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THE DEVELOPMENT OF COINAGE IN THE NORTHERN, WESTERN AND EASTERN PARTS OF LOWER LOTHARINGIA IN THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES COMPARED

The region that is my subject was the result of the splitting of the Carolingian Empire. This gave birth to Lotharingia which, during the tenth century, began to be divided into Upper and Lower Lotharingia. Today, the latter area is situated in three countries, viz. Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany. Comparing the three parts is a bit like comparing apples with pears, because the conditions in each are quite incomparable. The majority of the material does not come from the regions themselves but derives from hoards in the Baltic area. These hoards however do not mirror the situation in the duchy as a whole, as they preferentially contain coins that come from a trading network making use of rivers, especially the Rhine. Mints which are not close to this river network do not have the same chance of being represented in hoards in the Baltic Sea area countries [1]. Of course this does not mean that coinage was less important in the areas away from the Rhine than in the areas which are well represented in the Baltic area hoards.

The number of domestic hoards is not sufficient to compensate. This brings us to another field, namely the single finds. In the Netherlands these are rather numerous [2], whereas in Belgium registered single finds are more or less exceptional, and in the Rhinelands there are some, but they are not as plentiful as in the Netherlands.

At the beginning of 2013, numis had collected data on about 840 coins from 1000 to 1100 found in the Netherlands [3]. This lack of comparability between the countries is not for an historical reason, but the result of modern legislation. In the Netherlands a liberal law allows metal detecting in areas where it is not destroying archaeological layers. The same is true in the Rhinelands, but here – where Roman sites are common – archaeologists have been trying to curtail the use of metal detectors for a long time and have not used detectors themselves. In Belgium there is no legal possibility for private persons to use a detector, with the result that single finds there are very rare [4].

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[3] Numis is a database project now hosted at De Nederlandsche Bank.  

RBN CLX (2014), P. 67–76.
In the Carolingian period Dorestad was probably the most important mint in this region \[5\]. Minting there ceased however at the end of the tenth century, and trade shifted to other locations. With the downfall of Dorestad came the rise of Cologne. The three-line-type with its place name in three lines (barred \textit{s} for \textit{Sancta} \mid \textit{C}OLONIA \mid \textit{A} for \textit{Agrippina}) is characteristic for the coinage up to the early eleventh century. The other side shows the traditional cross with dots in the angles with the ruler’s name around it. This pattern can be traced in many regions even relatively far away from Cologne. In the middle of the tenth century we witness a linguistic change in the Riparian dialect, namely the shift from \textit{d} to \textit{t} which is characteristic of the upper German languages. Hence we find both \textit{oddo} as well as \textit{otto} on the coins. For a short period the name of Archbishop Brun (953–965), who was the king’s brother, replaced the place names, but thereafter there was a general return to the three-line-type. Otto II, who ruled as emperor right from the start of his reign, replaced the \textit{rex} with \textit{otto imperator} and also added a small \textit{g} to the \textit{A} in the bottom line \[6\]. These coins are very plentiful in hoards in the Baltic sea area where they of course are mixed with coins

from other regions and countries. They are not so plentiful however in local single finds. If we take a closer look at the Cologne Imitations from the surrounding areas outside the Lower Rhinelands they have a blundered ODDO. This is true for the Netherlands [7] as well as for Westphalia and Eastern Frisia [8] (which I do not discuss here). Also the Cologne Imitations from Belgium which are found as far west as Brussels and Mons never have the small € beside the Α which is always present in Cologne from 962 to 1014 [9].

This consequently means that Cologne pennies were the leading currency in a very large part of Lower Lotharingia as well as in Western Saxony in the second quarter and probably also in the middle of the tenth century, as is witnessed by the Dalen hoard [10]. But when imitative coinage started in these areas on the basis of the Cologne type, the ways parted and the supply of circulating currency no longer came from Cologne, but was produced regionally. With the exception of the Eastern Netherlands and Westphalia, this lead to a lowering of the weight standards, in a process which was probably gradual. The results were the strongest in coastal areas which were far away from Cologne.

