleventh centuries is well represented in Dodds 1992, which accompanied an exhibition held in that year at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

nothing of the kind is recorded for the later eighth, ninth and tenth centuries; but that is not to say there was none. Trade routes by land and sea connected one part of the European mainland to another, and what applied to merchants going about their business applied equally to pilgrims, envoys, outcasts, and brigands.[14] Indirect routes for the transmission of information from Spain to England, at high levels, would have been via agencies in Germany or France, perhaps in some cases meeting in Rome. In 953 John, monk of Gorze, was sent by Otto I as an envoy to Abd al-Rahman III, and resided at Córdoba for three years; John became abbot of Gorze in 960, and died in 974.[15] His story is inseparable from that of Recemund (Rabi ibn Sid al-Usquf [the bishop]; see Christys 2002: 108–134, Collins 2012: 92–93), a Christian (Mozarab) who served Abd al-Rahman III as secretary, who was sent as an envoy from Córdoba to Ottonian Germany in the mid-950s, where he interacted with Liudprand of Cremona, and who after his return to al-Andalus, as bishop of Elvira, presented the "Calendar of Córdoba" to al-Hakam II. Also in Germany, Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim (*c.* 935–*c.* 1002) wrote the *Passio S. Pelagii*, about a ten-year-old boy from Galicia who had been executed by order of Abd al-Rahman III in the mid-920s.[16] The Frenchman Gerbert, monk of Aurillac, studied for a short time in Catalonia, where he learnt much from Atto, Bishop of Vic, about mathematics and other branches of learning as taught in Córdoba in the days of al-Hakam II; Gerbert served later

[14] For the background, see McCormick 2001. In a late tenth-century Iranian tract (*Hudud al-'alam*), Britain is described as "an emporium of Rum and Spain," i.e. "the storehouse of goods from Byzantium (Rum) and Spain (al-Andalus)," whatever that might mean; see Minorsky 1970: 8, 158. I am grateful to Rory Naismith for drawing this reference to my attention.

[15] For the primary account (*Vita Iohannis abbatis Gorziensis*, chs. 121–135), see Smith 1988: 62–75 (text and translation). For further discussion, see Wormald 1988: 26–29, Hitchcock 2008: 41–47, and Collins 2012: 82–84.

[16] On the development of the cult of St Pelagius of Córdoba, see Christys 2002: 94–101, with Collins 2012: 155.

as tutor to Otto, son of the Emperor Otto I, and to the Emperor Otto III, eventually succeeding Pope Gregory V as Sylvester II (999–1003; Riché 1987; Guyotjeannin & Poulie 1996; Collins 2012: 136–137). Given connections of such kinds reaching from Germany and France into Spain, and back, it is easy to imagine how stories of the Christian kingdoms in the north, and of the caliphate in the south, might have reached Anglo-Saxon England, perhaps in some cases prompting a wish for direct contact and better information.[17]

Although one should not forget the example of John of Gorze, one might expect any visitor from England in this period to gravitate towards northern Spain. In this connection it would be as well, therefore, to bear in mind the numismatic evidence. The point of departure for a recently published survey of the coinage of the Christian polities of the Iberian peninsula, across the whole of the period from *c.* 1000 to *c.* 1500, is determined by the fact that coin production did not start in Pamplona/Navarre until the early eleventh century, and did not appear further west, in León/Castile, until some time later.[18] The authors look back at earlier coinages which circulated in the peninsula, including Carolingian issues as well as the gold dinars and silver dirhams minted in the names of tenth-century caliphs of Córdoba; and it is clear that use was made during this period, in the Christian kingdoms of the north, of the gold and silver coinage of the caliphate.[19] An English visitor to northern Spain in the late tenth or early eleventh century, accustomed to the well regulated coinage of his own country,

[17] On England and Germany in the tenth century, see Keynes 2006: 83–84, with references. The (Ottonian) Dowgate Hill brooch (British Museum), found (most interestingly) in London, is symbolic of the same connections.

[18] Crusafont *et al.* 2013: 15–16 (Pamplona/Navarre) and 16–17 (León/Castile). For the earlier Visigothic coinages (to 714), see Grierson & Blackburn 1986: 39–54.

[19] Crusafont *et al.* 2013: 6–8, 25. For the coinage of the caliphate, see Miles 1950, Frochoso Sánchez 1996, and Canto García *et al.*: 2007. On caliphate dirhams, see Cano Ávila & Martín Gómez 2004, 2009.

might well have noticed the difference; he might also have noticed the dirhams.

2 Silver pennies of King Æthelred found in the Pyrenees

The first object for special attention is a small parcel of Anglo-Saxon silver pennies, found at Puerto de Ibañeta, in the Pyrenees, on the border between France and Spain. In 1934 some graves were uncovered in the ruins of a medieval chapel at this place, which had been destroyed by fire in 1884.[20] One of the graves contained a group of six pennies of Æthelred the Unready, king of the English from 978 to 1016. Three of the coins (Figures 1–3) are now in the Museo-Tesoro de la Real Colegiata de Roncesvalles (nos. 842–844), and featured in an exhibition of coinage from late antiquity to the early middle ages held in the Museo de Navarra, Pamplona, in 2001;[21] the others are now untraced.[22] Five of the six coins were pennies of King Æthelred's so-called *First Hand* type, bearing on one side an image of the king, identified as "Æthelred rex Anglorum," and on the other side a representation of the Hand of God, with the letters Alpha and Omega to each side. The inscriptions on the reverse reveal that two of the five *First Hand* pennies were minted at London, one at Winchester, one at Totnes (in Devon, in the south-west), and one at Exeter (also in Devon). The sixth was a penny of King Æthelred's so-called *Second Hand* type, which is

[20] Mateu y Llopis 1950. The hoard is included in the list of hoards and single finds, for Navarre, in Crusafont *et al.* 2013: 516.

[21] Marot Salsas 2001: 72, with 329 (no. 77), illustrating the three coins in the Museo-Tesoro de la Real Colegiata de Roncesvalles. See Figures 1-3.

[22] The (supposedly Northumbrian) copper coin associated in some way with the hoard (Mateu y Llopis 1950: 209; Mateu y Llopis & Dolley 1952: 89, fn. 2; Crusafont *et al.* 2013: 516, recorded as a styca of King Eanred) does not appear to survive. It is most unlikely that a ninth-century Northumbrian coin was associated with the pennies of King Æthelred; and in its absence it must be left aside, as an object of unidentified origin and unknown significance.

very similar to *First Hand*, but with additional features on each side; it too was minted at Exeter, in the south-west.

