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## Byzantium in London? New Archaeological Evidence for 11<sup>th</sup> Century Links between England and the Byzantine World

(with plates 22–23)

Among many novel insights provided into Saxon and Norman London by finds from recent excavations in the central area of the city's Thames waterfront is the revelation of a small concentration of coins and seals from the late 11th century from an overall total of over a dozen Byzantine items of about this date now known from the City. The majority of these objects were recovered during a few years from 1989 onwards, by both archaeologists and detectorists. The very limited distribution within the city of most of the finds is striking. Their potential significance, which is out of all proportion to their numbers and intrinsic worth, is considered against other evidence from the ground from the same period and to either side for connections between London and the Byzantine world. A few other finds of Byzantine objects in England are also noted.<sup>1</sup>

All the objects in the numerical listings below are now in the Museum of London's collections, unless otherwise indicated. The figures here are © Museum of London.

### INTRODUCTION

A series of large-scale excavations in London in the 1970s and 80s, particularly along the Thames waterfront where the preservation of metalwork is exceptionally good, mapped out for the first time the likely survival of different categories of finds through the medieval period. It came as something of a surprise right at the end of these twenty years of intensive fieldwork when a small group of metal objects originating in the Byzantine world and centring on the late 11th century made what at the time seemed like a sudden appearance at two sites – first BUF90 and then VRY89 (see pl. 23, fig. 1). In the light of these finds, subsequent vigilance and purposeful investigation of archive holdings has revealed further relevant material. For the first time, a tight group of artefacts connecting these separate spheres can be considered, along with some possible implications.

### THE COINS<sup>2</sup>

Four bronze coins, which are fairly unprepossessing in appearance (though it is difficult to gauge the degree of pre-deposition wear) come from the BUF90 or neighbouring VRY89 sites (No. 1, along with a fifth coin noted below that is slightly later in date were retrieved from spoil removed from the VRY89 site for searching at another location, as the pace of redevelopment was too fast to permit full stratigraphic excavation of all the deposits there):

1) *Anonymous follis of Constantine IX (1042–55)*

VRY89 lorryload <V1074> [site dating ?c.1060–80]

Very worn, d 26mm; bust of Christ // bust of the Virgin, with veil, praying

Cf. WROTH 1908, 503 nos.19ff & pl. 49 no. 7<sup>3</sup>; BELLINGER 1993<sup>4</sup>. Anonymous Folles – Class G.1

<sup>1</sup> For a general overview see now A. HARRIS, *Byzantium, Britain and the West. The Archaeology of Cultural Identity AD 400–650*. Stroud 2003.

<sup>2</sup> See Pl. 21, fig. 1; Note: in descriptions // = next side, and / = next line. (see Fig. 1 for the location of the London archaeological sites mentioned in the text)

<sup>3</sup> W. WROTH, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum 2*. London 1908.

<sup>4</sup> A. R. BELLINGER – P. GRIERSON, *Catalogue of Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection & in the Whittemore Collection: 3.2 Leo III to Nicephorus III, 717–1081* (by Ph. GRIERSON). Washington, D.C. 1973 (repr. 1993).

2) *Anonymous follis, (class F) issued 1065–70*

BUF90 <Reg. No. 1090> [Context 2994] (Group 45.2)

D 28mm; Christ seated on backless chair, the right hand stretched out in benediction, in the left a gospel book // ISXS/IASILE/IASIL – i.e. ‘Jesus Christ, King of Kings’

As WROTH 1908, 510 no. 10, pl. LX; cf. BELLINGER & GRIERSON 1973, pl. LXI F1 & 2<sup>5</sup> (as is usual these devices are struck over a previous issue, here (?) class C, D or E).

3) *Irregular, provincial copy of a post-reform tetarteron of Alexius I (1092–1118)*

BUF90 <823> [2722] (Group 45.5) residual in deposit with site dating 1158–1200

D 18mm; the flan has split diametrically on the obverse due to a large inclusion of foreign matter; (?) very worn, or possibly the lack of detail results from original poor striking: (?) Christ // Emperor

As WROTH 1908, 547 no. 33, pl. LXV 9; cf. HENDY 1969<sup>6</sup>, pl. 8 nos. 7–9; (?Thessalonika or Holy Land – cf. WROTH, 554).