In the Cologne area itself, the local coinage dominated the circulation as is shown by the Wermelskirchen hoard [11]. The age of the coins is relatively homogenous, which means that the bulk of the struck coinage faded out of circulation within maybe 25 years. The Cologne coinage retained its influence in an area in the central Rhinelands up to Andernach. A very high standard of c. 1.5 g was maintained throughout the tenth century [12].

When Otto III received the title of imperator, this had no influence on his Cologne coinage. After his death in 1002 the usual coin type was only altered with respect to the legend by changing OTTO REX into HENRICVS REX. But when Henry II became emperor in 1014, a new three-line-type reading SCA | COLO | NIA was introduced. It is rather improbable that this was connected to a renovatio monetae, as numerous hybrid die combinations exist which also show that control of the dies was not very strict. Although in the first quarter of the eleventh century no other mint is named on the coins of the Lower Rhinelands, there is evidence that other mints did exist. There are very rare coins with VERONA, which was an old secondary name of Bonn, south of Cologne. These exist with the names OTTO as well as HENRICVS and also Archbishop Pilgrim. The die with the place name is however in all three cases the same. Die combinations exist with other coins

[10] DIRKS 1879, with wrong information that all coins were deposited in the provincial museum at Assen.
not naming Bonn, but **Colonia**. This means that apart from Cologne, a certain number of branch mints were operating, all probably under the control of the Cologne archbishops. So in my opinion **Colonia** only means that a coin was struck under the authority of the archbishop at any place. The mints can only be detected and put into an order by die analysis. After 1027 the coins of Cologne name the archbishops alongside the king or emperor. Types were now changed more frequently, but continue to include hybrids. In the time of Henry III the name of the king was no longer mentioned on the coins; the mint was totally under archiepiscopal control. So it continued until well into the twelfth century. Slightly blundered legends remained a constant feature whereas the quality of die cutting improved during the eleventh century. The weight standard in Cologne and probably also the fineness of the silver remained unchanged throughout. The average weight in Cologne was much better controlled than in other mints. But if we consider the internal distribution of the Cologne pfennigs, it seems that their zone of influence was much smaller than it had been in the middle of the tenth century. In the Remscheid hoard, only around 38 km away from Cologne, about half of the coins were from the metropolis on the Rhine \footnote{Ilisch 1993.}. In the Halver hoard, some 52 km east of Cologne, it is only about a third \footnote{Ilisch 2010 (provisional publication).}. In both cases the other coins came from Westphalia and used a slightly lower weight standard. In the Bonn hoards, some 30 km south of Cologne, and on the Rhine, Cologne coinage is dominant.

After 1027 a royal mint opened in Duisburg (the lower Rhinelands \footnote{Berghaus 1983a, p. 90–93.}), if indeed it had not been copying Cologne coins anonymously before. Although of some importance in the Scandinavian hoards, its regional importance was not very high. Its types were mostly independent. Nevertheless about c. 1040 an enigmatic mint **Minteona** was in operation, which is die-linked to both Duisburg and Dortmund, but which also struck imitations of Cologne types \footnote{Ilisch 1991 & Kluge 2013.}. Further north was the Xanten mint, about a hundred km from Cologne, which belonged to the archbishop of Cologne. Perhaps after a phase of imitative coinage Hermann II (1039-1056) started to strike coins there on a weight standard lower than Cologne’s, probably that of Deventer.

Let us now consider the Netherlands. In this context I must exclude the Maastricht region, which is part of the modern Netherlands, but historically and numismatically belongs more to a southern region. In the northern Netherlands, as said previously, the Cologne pfennigs were of importance during the tenth century but had been replaced by imitative coinage, perhaps struck in Tiel or in Nijmegen, characterized by the hour-glass-like

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shape of the elements of the letters \[17\]. In Deventer some other type of Cologne imitation was struck on a lower weight standard \[18\]. And in the far west, e.g. in Utrecht, we can observe traces reminiscent of an immobilized CHRISTIANA RELIGIO-coinage \[19\]. The legend of the oldest episcopal coins of Utrecht reads CHRISTIANA RELIGIO (slightly blundered) and on Cologne imitations struck somewhere in the Western Netherlands, the Cologne side (which goes back to a prototype from the middle of the tenth century) is combined with an immobilized cross side with the blundered legend HLV-DOVVICVSMIP \[20\]. The tenth-century Frisian coins are degenerated CHRISTIANA RELIGIO-types, too \[21\]. Because the Eastern hoards do not contain western coins before c. 970 and hoarding was not common in the tenth century, there is a missing link to the older Carolingian coinage.