Figure 1: "First Hand" penny, Totnes
(Museo-Tesoro de la Real Colegiata de Roncesvalles, no. 843)

Silver pennies of King Æthelred, which survive in large numbers, represent the products of a monetary system which had developed during the course of the tenth century, in the unified kingdom of the English, and which had been significantly reformed in the early 970s, in the closing years of the reign of King Edgar (d. 975). Some of the basic principles behind the new arrangements (such as uniformity of design) must have been determined from the outset, but aspects of its operation are likely to have been determined by unfolding circumstances, as the years passed, allowing scope at all times for modification and innovation. Edgar's so-called *Reform* or *Small Cross* type was introduced a couple of years before he died, and was followed by what proved to be the sole, *Small Cross*, type of his son Edward the Martyr, and by what is known as Æthelred's *First Small Cross* type (so-called to distinguish it from his later types with similar designs). When a design or type was changed, dies for coins of the new type were issued to the moneyers currently active at some or all of the mints currently in operation, at much the same time although not always simultaneously; and, after periods which

proved during Æthelred's reign to be of roughly six years, the type already in use was replaced by a new type, with various differences. The relative order of the successive types is well established, and the changes of type can be dated quite closely; but it was a system which was intended to serve the interests of those who controlled it, and it is unlikely that they would have tied themselves to any inflexible arrangements.[23]

Figure 2: "First Hand" penny, Winchester
(Museo-Tesoro de la Real Colegiata de Roncesvalles, no. 844)

The five pennies of the *First Hand* type found in the grave at Puerto de Ibañeta would have circulated in England during the early to mid-980s; the *Second Hand* type was introduced probably in the mid-980s, so the presence of one *Second Hand* penny alongside the five *First Hand* pennies suggests that the coins, as a group, came together in the mid- or later 980s. The fact that two of the *First Hand* pennies were minted in the south-west, at Totnes and at Exeter, with two others from London and one from Winchester, and the fact that the (newer) *Second Hand* penny was minted at

[23] For one instance of such flexibility, arising from particular circumstances, see Keynes & Naismith 2012: 196–201. For a significant reappraisal of the "reform" of the coinage in the late tenth century, see Naismith forthcoming; for further discussion, see Keynes forthcoming.

Exeter, give the group a "south-western" identity. The coins do not seem to have formed part of a larger treasure, generated by commerce or by some other activity; rather, they seem to represent a small and compact parcel of coins drawn from those circulating in south-western England in the late tenth century, perhaps the remaining contents of a purse carried by an Englishman who had left south-western England at about this time (*c.* 990), made his way southwards through France, and died while crossing the Pyrenees from south-west France into north-eastern Spain (or on his way back from Spain to England). Whatever the case (whether coming or going), he died, and was buried alongside others in a hospice of some kind by the side of the road.

Figure 3: "Second Hand" penny, Exeter
(Museo-Tesoro de la Real Colegiata de Roncesvalles, no. 845)

The hoard of silver pennies of King Æthelred the Unready, found in a grave at Puerto de Ibañeta, is perhaps the earliest tangible evidence for the presence of an Englishman in Spain. Yet one could not fail to be impressed, at the same time, by the location of this grave. It lies on one of the major routes between south-western France and north-eastern Spain, which would have been used for journeys of many kinds in both directions. If a traveller were to be heading north-east, from Pamplona (for example) into France (and

beyond), he would soon be climbing up into the Pyrenees. A high point on one such crossing is Roncesvalles; and Puerto de Ibañeta, where the hoard was found, lies a hundred metres higher up in the mountains, a couple of kilometres further along the way from Spain into France. It is of course an area with powerful associations. We read in the *Annales regni Francorum* how Charlemagne led his army into Spain, in 778, in order to assert his power across the border, culminating with his attack on Pamplona and his subjugation of the people;[24] the story of the Basque ambush on the rearguard is told in the "Revised" version of the annals, adding how it "shadowed the king's view of his success in Spain."[25] In his *Life of Charlemagne*, Einhard describes the incident in greater detail, naming Roland, "the lord of the Breton March," among the dead.[26] The place where the action took place was named already in the eleventh century as Roncesvalles; and the stories gave rise in due course to the *Chanson de Roland* (McKitterick 2008: 134, 226, fn. 57).

The route across the pass at Ibañeta was used also by pilgrims travelling from south-western France across the Pyrenees, and further west into Spain, en route for the shrine of the apostle St James the Greater at Santiago de Compostela. Following earlier tradition (represented by Isidore), St James (brother of St John) had been represented by Aldhelm of Malmesbury, in the early eighth century, and by the compiler of the Old English Martyrology, in the ninth century, as the apostle who had converted the men of Spain to Christianity.[27] The legend developed further in the ninth

[24] For the *Annales regni Francorum* (ARF), see Scholz 1970, and McKitterick 2008: 24–56, with further references.

[25] ARF 778, in Scholz 1970: 56–58 (with map).

[26] Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, ch. 9, in Dutton 1998: 21–22; for allusions in the Astronomer's Life of Louis the Pious, see McKitterick 2008: 21, 26.

[27] Aldhelm, *Carmen Ecclesiasticum* IV.iv, in Lapidge & Rosier 1985: 43, 52; Rauer 2013: 144–145, 275.

century, especially in Spain, and must have been widely known.[28] The first *recorded* pilgrim to Santiago de Compostela was Godescalc, bishop of Le Puy-en-Velay (935–955; Bourbon 1965; Lauranson-Rosaz 2004); and the evidence is of a kind which suggests another dimension in our appreciation of the wider context. On his journey through Spain, in 950, Bishop Godescalc commissioned Gómez, monk of San Martín de Albelda, to make a copy of *De perpetua uirginitate Mariae contra tres infideles*, by Ildefonsus of Toledo (d. 667). When Godescalc collected the book, on his journey back to the Auvergne, in January 951, Gómez entered in it a detailed record of the circumstances in which the book had been commissioned and delivered.[29] Albelda de Iregua lies just south of Logroño, where the bishop might have joined the main route leading further west to Santiago de Compostela; and we are reminded in this way that pilgrims passed close to a religious house which in the tenth century was one of the centres of Benedictine monasticism in northern Spain. The monk Gómez, of San Martín de Albelda, produced the book for Godescalc in 950–951; some years later, in the mid-970s, the monks Vigila, Serracino and García, also of San Martín de Albelda, produced the so-called *Codex Vigilanus*, with its images of King Sancho Garcés II, his consort Urraca Fernández (d. 1007), and his brother Ramiro, and with its extraordinary collection of texts.[30] One can but assume that enthusiasm for the pilgrimage spread as returning pilgrims passed on reports by word of mouth. In his life of Abbo, abbot of Fleury, the monk Aimoin of Fleury mentions an altar dedicated to St James [the Greater] among six which received special attention there; on which basis it has been suggested that Abbo felt particular devotion to James, and might even have visited

[28] On the cult of St James, and the origins of pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, see Fletcher 1984: 53–77, 78–101; see also Collins 2102: 112–118.