4) *Barbarous copy of a tetarteron*

BUF90 <690> [2636] (G49.4) site dating 1158–1200

Very worn / corroded; irregular flan, d 17mm; emperor with cross // cross

Cf. HENDY 1969, pl. 8 nos. 10–12 (?Eastern Mediterranean or Holy Land).

These four base-metal coins would hardly represent a significant sum of money, even in pristine condition. They are small change, and certainly in the case of the last two, scarcely worth selecting for retention as souvenirs of travel (if indeed any such concept was current at the time of their use). Their significance is more likely to be as diverse, chance losses (No. 2 is from the same stratigraphic grouping of deposits as Seal No. 1 below). They are certainly indicators of distant links, but not in themselves primary evidence for trade. It is an open question whether any of them might have been dropped by veterans of the First Crusade (late 1090s), among whom there were presumably a few from England, even though this country was not a main contributor to the manpower for that conflict (while the relatively flimsy dating indications from the context dating are not consistent with this possibility, at this stage it would be prudent to keep an open mind). Further possibilities in the light of the other finds are considered below.

## THE LEAD SEALS

Identifications of Nos. 1–4 and 7 were kindly made by Jean-Claude Cheynet, on whose comments much of the descriptions below are based (see his article for a more detailed sigillographic assessment of these items<sup>7</sup>; No. 8 was kindly examined by Tom Patty. Numbers 2 to 4 were retrieved from spoil removed from the VRY89 site for searching, as the pace of redevelopment was too fast to permit full stratigraphic excavation of all deposits.

Because of weak striking, the devices on most of the seals listed were registered fully only along a central, raised band, where a channel diametrically through the disc catered for an attachment string to the document concerned. The deficient striking has left a large, B-like character from the original casting of the blank flan on Nos. 5–6 and 9 (the significance of this feature remains unexplained).

1) *Stephanos, judge and antiprosopon of the genikon logothesion*

BUF90 site, find no. <1212> [context 3225] (Group 45.2)

D 28mm: (accomplished engraving) bust of the Virgin holding a medallion with the child //

..KEPΘ... / ΤΩCΩΔΘ... / CTEΦAN... / THSAN... / ACΩΠΘ... / ΤΩCEKP... / ΤΘΓΕΝΑ

<sup>5</sup> A. R. BELLINGER – P. GRIERSON, *Catalogue of Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection & in the Whittemore Collection: 3.2 Leo III to Nicephorus III, 717–1081* (by Ph. GRIERSON). Washington, D.C. 1973 (repr. 1993).

<sup>6</sup> M. F. HENDY, *Coinage & Money in the Byzantine Empire 1081–1261 (DOS 12)*. Washington, D.C. 1969.

<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile the article J. C. CHEYNET, *Les sceaux byzantins de Londres*. *SBS* 8 (2003) 85–100 has been published.

[Θ(εοτό)]κε β(οή)θ(ει) τῷ σῶ δού[λῳ] Στεφάν[ω] [κριτ]ῆ (καὶ) ἀν[τι](προ)σωποῦ[ντι ἐν] τῷ σεκ[ρέτ(ω)] τοῦ γεν(ικοῦ) λο(γοθεσίου) ('Mother of God, help your servant, Stephen, Judge and *antiprosopon* in the *Genikon* Department').

Ed.: CHEYNET 2003, Nr. 2

The formula calling on the aid of Mary or one of the saints in the discharge of official duties is standard on many Byzantine seals. Traces of it recur on several of the partly read legends below. This is the first seal recorded for an official holding this particular title.

Jean-Claude Cheynet assigns this find to Constantinople, and dates it (like Nos. 2–5) to the late 11th century, probably 1070–90 and he gives further examples for *antiprosopountes*.

2) *Theodore (?), protospatharios and hypatos – logothete of the genikon; late 11<sup>th</sup>-century, pre-1080*

VRY89, box V21 <no. 26>

Incomplete flan, d 29mm: ...(Π)Ο/ ..ΤΩ / ..ΔδΛΩ / ..(ΔωΡ)Ω(Α) / ..ΠΑΘΑΡ(Ι) / ΠΑΤΩ // ΕΠΙΤ.. / (Κ)ΟΙΤ(Κ).. / ΤΗΣΑΝ.. / ΤΑΡΤδ(Γ).. / ΝΙΚΛΟΓ.. / ΘΕC

+ Κ(ύρι)ε βο[ή]θε[ι] τῷ [σῶ] δούλῳ [Θ(εο)]δώρῳ (πρωτο)[σ]παθαρι(ί)φ [ύ]πάτῳ // ἐπὶ τ[οῦ] κοιτ(ῶνος) κ[ρι]τῆ (καὶ) (πρωτο)ν[ο]ταρι(ῶ) τοῦ γ[ε]νικ(οῦ) λογ[ο]θεσ(ίου)

Ed.: CHEYNET 2003, Nr. 3.