If we look at weight standards in the Netherlands at the end of the first millennium we find three zones: a high weight zone in the east, a reduced weight zone in the area under the influence of Deventer, and a light weight zone in the coastal areas from west to east where the penny weight standard was below 1 g already around the year 1000. This means that coins from these differing zones cannot have been accepted as 1:1. A very special situation can be observed in Frisia, where from c. 1040 synchronized minting in the name of the Brunonian counts took place in a handful of mints with equivalent types and standards and possibly even a centralized die-cutting workshop. In about 1040 five mints were concerned, after 1068 seven mints. Before 1040 it is difficult to say how many mints there were, because the coins bear mostly pseudo-legends. After c. 1080 synchronized Frisian minting was continued by the archbishops of Utrecht with three mints \[22\]. In the eleventh century weights in Frisia were more reduced than elsewhere and there is a high probability that the fineness was reduced also \[23\].

In the centre of the Netherlands the royal Tiel mint had extensive influence and seemingly was imitated anonymously by other mints \[24\]. In the west the most influential mint was of course Utrecht, which in its turn was imitated by the counts of Holland \[25\].

When we come to the remainder of Lower Lotharingia, i.e. present Belgium, Maastricht and also Aachen, this is a region where already in Carolingian times there was a relatively close network of mints, although none

\[17\] Ilisch 1997/98, p. 105-120.
\[18\] Ibid., p. 13-17.
\[19\] Ibid., p. 124-126.
\[20\] Ibid., p. 131-132.
\[21\] Ibid., p. 211-213.
\[22\] Ibid., pp. 224-247, 256-259.
\[23\] Ibid., p. 7-9.
\[24\] Ibid., pp. 75-84, 87-99.
of them had an importance reaching far beyond the mint \[26\]. The basis for research is relatively small as these mints are much less well represented in the Baltic area hoards. This is visible from the statistics for two Polish regions, and the similar numbers in Scandinavia. Things are slightly different for the Eastern Baltic area as the hoards there tend to be of later date, but even there the numbers are relatively small. We know practically nothing about monetary circulation in this zone in the first half of the tenth century. There must have been a strong Cologne influence in the middle of the tenth century as we find successor patterns of the three lines s | \textsc{colonia} | a in Brussels and in succession from here in Thuin, Mons and Nivelles, as well as in Dinant, Liège and Maastricht \[27\]. The earliest known imitative types are already relatively remote from the prototype. And if we may judge this coinage on the basis of the few surviving specimens, they are clearly separated from the high Cologne weight standard. We can be certain that it would have been impossible to pay in Cologne with coins reading \textsc{colonia}, but struck in the Maasland.

Further west seemingly \textsc{christiana religio}-types survived up to the end of the tenth century \[28\]. The coins of duke Giselbert (915–939) correspond to \textsc{xp}-coinage, except that the name of emperor Louis is replaced by that of Giselbert \[29\]. The design of the oldest coins of the count Baldwin of Flanders goes back to Carolingian origins. We find them in Brugge – where previously East Frankish types had been struck – and Gent. No such coins are to be found in hoards buried before c. 1010. In Brussel, coins were struck with the name \textsc{hlvdovvicemp} in a blundered way on one side, whereas the other side corresponds to the Ottonian Cologne type \[30\]. Thus two different traditions meet here. Also the earliest coins of Antwerpen go back to the type of Louis the Pious \[31\].