[29] Paris, BN lat. 2855, fols. 69v–71r (facsimile online): printed in Delisle 1868: 516, and in Díaz y Díaz 1979: 279–280 (Appendix I); see also Blanco García 1937: 11–13.

[30] For the *Codex Vigilanus*, see above, fn. 6.

the shrine at Santiago de Compostela.[31] All that matters for present purposes is that Compostela is known to have been a destination for pilgrims already in the mid-tenth century; and the fact that it was sacked by al-Mansur, in 997, and the bells taken back to Córdoba, points in the same direction.[32]

The first person said to have travelled as a pilgrim from England to Santiago de Compostela did so c. 1100 (Fletcher 1984: 96). The first recorded instance of something cannot of course provide more than a *terminus ante quem* for the beginning of whatever is at stake; and, given the example of Bishop Godescalc, it may be that our man from the west country was en route there, *c*. 990, or on his way home, taking English participation back into the Anglo-Saxon period.[33] Like a modern pilgrim, setting out from France along the "Way of St James," he might have begun the final stage of the journey at S. Jean Pied-de-Port, in the foothills of the Pyrenees, walking (or riding) from there up into the mountains. After 20 kilometres he would have skirted round a mountain top, and found himself in the vicinity of what is now the chapel at Puerto Ibañeta (1,055m), still about 600 kilometres short of Santiago de Compostela. The person buried at Ibañeta might have been caught up in zeal "to be a pilgrim;" or perhaps he been prompted to leave home by the onset of viking raids, which had begun (or resumed) in the 980s.[34] At the same time, one should not discount the possibility that the

[31] Defourneaux 1949: 65, 66. For Aimoin's *Vita et passio sancti Abbonis*, see Bautier *et al*. 2004: 106 (ch. 15).

[32] See above, fn. 9.

[33] The small parcel of coins from Puerto de Ibañeta is included in Balaguer 1994: 30–36 (no. 2).

[34] Mateu y Llopis & Dolley 1952 made the connection with the pilgrimage, but then contemplated the rather wild notion (described as a "faint possibility") that the pilgrim was a Scandinavian, that his coins were part of the proceeds of raiding in the late 980s or early 990s, and that he was now on his way to Spain to do battle against the (Muslim) infidel.

pilgrim was a priest, or a monk, and that advantage would be taken of opportunities to visit other religious houses along the way.

3 A dirham of Hisham II (c. 1000) found at Cerne abbey

I turn now from the small parcel of silver pennies of King Æthelred the Unready, found at Ibañeta, in north-eastern Spain, to a silver dirham of Hisham II, caliph of Córdoba, and a contemporary of King Æthelred, found at Cerne Abbas, in south-western England.

It was claimed in the early twelfth century that Cerne abbey, in Dorset, had been founded by St Augustine in the early seventh century, and that it was associated also with the hermit St Eadwold, brother of Edmund, king of the East Angles (d. 869).[35] The place is better known today for the "Cerne Giant," a large figure (180 feet or 55 metres tall) of a naked man wielding a club, cut into the chalk hillside overlooking the abbey. The figure is supposed by some to have originated as a Romano-British representation of Hercules, in which case it might follow that the abbey was founded in deliberately close proximity to an ancient landmark of a particular kind; but if simply the product of a seventeenth-century imagination, one would be left with the possibility that the other associations (assuming that they were recognised already in the tenth century) had been enough to attract attention. It seems that a small religious house was established at Cerne during the reign of King Edgar (959–975).[36] It was associated from the outset, or soon came to be associated in some way, with Æthelweard, ealdorman of the western shires,[37] and his son Æthelmær. The former held high office during the reigns of Edward the Martyr (975–978) and Æthelred the Unready (978–1016); he is known above all for his Latin version of the

[35] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta pontificum Anglorum*, ii.84 (Winterbottom & Thomson 2007: i.290–292, ii.128).

[36] For further details, see the entry for Cerne on the "Kemble" website (above, fn. 3), under "Archives;" see also Yorke 1988.

[37] For this style, see Sawyer 1968: no. 891, with Keynes 2013: 116–118.

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and died *c.* 998 (Gretsch 2013: 205–209). Æthelmær was conspicuous among those attending royal assemblies from the late 980s until *c.* 1005, when he appears to have "retired" to Eynsham abbey in Oxfordshire; he emerges again into view as ealdorman in the south-west, during the closing years of Æthelred's reign.[38] At Æthelmær's request, and with the approval of Ælfheah, bishop of Winchester (984–1006), Ælfric, a monk and mass-priest of Winchester, was sent from Winchester to Cerne (probably to act there as master of the school).[39] Ælfric seems to have remained at Cerne for several years (which is to say that he is not known to have been based anywhere else), though no doubt he would have maintained other connections.[40] It is thus presumed to have been at Cerne that Ælfric wrote the two series of his "Catholic Homilies," dedicated to Archbishop Sigeric (990–994), and at Cerne too that he wrote his "Lives of the Saints," for Æthelmær and for his father Ealdorman Æthelweard.[41] In or soon after 1005 Ælfric was appointed abbot of the abbey which Æthelmær had founded at Eynsham; and he was active there for another five or ten years (Keynes 2007: 160–170, Keynes 2009). Cerne abbey was thus the place where, across the 15-year period from *c.* 990 to *c.* 1005, Ælfric lived his religious life, absorbed the contents of the books in his library, and transmitted his learning through his own teaching and writings; and it is this, quite simply, that gives anything which can be associated with Cerne, during this period, an interest of its own.