3) *N., proedros and logothete of the genikon*

VRY89, box 17 <no. 28> [lorryload V1091]

D 31mm: (only M is legible from the legend) // ...ΔΡΩ. / ΓΕΝΙΚΩΛ../ΘΕΤΤ./ΤΗ...

.... [προέ]δρῳ [(καὶ)] γενικῶ λογ(ο)θέτ(η) τ[...]

On the obverse the traces could probably read as [Μάρ]κος; probably late 11th-century.

Ed.: CHEYNET 2003, Nr. 7.

4) *N., anthypatos, patrikios and judge*

VRY89, box 4 <no. 15>

D 29mm; doublestruck; roughly holed twice – only one goes right through (this avoids the saints but the uncompleted hole would have gone through their heads): bust of St Mark, M/AP/K to left, ..(ΝΘ)ΥΠΠΠ(Ι)/ ... ΡΕCΤ / ΚΡΙΤ/Τ/Π... around

[Ὁ ἅγιος] Μάρ(κος) // ... βέστ(η) κριτ(ῆ) τ(οῦ) or τ(ῆς)

I.e. '(...t) Judge [P...]'? (Cheynet suggests a *Genikon* connection here too); late 11th-century. On the reverse could be a bust of John Chrysostom.

Ed.: CHEYNET 2003, Nr. 4.

5) *N., logothete of the genikon*

GYE92 <6021> [23444] from fill of rubbish pit at site close to the future Guildhall of the City – site dating 1050–1150

Very weak, partial impression; d 30mm:

Bust of bearded saint (possibly one of a pair?) // .../ ΓΕΝΙ... / [ΘΕ]... ΓΕΝΙΚ(ΩΝ)

Illustrated in N. BATEMAN, *Gladiators at the Guildhall: The Story of London's Roman Amphitheatre and Medieval Guildhall*, Museum of London. London 2000, 61.

Ed.: CHEYNET 2003, Nr. 8

6) N.

*ONE90 <2706> Unstratified*

Corroded and broken in two halves along string line; d c27mm:

haloed bust // (almost completely unreadable legend in several lines) ...C/ ... [etc.]

7) *Leon, anthypatos, patrikios and logothete of the genikon*

Curatorial collection no. 99.67; found in the 1980s in a foreshore deposit in front of the future VRY89 archaeological site (deep excavations to put in the present river wall, ?in the 19th century, may have brought

this item up towards the surface); purchased from the finder, I Smith; d 29mm: bust of saint Michael // ...ΕΩΝ / ...ΘΥΠΙ ... / ...ϢΙΑΤ .. / ...ϢΚΑ... / .ΙΚΟϢ...ΟΘΕ..

[+Λ]έων [ἀν]θύπ[ατο]ς πατ[ρίκι]ος κα[ὶ] γεν[ικ]ὸς [λογ]οθέ[της]

Ed.: CHEYNET 2003, Nr. 1

8) *Stephen [Xeros], vestarches, judge of the velum and logothete of the genikon*

Curatorial collection no. 17875 (ex Guildhall Museum – no provenance, but that collection concentrated on finds from the City); d 30mm; standing, bearded saint, ... Α Κ Ο C vertically at right // +/..ΕΦ. / .Ε.ΤΑ.Χ / ...ΤΗ..Τῶ / ..ΛΣΓΕΝΙ / .ΛΟΓΘΕ/Τ

[Στ]έφα[ν(ος)] [β]ε[σ]τά[ρ]χ(ης) [κρι]τή[ς] τοῦ [βή]λ(ου) (καὶ) γενι[κ(ὸς)] λογ(ο)θέτ(ης)

The seal is datable to the last years of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Cheynet suggest that Stephen belonged to the family of Xeros.