The Maas valley between Liège and Maastricht (including also Aachen and Huy) was an area with a common coinage. Linguistic borders here obviously were less important than economic relations. The coins have a common style of die cutting characterized at the end of the tenth century by royal profile busts which are rather influenced by late Roman coins of

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\[26\] Ilisch 2014.


\[30\] Dannenberg 1876–1905, no. 142 and 1441. Also no. 1437, 1236, 1197, 1766 at least are on one side based on \textsc{xp}-types. Ilisch 2014, p. 125–129.

\[31\] Ibid., no. 1791. See also Hatz 1981, no. 1a; Ilisch 2014, p. 155–159.
the Constantinian dynasty. They emphasize the shoulder region, the *pendilia* in the neck and a diadem. It is rather probable that Liège, Aachen and Maastricht used the same die-engraver. Unfortunately this region is also characterized by slipshod workmanship. In 1000 the average weight was about 1.1 g or slightly over, and it remained so until c. 1040. The scarcity of available data makes it difficult to be exact. Interestingly the average weight of 43 coins which can be dated to the middle of the eleventh century is 1.19 g, so a little bit higher. A weight decline took place probably around 1070, and by 1075 hardly any Liège coins attained the weight of a gram.

For mints further south on the Maas the number of coins per type is limited, but it is probable that up to Bouillon they too followed the standard of Liège-Aachen-Maastricht. This corresponds to the Maastricht hoards, which certainly and naturally mainly have coins from the northern part of this region, but also include some from the south.

Quite another currency region was Flanders, in the west of which – of course outside Lower Lotharingia – late successors of Charles the Bald’s GDR-coinage were replaced in c. 1020 by other coinages. In 1020/30 we find an average weight of 0.81 g in Arras or 0.83 g in Brugge, and 0.77/0.78 g (but based on a much lower number of samples) in Saint-Omer and Bergues-Saint-Winnoc.

In c. 1030 Mons struck pennies at c. 0.94 g which corresponds to the weight used in Brussel, where at the end of the tenth century the standard had been 1.12 g. We also find iconographic links between Brussel and Mons, which seem to indicate a common coinage region, too. This does not include Antwerpen where the early coinage was a late successor of *Christiania religio*-types. As this is an immobilized coinage and the legends are immobilized, too, it cannot be excluded that more than just the one mint is behind this coinage.

So during the eleventh century we find four zones of regional coinage in Belgium and the neighbouring French parts of Flanders. Two things are completely different in these regions from both the Cologne area and from the northern Netherlands. First, the density of mints is much higher, and secondly, at least from the second quarter of the eleventh century onwards, coin-types had a much shorter lifespan. Seemingly this was not a problem, and the population using coins as money did not expect a very specific external appearance in order to accept this variable coinage. But in Central Belgium before this we find a numismatic situation which is very difficult to evaluate. Above all this is due to the scarcity of the pieces, which either come from collections without known provenances or are from foreign hoards. The latter give us a *terminus ante quem*, but as these hoards often contain coins from the period of about a century this is only a relative help.

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The other point is that these coins do not deliver much information by themselves. The only way out is to compare these coins amongst themselves, which I think allows us to construct regional attributions and relative datings as these coins are more interrelated than the later ones. Very unfortunately there are only four hoards for the period from 950 to 1100 for the whole of Belgium according to Haeck 1996. Three of them are from the south and from the end of the eleventh century. From the northern half of Belgium only the poorly known hoard of Betekom from 1849 is reported. According to what we know, it contained only coins of Brussel and Nivelles, of a very limited number of types which are rather similar and also from a rather limited range of time. Thus it reflects a regional currency of Brussel circulating in about 1040.

The three hoards from the south all exclusively contain coins from the Maas valley, with no coins from Brussel or Flanders. Mints nearby the find spot are better represented than distant mints. And here too all coins are from a limited range of time.

To summarise: The unity of currency which had been established during the reign of the Carolingians was lost in favour of dominant mints like Cologne which for not too long a period influenced a region over most of Lower Lotharingia, the area up the north sea coast and western Saxony. This dominance faded away when imitative coinage was initiated on norms below the Cologne weight standard in the various regions. As a consequence different regional currencies developed. Whereas Cologne maintained a weight standard not very far removed from the Carolingian one, elsewhere the denarius lost weight; the further afield from Cologne, the lower the weight. In handbooks of economic history the twelfth century is usually declared to be the period when the regionalization of money began, but I think it started two centuries earlier.
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