[38] For Æthelweard and Æthelmær, see Keynes 1980: 191–192, with Keynes 2002, available online on the "Kemble" website, Tables LXII (ealdormen) and LXIII (thegns), and Keynes 2009: 451–454; see also Cubitt 2009: 171–184.

[39] For Ælfric's statement to this effect, see Clemoes 1997: 174, with Godden 2000: xxix–xxxvi and 4–5.

[40] For Ælfric's career, see Wilcox 1994: 2–15 and Godden 2004 and 2014. For the context in Dorset, see Hall 2000, Wilcox 2005.

[41] For further discussion, see Gneuss 2009: 6, Hill 2009: 51–60, and Gretsch 2013: 205–209.

As we have seen, Ælfric had been sent from Winchester to Cerne, at Æthelmær's request, some time between mid-October 984 (when Ælfheah became bishop of Winchester) and late October 994 (when Archbishop Sigeric died). The record of the abbey's property *tempore regis Eadwardi* (1066) and *tempore regis Willelmi* (1086), provided in Domesday Book, provides good evidence of the development of the abbey's endowment across the first hundred years of its existence. In a league-table of religious houses in Dorset, Cerne was second only to Shaftesbury, and comfortably ahead of the other houses at Milton, Abbotsbury, Sherborne, Cranborne and Horton (Knowles 1963: 702–703; Hill 1981: 154). Important evidence bearing on the composition of the community at Cerne in the late 980s and early 990s is provided by a manuscript of the "First Series" of Ælfric's "Catholic Homilies," arguably written there *c.* 990;[42] but the documentary evidence is meagre. The abbey's endowment by 1066 amounted to a total of more than 120 hides; on which basis one might have hoped to find a considerable number of royal diplomas preserved among the abbey's muniments, as title-deeds for its separate estates, perhaps complemented by some vernacular records. The only surviving charter relating to Cerne abbey before Domesday Book (1086) is a text, copied probably from a single sheet into the thirteenth-century Cartae Antiquae Rolls, which purports to record the abbey's foundation and endowment.[43] It is dated 987, and takes the form of a record, in Latin, of a declaration by Æthelmær, son of Æthelweard, and thegn (*satrapa*) of King Æthelred, by which he made known to the king, and to Archbishop Dunstan, Bishop Ælfheah, the bishops

[42] BL Royal 7 C XII. For the palaeographical and linguistic evidence, see Scragg 2012 and 2014: 145.

[43] Kew, National Archives, C 52/21, no. 16, registered in Sawyer 1968: no. 1217. It is not clear in what circumstances or for what purpose a copy of this charter was enrolled among the Cartae Antiquae Rolls (Kew, NA, C 52); see further below, fn. 45.

and all the "wise men" (*sapientiae*) of the English people, that he had founded and endowed the monastery at Cerne (*Cernel*) for the king, himself, "and for the beloved soul of my father" (*pro dilecta mihi animula mei genitoris*), as best he could;[44] and that a few years later he had increased the endowment with other lands, including the reversion (after his days) of the estate (*uilla*) of Cerne itself, the reversion of the estate (*uilla*) at Esher (*Æscere*), as well as (with immediate effect) four other estates. Although it is quite likely that the person who created this charter had access to genuine pre-Conquest material, in Latin and in the vernacular, it is hard to believe that it existed in this form in the late tenth century. Perhaps, having fastened on a credible date (987), a later monk of Cerne fabricated a text which looked back from that date to an earlier period, and for good measure incorporated some other (perhaps later) acquisitions, in order to provide the abbey with its own charter of foundation. It is possible that the act of fabrication arose from the abbey's particular interest in land at Esher, Surrey;[45] it is also possible that the charter was the product of a wish or need at Cerne to establish its historical identity with help from records found among its ancient muniments.

We may pass over the abbey's history in the middle ages.[46] If only to judge from the testimony of a disaffected monk of Cerne, in

[44] Compare Æthelmær's vernacular declaration to the royal assembly in 1005, embedded in the diploma for Eynsham abbey; see Keynes 2009: 461–462.

[45] Ealdorman Æthelweard had granted an estate of 20 hides at Esher to his son Æthelmær, who gave it to Eynsham, together with the adjacent estate at Thames Ditton; Keynes 2009: 472–473. The estates were not retained by Eynsham, and part of Esher was given by William I to the abbot of La Croix-Saint-Leufroy (as recorded in Domesday Book). Cerne abbey's residual interest in Esher emerges from the Curia Regis rolls for 1219–1220, which show that the abbot attempted to recover land at Esher from the abbot of La Croix-Saint-Leufroy, apparently without result.

[46] For an account of Cerne abbey, see Page 1908: 53–58. See also Vale & Vale 2000: 15–25.

1535, the abbey deserved the fate it suffered in 1539 (see Bettey 1988). The site was allowed thereafter to fall into disrepair, and was soon being plundered for building materials. Early in the 18th century the site passed into the hands of the Pitt family, of Stratfield Saye, in Hampshire.[47] Little now remains of the abbey itself. The main buildings stood just north of the present village (Cerne Abbas), on the eastern part of the present churchyard, which is itself detached from and to the north of the fourteenth-century parish church of St Mary. In other words, the abbey lay at the foot of "Giant Hill," in apparent association of some kind with the unexplained earthworks immediately north and east of the site. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the surviving remains comprised a porch to the Abbot's Hall (*c.* 1500), a fifteenth-century building known as the "Guest House" (which when first built might have been an earlier Abbot's Hall), and a fifteenth-century barn further north. Another prominent building on the site of the abbey, formerly known as the Abbey House or Abbey Farm (now the "Manor House"), incorporates some older fabric which might once have been part of the abbey gatehouse. A fourteenth-century tithe barn, long since restored and converted to domestic use, stands some distance to the south-west of the main abbey site.[48]

It is often the case that useful information on the fate of an ancient abbey, and of its buildings, treasures, books, estates, and muniments, in the period from the dissolution of the monasteries in the late 1530s to the mid-nineteenth century, can be recovered from the writings of antiquaries active in the early modern period.

[47] The Pitt-Rivers family estate archive is accessible in Dorchester, Dorset History Centre (D-PIT). It includes D-PIT/P/5 (map of Cerne in 1768) and D-PIT/P/6 (map of Cerne in 1798), both of which are available online. The site was sold by the Pitt-Rivers family in 1919, and changed hands again in 1937. It belongs now to the Barons Digby, of Minterne House, Minterne Magna, just north of Cerne Abbas.