Ed.: CHEYNET 2003, Nr. 6

9) *N., anthypatos and antiprosopon*

Formerly in private hands, another seal from the Thames foreshore at Queenhithe (i.e. Edred's Hithe in Fig. 1) came to light in recent years – cf. the findspot of No. 7. This has kindly been offered by Simon Bendall to the Museum of London during the compilation of this paper:

D 30mm; bust of saint (?) Mark with bible, O/M/A/R.. to left, ...ΑΝΤΙ(Ι)... around // [apparently similar arrangement to other stamp but less legible]; datable to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century

Ed.: CHEYNET 2003, Nr. 5

Of the nine seals listed which were or were probably found in the City of London, all but the illegible No. 6 of the first eight appear to relate to the *Genikon* at Constantinople, one of the major treasury departments of the Byzantine Empire. Jean-Claude Cheynet favours a connection with one of the functions usually associated with officials of the army/defence department – the recruitment of English Varangians, i.e. army mercenaries, who, among many other duties, acted as Imperial guards in Constantinople.

#### THE NEW FINDS CONSIDERED TOGETHER

Despite the diversity of their stamps, the seals show a more focussed provenance and chronological concentration than the listed coins (which inevitably have a potential for circulation over a period of time). Whatever the explanations for the presence of the coins in London, the first three and perhaps all four listed above should be considered in the light of the seals found in the same area and with which the majority seem contemporary. The coins suggest the movement of people from the East in addition to the documents implied by the seals, but the connection between the two categories remains obscure. Nevertheless, the cumulative archaeological evidence that has emerged suggests a concentrated flurry of activity in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century.

This notable concentration is, of course, part of a much broader, long-lasting phenomenon of finds from the Byzantine World in London and elsewhere in England that otherwise lacks such an obvious focus. Although the listed finds from the City of London for which the place of discovery is known are all (with the arguable exception of the very corroded No.6) from what can be seen as 'central' places for London's trade and administration in the early Norman period, these happen to be precisely the areas where soil conditions allow metalwork of the present two categories to remain legible. Elsewhere in central London, the survival of lead discs, even in the state of No.6, would be highly unlikely. In view of this, it would be unwise to take the currently attested distribution as even beginning to defining the full extent of the capital's buried links with Byzantium.

## OTHER BYZANTINE FINDS IN THE LONDON AREA AND BEYOND

Further excavations in the same area of London's waterfront produced from VRY89 spoil a slightly later coin<sup>8</sup> – a copper-alloy half tetarteron of Manuel I Comnenus (1143–80) from an uncertain Greek mint (cf. HENDY 1969, pl.18 nos. 1 & 2, and WROTH 1908, 580 no. 83, pl. 70 no. 18; identification by Terry Letch).

In addition to this, four single Byzantine coins have previously turned up over the years, allegedly in or close to the City of London (Museum of London reg. nos. 87.33/1–4 – John Clark pers. comm.). These have previously received little attention because three are one-off, chance discoveries, and none is from a formal excavation. Number 87.33/4, a silver miliaresion of John Tzimisces, issued 969–76, comes from a coin hoard found at the Walbrook dated to c.1075, and may be regarded as a stray exotic within that group; no. 88.33/2, said to have been found at the Royal Exchange, is assigned to Romanus I, 919–44; only no. /3, an unidentified piece assigned to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, allegedly found at Tower Bridge Road, may be of comparable date to the four items listed above (no. 88.33/1, said to be from the Farringdon Road and assigned to Justinian I, 518–27, is much earlier).

It has been suggested that the well known fragments of figured silk textiles recovered in the late 17th century from the tomb/shrine in Westminster Abbey of Edward the Confessor were actually part of the monarch's coronation dress<sup>9</sup>. These scraps are now firmly associated with the period of his reign, 1042–60, which is within the span assigned to some of the recent finds of lead seals and coins. While the dating of the textiles is uncontroversial, their origin is another matter – Granger Tailor doubts that they originated in Byzantium itself, though she feels they are likely to be representative of some of the textiles available there, rather she suggests their origin should be sought in the Islamic world, perhaps Persia. This one-off, probable diplomatic gift need have no specific bearing on the other items discussed here.

More speculatively from the archaeological side, Roslund has put forward an intriguing suggestion that an enigmatic category of 11th/12th-century pottery known from one of the findspots (this one in Lincolnshire) as 'Crowland Abbey ware' might originate in the Byzantine World. The geological source for the clay used has apparently remained stubbornly and most unusually elusive, despite extensive investigations. The fairly unprepossessing bowls and fragments, many boldly decorated with stamped roundels and other motifs, have been recognised in England, Scandinavia and elsewhere in NW Europe<sup>10</sup>. Plate 23, fig. 2 shows two sherds of this ware found in London.