[48] For an authoritative description of the abbey site, and the standing remains, see Royal Commission on Historical Monuments 1952: 74–85 ("Cerne Abbas"), with maps and plans; see also Vale & Vale 2000: 23–25 (with illustrations).

Much of their work is readily available in the books they published; and more is to be found among their surviving papers, now widely dispersed. The natural points of departure are the county-by-county surveys in Camden's *Britannia*, published (in Latin) from 1586, and available in English translation from 1610.[49] This great work led in turn to the more detailed county histories which began to proliferate in the seventeenth century, and also to expand. Dorset received close attention in the mid-eighteenth century from the antiquary John Hutchins (1698–1773).[50] Hutchins's work was taken forward by Richard Gough (1735–1809);[51] and in his role as editor of Hutchins, Gough became part of the research network which had the printer-publisher John Nichols (1745–1826) at its centre.[52] In the 1760s Hutchins was gathering material for his *History of Dorset*, and recorded for these purposes what was to be seen at Cerne. "Of the conventual church there is not the least remains. It is supposed to have stood E of the abby House, perhaps parallel with the church yard." He refers also to "a broken stone, no doubt brought hither out of the abby church, which serves for a step," which carried an incomplete inscription referring to the last abbot.[53] Hutchins died on 21 June 1773; at which point Gough

[49] For William Camden (1551–1623), and his *Britannia*, see Herendeen 2007, and his entry on Camden in *ODNB* 2004 (online); see also Keynes 2014.

[50] Bettey 1994; Sweet 2004; and Bettey's entry on Hutchins in *ODNB* 2004 (online).

[51] See Sweet's entry on Gough, in *ODNB* 2004 (online), and the several papers "In Celebration of Richard Gough (1735–1809)," in *Bodleian Library Record* 22.2 (2009).

[52] For collaboration between Gough and Nichols on Dorset, see Pooley 2009, esp. 144 and 146.

[53] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Gough Dorset 8 (SC 17874), pp. 67–77. There are some drawings and engravings of Cerne (1769, 1793) in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gough Maps 6 (Dorset) (SC 17503), reflecting interest in the abbey buildings as well as in the giant.

took over and saw the *History* through its final stages. The account of Cerne in the first edition, largely if not entirely the work of Hutchins himself, does not contain any suggestion that there had been recent digging or building operations on the site, and one imagines that it was based on his own observations.[54] In the later 1770s and early 1780s Gough worked on an edition of Camden's *Britannia*, translated from the Latin edition published in 1607, but substantially augmented for each county by his own additions. Gough's manuscript, as prepared for the printer, survives in three large volumes,[55] and the edition itself was published in 1789. In his account of Cerne, Gough remarks that "all its remains are a gateway and a noble stone barn," and like Hutchins he says nothing of recent finds.[56]

The accounts of Cerne Abbas published in 1774 (Hutchins/Gough) and 1789 (Camden/Gough) suggest, albeit only in their silence, that digging and salvaging operations on the site of the medieval abbey (presumably for building materials) had not made much of an impact there in the 1770s and 1780s. A different impression emerges from subsequent editions of these works, suggesting that digging at Cerne intensified in the 1790s. Gough inserted additions and notes of various kinds in his own copy of the 1789 edition of Camden's *Britannia*, in ways which suggest that he was actively engaged in a fairly random process over an extended period; though there is no obvious sign here of incoming information on Cerne.[57] However, a sentence added by Gough in the edition of *Britannia* published in 1806 refers explicitly to recent digging on the abbey site: "All its remains are a gateway and a noble

[54] Hutchins 1774: ii.286–296 (Cerne). Gough's copy of this work, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gough Dorset 3–4 (SC 17906–7), contains his occasional notes, as well as some accounts; but nothing useful for present purposes.

[55] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS. Gough Gen. Top. 34–6 (SC 17623–5).

[56] Camden ed. Gough 1789: i.50.

[57] Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gough Gen. Top. 372–3 (SC 17675–6).

stone barn. Some defaced monuments of abbots were lately dug up in the site of the monastic church."[58] By this time Gough was in fact also engaged on the production of a second revised and augmented edition of Hutchins's *History of Dorset*.[59] In this case, a large amount of material relating directly to the making of the new edition has survived, including four volumes of Gough's correspondence in the Bodleian Library,[60] and other material now in the library of the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester.[61] There is so much, indeed, that one can but wait to see what it might reveal, in detail, about the ways in which information came to Gough about various places in Dorset. By May 1806 the sheets which included Cerne, in the third volume of the second edition, were already being circulated for comment,[62] and by early February 1808 the printing of the volume as a whole was nearly finished. Alas, however, the entire stock, save only the one copy already in the author's hands, was destroyed in the fire which ravaged Nichols's printing office and

[58] Camden ed. Gough *et al*. 1806: i. 68.

[59] For Hutchins's work on the second edition, see Douch 1973: xiii; see also below, fn. 64.

[60] The three volumes of Gough's general correspondence for the second edition, including his draft replies, are Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Dorset d. 3 (SC 53893) [A–C]; MS. Top. Gen. d. 3 (SC 25533) [D–O], not including Nichols; and MS. Top. Dorset d. 4 (SC 53894) [P–Y]. Another volume, containing correspondence between Gough and his son-in-law, Gen. Bellasis, about Hutchins's Dorset, is MS. Gough Gen. Top. 42 (SC 47263).

[61] The items in the Dorset County Museum Library include the only surviving copy (Gough's own) of the first printing of what was to be the third volume of the second edition of Hutchins, which escaped the fire at the printer's works on 8 February 1808 (below, fn. 63). I am grateful to the museum staff for their responses to my queries (e-mail, 3 July 2014).

[62] Letter from the clergyman-antiquary Thomas Rackett to Richard Gough, 26 May 1806 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Gen. d. 3 (SC 25533), fol. 152).

warehouse on 8 February 1808, and it was not until 1813 that the volume was reconstructed, printed and published.[63]

Richard Gough's account of Cerne, written presumably *c.* 1805 and known in the form as published in 1813, contains a tantalizing account of the various traces of the medieval abbey which had come to light during operations of one kind or another over a period of years, perhaps especially since 1790.[64] The "monuments of two abbots" had been dug up in the abbey ruins, and were laid across a ditch. Other fragments of monuments had been dug up at various times in the churchyard and the adjoining field. In 1790, or thereabouts, when men were digging in the field, the remains of a "sepulchral chapel or shrine" were found at the west end of the church, over what seemed to be a woman's grave; nearby were some coffins "with effigies of monks," which were left alone. Fragments of monuments had been found frequently "near the centre of the present churchyard" (of the parish church); the south transept of the abbey was presumed to have been nearby. A "pavement of fine glazed figured tiles," now covered with turf, lay in the north-east corner of the churchyard, thought to be the floor of a chapel at the east end of the old church. Various stone fragments "which must have been brought over from the abbey" could be recognised in the town. The "deepest foundations" of the abbey incorporated the remains of "a former handsome building;" a hoard of "large irregularly formed pieces (of gold)" had been found *c.* 1740 in

[63] In his account of the fire in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for February 1808, pp. 99–100, Nicholas lists the concluding volume of Hutchins's *Dorset* first among the volumes then in the press, and describes it as "nearly finished."

[64] Hutchins 1796–1815: iii.314–315. Substantially the same text was used many years later in Hutchins 1861–1873: iv.27, with necessary modifications. For example, the phrases "and now laid across a ditch" and "was lately dug up" in the 2nd edition (1808/1813) were changed in the 3rd edition (1873) to "in 1810 laid across a ditch" or "dug up about 1810;" but a significant use of the phrase "about 20 years ago," in the 2nd edition (referring to *c.* 1790), was left as it was, creating a false impression that there had been further digging in the 1850s.

an old abbey wall; and a seal of the abbey "was lately dug up" in a garden. The use of the ground as the parish cemetery would impede or prevent further investigation, leaving one largely reliant on this account. It is likely, however, that some of the special objects found at Cerne in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries would have remained on the site. Some might have passed into the collection formed before 1884 by General Fox-Pitt-Rivers (1827–1900), and may be lurking to this day in the Pitt-Rivers Museum, at Oxford; other objects, certainly from Cerne, including two medieval stone carvings and six tiles, are registered and illustrated in the catalogue of General Pitt-Rivers's "second" collection, formed in the later 1880s and 1890s, and were displayed in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Farnham, Dorset (Bowden 1991).[65]

What, then, of the dirham from Cerne? It would appear that John Nichols had mentioned it in conversation with, or in a letter to, Richard Gough, probably in May 1806. For in a supplementary response, dated 30 May, Gough remarks: "I forgot to say that if you could convey the Silver coin you mention at Cerne in any safe way by Mr Penny or any other hand I will return it the same way."[66] Assuming that the dirham and the silver coin were one and the same, it is clear that Gough appreciated its importance. It may be, however, that it had come to light too late for inclusion in the account of Cerne in the second edition of Hutchins, and might anyway have been considered worthy of more detailed discussion than would be appropriate in that context. In due course Gough

[65] The catalogue of the Farnham collection is Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 9455/1–9, on which see Thompson & Renfrew 1999. For the items from Cerne, see Add. 9455/2, p. 337 (two stone carvings and six tiles), dated 22 Sept. 1887. In 1975 the "Wessex collections" from the Pitt-Rivers museum at Farnham were given by HM Treasury to the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum; items from the collection are displayed in the archaeology galleries which opened there in July 2014.

[66] Letter from Gough to Nichols, 30 May 1806, cited here from the database of the Nichols Archives Project. I owe this reference to the kindness of Julian Pooley.

addressed a formal report to Nichols, in his capacity as editor of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, dated 1 September [1807].[67]

> Mr. Urban, Sept. 1 [1807]
> The coin (*Fig.* 10) was found in the ruins of Cerne Abbey, Dorset. It has a very fair legend on both sides; and, by a ring of silver-wire affixed to it, seems to have been used as an amulet by some person with whom it was probably interred. The legend is on one side of the area the usual symbol of *There is one God*. On the margin of the same side: "In the name of God this drachm was struck at Andalusea (Cordovia) in the year (A. H.) 320" (rather doubtful). On the area of the reverse: "Munwaya Billah, Emperor of the Faithful," with a continuation of the symbol; in the margin, "Mohammed is the Prophet of God," &c.
> Yours, &c. D. H.

It was common practice for letters of antiquarian import to be addressed in this way to the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*;[68] and in this instance the initials "D. H." are known to signify RicharD GougH.[69] The letter as published was accompanied by an engraving of a drawing which showed both sides of the coin (see Figure 4). It must have been known, in late 1807, that the third volume of the second edition, containing the account of Cerne Abbas, would be published in 1808; so it may be that the dirham had only recently come to light, and that Gough thought it sufficiently interesting to draw attention to its existence separately. Clearly, much might turn

[67] *Gentleman's Magazine* 77 (1807), pt ii, p. 916, with engraved plate (p. 913). It would be interesting to find the original letter, and with it the original drawing; but my search has not yet produced the desired result.

[68] The second volume of Gough's correspondence (above, n. 81) contains a letter from "HD," dated 15 September 1796, apprising "Mr Urban" of a Roman coin, which is illustrated, found at Frampton, Dorset, and asking readers for "any information relative to its date."

[69] For Gough's numerous contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, see Kuist 1982: 64–74.

on the exchange in May 1806, if only the letters and any associated documentation could be found.

Figure 4. Cerne Abbas dirham of Hisham II (389 AH, 998–999 AD) from the Gentleman's Magazine *(October, 1807)*

Unfortunately, the dirham itself is not known to exist. If by any chance it passed into Gough's own collection, it is not visible in the catalogue of his "museum," sold at auction in July 1810;[70] nor has it been identified in any of the major collections in London, Oxford or Cambridge. One can but hope, therefore, that it might yet be found in one or other of the two Pitt-Rivers collections, in Oxford or Salisbury.[71] The dirham is readily identified, however, on the basis of Gough's engraving, as a silver dirham of Hisham II.[72] On the obverse, the inscription in the three lines of the central field is an expression of Islamic faith; the inscription in the outer circle specifies the mint (al-Andalus) and the year in the Islamic calendar

[70] *Museum Goughianum: a Catalogue of the Collection of Prints, Drawings, Coins, Medals, Seals, Painted Glass, etc., of R. Gough*, Sotheby's sale catalogue, 19 July 1810 (London, 1810).

[71] See above, fn. 47.