Allegedly from central London is a somewhat dubious find in the British Museum – a 6th/7th-century Byzantine marriage disc of gold, cut at some later stage to make a pair of penannular ear rings, which are recorded as having been discovered in Cowcross Street, just to the north of the City of London, in 1879; Cowcross Street is to the north-west of the area shown in Fig. 1)<sup>11</sup>. These items remain completely isolated in terms both of date and of location, as well as enigmatic – it is tempting to rationalise them as much later losses from some antiquarian collection.

The only other link worth noting here comes from late-medieval documentary evidence and gives a longer-term perspective to the remoteness of the connections attested by the Norman-period and other finds. Two immigrant Greeks working in London as precious-metal wire drawers as late as the 15th century seem to have been the earliest recorded individuals from the Byzantine World to take up residence in the English capital<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Unpublished listing by P. Guest of coins recovered from mudlark retrieval operations from spoil following its removal from the site of VRY89 during redevelopment (compiled at Dept. of Coins and Medals, British Museum; copy held at Museum of London), no. 1431.

<sup>9</sup> H. GRANGER TAILOR, catalogue entry in D. BUCKTON (ed.), *Byzantium: Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture*, British Museum, London 1994, 151–3, nr. 166; E. CROWFOOT – F. PRITCHARD – K. STANILAND, *Textiles and Clothing, c. 1150–1450 (Medieval Finds from Excavations in London 4)*, London 1992, 86–7 fig. 59.

<sup>10</sup> A. VINCE, *Aspects of Saxo-Norman London. 2. Finds and Environmental Evidence (London & Middx. Archaeological Soc. Special Paper 12)*, London 1991, 111–2. See also n. 18.

<sup>11</sup> L. ALLASON JONES, *Ear Rings in Roman Britain (British Archaeological Reports 201)*, Oxford 1989, 137–8, nos. 590–1.

<sup>12</sup> J. HARRIS, *Two Byzantine craftsmen in 15<sup>th</sup> century London. Journal of Medieval History 21 (1995) 387–403.*

## THE NEW FINDS SEEN AGAINST THE BROADER PICTURE

The recent coin finds listed above, though few, go some way towards countering the gloomy prognosis for recovering contemporary losses of Byzantine numismatica in England suggested by Boon<sup>13</sup>. Starting with a series of coins of many kinds from Exeter that were long ago published as authentic finds of ancient discards, and branching out to a much wider survey of 140 potentially similar finds from a number of towns across the country, he concluded that only three of these pieces, which were all firmly stratified in appropriately dated contexts excavated in the second half of the 20th century at Southampton and Winchester, were vindicated, and there were possibly a further five which might also be from such deposits (only one of these eight is from the 9th century or later). As for the rest, the conclusion was ‘nearly all are later losses’, e.g. of souvenirs from much more recent travels. This survey included some of the then known London finds but by no means all of them (none of the four in the Museum of London’s collections, as noted above, were listed).

While some of the coins said to have been recovered in previous years in London may fall into that category, the recent finds listed above could begin to redress the balance of probability for some of them – at least it now seems inappropriate to presume against contemporary loss without careful investigation. The same should also apply for other, unstratified Byzantine finds in England that may emerge through the Portable Antiquities Recording Scheme (for example, a very worn anonymous copper-alloy coin of c. 969–1092 from Warburton in Greater Manchester has been identified by Simon Bean – R. Philpott pers. comm.; Boon had previously dismissed an earlier find of a Byzantine coin from the Wirral as a non-contemporary loss)<sup>14</sup>. Limited information will mean that a positive identification as a contemporary loss is impossible in many cases, but with the latest London evidence this possibility seems more likely for some finds, even if they cannot be specifically pinpointed (it would have been very easy to dismiss seal No. 6, for example, had it turned up in isolation).

Byzantine seals are arguably even less common in England overall than coins<sup>15</sup>. Two other seals excavated at Winchester, undoubtedly authentic finds, are much closer in date to the present items<sup>16</sup>. One, dated to c.1060–80, is of an official named John, who was based in the Pantheon Chamber in the Imperial Palace at Constantinople, and the other, which is dated to 1059–64, is of Sophronius II, Patriarch of Jerusalem; the second of these, at least, is likely to concern a completely different sphere of international relations. There are also similarly dated fragments of exotic silk textiles from excavations in Winchester that possibly came from the same regions<sup>17</sup>. These seals and perhaps some of the Winchester textile evidence provide a further cautionary note for anyone seeking to restrict the archaeological manifestation of connections even over an apparently limited period between England and Byzantium to a single phenomenon. Another Byzantine-style lead seal excavated at Lincoln has not yet been identified (WN87 site – information kindly provided by Jenny Mann).

In his survey of Byzantine items from a broad timespan found in Scandinavia (these include ceramics and glass in addition to seals and coins), some of similar date to those discussed here, Roslund concludes that these archaeological finds from early trading centres in Sweden and Norway, are more likely to relate to trade with or pilgrimage to the Byzantine World than – the explanation favoured by historians – to Scandinavian (Viking) Varangians, who (like the ones from England) are well known from documentary sources<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> G. C. BOON, Byzantine and other exotic ancient bronze coins from Exeter. In: N. HOLBROOK – P. T. BIDWELL, Roman Finds from Exeter (*Exeter Archaeological Report* 4). Exeter 1991, 38–45.

<sup>14</sup> R. A. PHILPOTT, Three Byzantine Coins Found Near the North Wirral Coast in Merseyside. *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 148 (1998) 197–202, 199–200.

<sup>15</sup> See M. BIDDLE, A city in transition: 400 – 800. In: M.D. LOBEL (ed.), *The City of London (British Atlas of Historic Towns 3)*, Oxford 1989, 20–29 for an isolated, 6th-century one from the Thames at Putney, some ten kilometers upstream of the City (half a millenium separates this from the City finds, with which there can obviously be no connection).

<sup>16</sup> M. BIDDLE, Excavations at Winchester: Second Interim Report. *Antiquaries Journal* 44 (1964) 188–219, 195 and 197, pl. 49; V. LAURENT, Byzance et l’Angleterre au lendemain de la Conquete Normande. *Numismatic Circular* 71 (1963) 93–96; IDEM, 1964, ‘Un scéau inédit du Patriarche de Jérusalem Sophrone II trouvé à Winchester. *Numismatic Circular* 72 (1964) 49–50.

<sup>17</sup> E. CROWFOOT, 1990, ‘Textiles’, in M. BIDDLE, Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester (*Winchester Studies* 7.2). Oxford 1990. 467–88, 472–5 & 481–3.

<sup>18</sup> M. ROSLUND, Byzantine artefacts in Lund and Sigtuna c. 980–1250. In: Programme for the Medieval Europe Brugge 1997 conference, ‘Exchange & Trade’ (Paper O3B4), 1997, 17; IDEM, Crumbs from the rich man’s table: Byzantine finds from Lund and

## CONCLUSION

The core BUF90 finds, three coins and one seal, for the first time furnish reliable archaeological evidence from a stratigraphic medieval sequence for contemporary connections of some sort with the Byzantine world. These items are supplemented by at least six further contemporary seals deriving from nearby parts of the early Norman City. The presence in London of a very tightly focussed group, in terms of findspot (with a couple of inland outliers), date and administrative function, of official seals from Constantinople, along with a small assemblage of Byzantine coins from a wider area and arguably from a slightly more diverse period has been established. The earliest part of the datespan for some of the listed coins corresponds with that for a prestigious textile which clearly reached Westminster a little before the Conquest of 1066. It is probable from the historical context that the links the seals represent began with rather than survived the political changeover in England. The recruitment of politically disaffected Saxons into the Imperial Byzantine army appears to be the most likely reason for these particular links<sup>19</sup>. A further category of finds from London in the form of a distinct ceramic ware from about this same period awaits further work before its origins can be tied down definitively in the Byzantine world or elsewhere. These diverse objects are now the raw material for continued discussion before any consensus may be reached as to their individual and collective significance. Hopefully, further discoveries will both broaden out the timespan and continue to expand the categories of objects involved in diplomacy, trade and other movements.

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Any errors in the paper should be seen as the sole responsibility of the writer.

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Sigtuna c. 980–1250. I. H. ANDERSSON – P. CARELLI – L. ERSGÅRD (eds.), *Visions of the Past: Trends and Traditions in Swedish Medieval Archaeology* (*Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology* 19 / *Riksantikvarieämbetet Arkeologiska Undersökningar Skrifter* 24). Lund, 239–94, especially 292–3 and personal communication.

<sup>19</sup> J. SHEPARD, *The English and Byzantium: A Study of their Role in the Byzantine Army in the Later 11th Century*. *Traditio* 29 (1973) 53–93.