[72] Miles 1950, and Frochoso Sánchez 1996: 82–84 (dirhams of AH 389–390). See also Canto García *et al*. 2007.

(*Anno Hegirae*). On the reverse, the inscription in the three lines of the central field identifies the caliph; the inscription in the outer circle is a further expression of faith. The date on the obverse was read by Gough, in 1807, as AH 320, though he considered his reading "rather doubtful." The date was read by Dr John Walker, for Michael Dolley, in 1957, as AH 390 (Dolley 1957: 242). The coin (as depicted in Gough's engraving) has been re-examined for present purposes by Professor Pedro Cano Ávila, of the University of Seville; and the date is read by him as AH 389 [Friday 23 Dec. 998–Tuesday 12 Dec. 999].[73] The dirham was said by Gough to have "a ring of silver-wire affixed to it," suggesting (to him) that it had been used as an amulet by its owner. In other words, it seems that the coin had been pierced, and that a wire had been run through the hole (or holes) so that the coin could be mounted or suspended in some way for a decorative purpose.

Figure 5: A dirham of Hisham II (Private Collection), similar in type and date (AH 390, 999–1000 AD) to the one found at Cerne abbey (known only from the engraving in Figure 4)

[73] I am most grateful to Professor Cano Ávila for confirming the identification of the coin from Cerne, on the basis of the engraving published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, as a dirham of Hisham II (AH 389), citing Frochoso Sánchez 1996: 198 (389.38 d).

A set of ten dirhams of al-Hakam II and Hisham II, each of which is pierced twice, apparently for attachment to a headband, formed part of the early eleventh-century hoard of precious objects found at Lorca, Murcia, in the nineteenth century (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Gómez-Moreno 1951: 338–341; see Figure 5). Piercing indicates that a dirham was being used for a purpose other than currency; and on the evidence of this hoard it was practised in Spain, and perhaps imitated as well. So what might the presence of this coin at Cerne signify? Although Gough made no reference to the coin in his account of Cerne, as published in 1813, it is reassuring to know that it had come to light in the context of the serious and well informed interest taken by a distinguished antiquary in the site of the medieval abbey. It could have been found anywhere on the site of the abbey, dropped by accident by its original owner rather than buried with him in the abbey's cemetery; for while Gough might have been told that it had been found in the graveyard, he says no more than that it might have been used as an amulet by the person with whom it was "probably interred." The problem is, of course, that one has no idea for how many years the dirham had circulated in Spain, or in what circumstances it came to England; nor could one hope to know for how long it remained above ground in England, before it came to be lost or buried at Cerne. The great majority of the Arabic or "Kufic" coins found in Anglo-Saxon England are of the Abbasid dynasty, coming ultimately from the eastern Islamic empire; it is altogether more unusual to find an Umayyad dirham among them, from al-Andalus.[74] A famous gold coin of Offa, king of the Mercians (757–796), seems to have been modelled on an Abbasid dinar of AH 157 (AD 773–774), which probably owed its presence in south-eastern England to commerce (Chick 2010: 55 (Type 1 *a*), with Naismith 2010). The presence of eighth- and

[74] For a survey of this material, see Scarfe Beckett 2003: 54–59, extended, in greater depth and detail, by Naismith 2005.

ninth-century Arabic coins in England, including one from Spain found at *Hamwic* (Southampton) and another from Spain found among a significantly larger number of Abbasid dirhams in the Cuerdale hoard, is attributed to the agency of Scandinavians (in their various capacities).[75] However, the Umayyad element in coin-hoards deposited in Scandinavia and eastern Europe increases in the late tenth century (*c.* 1000), a phenomenon attributed to renewed or increased involvement of Scandinavians in their particular brand of aggravated commerce.[76] The dirham found at Cerne, which is in fact the only coin of the *tenth*-century caliphate of Córdoba found in England, seems to be included in this picture as if it were evidence of the same kind, and is thus interpreted, with those found in Scandinavia and elsewhere, in terms of the same forms of activity, in the late tenth century, leading from the Iberian peninsula to Germany, England, and Scandinavia.[77]

It is arguable, however, that the dirham from Cerne should be regarded as a different and special case.[78] Its interest lies only in part in the fact that it is an Umayyad dirham from al-Andalus, of a certain date (*c.* 1000), found in England; it lies also in the circumstance that it would appear to have found, as a singleton, in the graveyard of the religious house at Cerne, in Dorset, and thus in a context which *separates* it from vikings, or from major trade

[75] For the former, see Brown 1988. For the latter, see Lowick 1976: 21–22 and 24–25, with Warhurst 1982, no. 1108.

[76] Linder Welin 1965; Noonan 1980; Barceló 1983: 11–14; Kromann 1988, with discussion of the Heligholmen hoard at 246–247; Mikolajczyk 1988: 262.

[77] The early work by Linder Welin, cited in Dolley 1957, led to her own publication in 1965, which was itself followed by various other publications in the 1980s.

[78] I follow Naismith 2005: 207–208, 209, who suggests that the dirham from Cerne (no. 31 in his list) might represent a souvenir of travel through Frankia to Spain, possibly to Santiago de Compostela, adding that "single finds from southern and western England are less likely to represent Viking activity," and that the "rarity, value and difference" of Islamic coins may have made them "objects of wonder as much as objects of value."

routes, and *associates* it with something altogether more distinctive. Perhaps, for the sake of argument, we may be allowed to pursue a line of wishful thought. A visitor to Spain from elsewhere in Europe would notice the Islamic coins, which were so completely different in appearance from anything with which he was familiar. He would have no idea how to read the inscriptions, but might be curious enough to ask; and it would have come as no surprise to be told that they were suffused with expressions or statements of religious import. It may be that on his return, knowing his dirhams to have been been minted in Córdoba, he had one of them pierced and mounted, perhaps in such a way that it could be suspended around his neck, to remind himself of what he had seen, or perhaps to indicate to others that he had been far afield. The crucial point, of course, is that the dirham was found, whether loose or buried, at an abbey which at precisely this time, through its association with Ælfric, was enjoying its moment of glory. A person who had set off in the late 990s from England through France into Spain, might have gone there on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, or to see for himself the splendours of Córdoba, in response to reports which were coming to England from France and Germany. It is conceivable, for example, that a monk or priest from Cerne, or a layman associated in some way with the abbey, travelled to Spain, *c.* 1000; that he picked up a dirham of Hisham II in the north of Spain, perhaps while engaged for his own part (like others) in an act of pilgrimage, or that he ventured south into al-Andalus, and picked one up there; and that he returned home safely to Cerne, with the dirham in his pocket or still displayed around his wrist or neck. Ælfric of Cerne is not known to have travelled overseas, at any point in his career, though it would be as well (albeit on slender evidence) to allow the possibility that he might have done so. A passage inserted by Ælfric into his homily for the First Sunday after Easter has been interpreted as evidence that he might once have

seen silkworms, in Italy;[79] and if silkworms had spread to places other than Italy, before the end of the tenth century, the passage might also point elsewhere.[80] At another point in the same inserted passage, Ælfric remarks, drawing again (so it would seem) on his own experience, that he would not wish to travel across land, or ride *to hirede* (perhaps to another monastery, or back to his own, or conceivably to the royal court), without knowing where he could stay on the way.[81] If Ælfric was not as stationary as one might suppose, his example might serve as a symbolic reminder that others in his circle might have had occasion to venture abroad, for one purpose or another. The owner of the dirham of Hisham II is most likely, anyway, to have been a man who once visited, lived near or was buried at Cerne, perhaps as a member of the local society in this part of Dorset, or a member of the monastic community; and in either case, the dirham might casually or deliberately have identified its owner as one who had journeyed to Spain.

4 Widening horizons

The two pieces of evidence discussed above contribute usefully to our understanding of the reign of King Æthelred the Unready (978–1016). The small parcel of King Æthelred's "Hand" pennies

[79] The suggestion was made by J. C. Pope, cited by Gatch 1977: 86–88, 229, fn. 9. For the passage in question, see Clemoes 1997: 533–535, with Godden 2000: 134–135. I am grateful to Professor Godden for enlarging on his allusions to this passage (Godden 2014: 210, and *ODNB*), and for further discussion.

[80] For sericulture, see McCormick 2001: 723, fn. 127. According to accounts of sericulture on the internet, the main silk-producing centre in tenth-century Europe was Andalusia.

[81] Clemoes 1997: 535, with Gatch 1977: 88 (monastery), and Godden 2000: 135 (royal court, or assembly). It is tempting for a historian to prefer Godden's suggestion, that Ælfric envisaged travel to a royal assembly (whether as abbot of Eynsham or, before that, as a prominent member of the community at Cerne); but one has to allow that Gatch's interpretation is also credible. For royal assemblies, see Keynes 2013: 33–38, 140–157, and Roach 2013: 45–76.

found in a burial in an old chapel at Puerto de Ibañeta provides evidence of an Englishman, perhaps from one or other of the "western provinces" of England, under the control of Ealdorman Æthelweard, who passed through southern France into northern Spain in about the year 990, bound quite possibly for the shrine of St James at Santiago de Compostela; but he seems not to have made it home. For its part, the "ringed" dirham of Hisham II (*c.* 1000), caliph of Córdoba, found in the early nineteenth century at Cerne, in Dorset, is most naturally understood, in its particular context, as an object brought back to the south-west among the effects of another Englishman who had been travelling in Spain, whether in the Christian north or in the Muslim south; who returned; and who was perhaps buried in the graveyard of a small religious house at Cerne, in the opening years of the eleventh century.

The two finds do not constitute evidence of direct contact between King Æthelred the Unready, on the one hand, and his counterparts in the Iberian peninsula (whether Christian or Muslim), on the other. Far from it. They are, however, the equivalent for historical purposes of two annals in an imaginary manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. One might have recorded how in 990 a man from the western shires set out on a pilgrimage to Spain, but did not return; another might have recorded how, in 1005, some other man, renowned for a successful expedition to distant lands, died, and was buried at Cerne abbey. Such evidence would have attracted far greater attention, and would have been of its nature much easier to handle. One might be inclined to say of such written evidence that the information was recorded because it was exceptional; so there is a sense in which the numismatic evidence is more compelling, especially when the two finds are taken in combination. One person apparently from south-western England is known to have been to Spain in the late tenth century, but did not return, and another person from south-western England, who may be presumed to have been to Spain in the early eleventh century, is known to have returned. We could not be so

lucky as to have found evidence of two special cases; so there must have been others like them. It is then up to the historian to press the evidence as far as it might be considered reasonable to go, and to speculate further. There was movement between England and Spain in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, just as there was movement between England and other parts of the continental European mainland. Some of the traffic might have arisen from the development of pilgrimage to the shrine of St James the Apostle, at Compostela, as an undertaking to set beside pilgrimage to the shrine of St Peter the Apostle at Rome. Some of it might have brought contact of some kind between members or representatives of religious houses in England and their counterparts in Spain, at places like San Martín de Albelda. The small parcel of pennies found at Puerto de Ibañeta is enough to show that the English have been visiting Spain, as pilgrims if not as holiday makers, for at least a thousand years; the dirham found apparently in a graveyard at Cerne abbey could be seen in the same context, suggestive of a pilgrim who returned, or it could be pressed further, suggestive of overseas contact leading to the circle of one of the most learned men of his day.

Simon D. Keynes
University of Cambridge

Acknowledgements

Earlier versions of this paper were given at the University of Seville, 21 March 2012, and at SELIM XXV, University of Córdoba, 12 December 2013. I should like to thank Mercedes Salvador Bello for organizing the seminar in Seville and for her good offices as co-editor of *SELIM* (*Revista de la Sociedad Española de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa Medieval*). I should like also to thank Prof. Dr. Javier Martín Párraga, of the University of Córdoba, Professor

Pedro Cano Ávila, of the University of Seville, Mercedes Jover Hernando, director of the Museo de Navarra, and Ricardo Ros Arrogante, author of the *Catálogo general de la moneda de Navarra, Siglos II a.C. al XIX d.C*. Photos of the Anglo-Saxon coins are courtesy of the Museo-Tesoro de la Real Colegiata de Roncesvalles and its director, Assunta Recarte Zabalza; thanks must be extended to the Chapter of Roncesvalles. I am indebted to Rory Naismith for much valuable discussion, and to the following in various connections: Andrew Breeze, Roger Collins, Malcolm Godden, Jonathan Jarrett, Michael Lapidge, Julian Pooley, Nigel Ramsay, Elina Screen, and Tom Shippey.

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Received 17 Jul 2014; *accepted* 10 Sep 2014