

The coinage of Pippin III (751–768) in the light of a new hoard from Limburg (The Netherlands)

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Samenvatting – De muntslag van de eerste Karolingische koning, Pippijn de Korte, brengt veel interpretatieproblemen met zich mee, waaronder de identificatie van veel van zijn muntplaatsen. De ontdekking van een nieuwe muntschat in Nederland in 2022 biedt de gelegenheid voor een overzicht van alle bekende muntsoorten, waaronder een aantal die hier voor het eerst worden gepubliceerd. Het artikel onderzoekt de mate van controle van de koning over de muntslag en de aard van de munt-hervorming die in 754/755 werd doorgevoerd. Het concludeert dat het bewind van Pippijn een belangrijke overgangsfase markeerde in de ontwikkeling van de Karolingische muntslag en zelfs van de middeleeuwse penning.

Summary – The coinage of the first Carolingian king, Pippin the Short, presents many difficulties of interpretation, including the identification of many of his mints. The discovery of a new hoard in the Netherlands in 2022 offers the opportunity for a survey of all known coin types, including a number published here for the first time. The article examines the extent of the king's control over the coinage and the nature of the reform undertaken in 754/755. It concludes that Pippin's reign marked an important transitional stage in the creation of Carolingian coinage and indeed the medieval penny.

Introduction

THE DISCOVERY OF A SMALL HOARD OF DENIERS from the reign of Pippin the Short (751–768; also known as Pippin III) at Broekhuizenvorst in the southern Dutch province of Limburg in 2022 offers a timely opportunity to consider Pippin's coinage in detail and to set these coins in their wider context. In the 1960s and 1970s Hans Hermann Völckers and Jean Lafaurie both wrote ground-breaking works offering valuable insights into Pippin's coinage (Völckers, 1965; Lafaurie, 1970; Lafaurie, 1974), but as the bibliography shows, many new types have come to light and a much larger body of material is now available for study. In 2014, Bernd Kluge included Pippin's coins in his survey of the early Carolingian coins in the Berlin Coin Cabinet, but the book was primarily a catalogue, with little room for detailed analysis (Kluge, 2014b; see Coupland, 2015). A recent volume by Patrick Breternitz included a reconsideration of Pippin's coinage, but because his focus was one specific capitulary,

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many aspects of the coinage went unexamined and few new numismatic insights were offered (Breternitz, 2020a; see Coupland, 2022a). The time is therefore ripe for a fresh study of the coinage of the first Carolingian ruler.

The material evidence: hoards, single finds, and other coins

The number of surviving coins of Pippin is not large, particularly in comparison to succeeding Carolingian coinages, though it is significantly larger than the 150-200 estimated by Kluge (Kluge, 2014b: 24, 37).¹ Before this new discovery, seven published hoards contained 111 recorded coins (figure 1), and there are 175 known single finds.² There are also numerous unprovenanced coins in public and private collections, including those sold at auction. Thus, only nine of Pippin's deniers from Angers have a definite provenance, but Nikolaus Schindel was able to track down another seven (Schindel, 2019: 218-223).³ Even so, nearly twice as many single finds are known of the immediately succeeding issue, the pre-reform coinage of Charlemagne (768-814), implying that coinage production and use was significantly lower under Pippin.⁴

Name of hoard	Total no. of coins	Coins of Pippin	Mints represented
Broekhuizenvorst 2022 (Limburg, NL)	5	5	Ghent? (1); Limoges (1); Lyon (1); Sint-Truiden (1); St Amand? (1)
Ilanz II 1904 (Graubünden, CH)	128	9	Auxerre? (7); Quentovic (1); Strasbourg (1)
Imphy 1857 (Nièvre, FR)	140-150	75-80 ⁵	Auxerre? (20); Besançon (1); Cambrai (1); Chalon-sur-Saône (1); Chartres (1); ELIMONSINA (1); Laon (1); Quentovic (3); Reims (11); Sint-Truiden (2-3); St Cirgues, Clermont (3); Ste Croix, Orléans (3); St Martin, Tours (1); St Peter (3); St Stephen, Bourges (1); Sens (1); Strasbourg (1); Troyes (1); Verdun (4); Vienne? (1); Zurich? (1); unidentified mint ('Vénasque': 1)

¹ Breternitz suggested 'just over 250': Breternitz, 2020a: 121.

² Figure 10; figures correct of 18.7.2024.

³ This does not include a coin of Abbot Gunthar or an obole, both discussed below. The number of coins recorded in Depeyrot, 2017 are unreliable, as numerous coins are double counted: as finds, in a sale, and/or in a collection: Kluge, 2014: 35.

⁴ 332 single finds compared with 175. Although they were minted over 25 years rather than 17, they were then completely withdrawn from circulation at the reform of 793 whereas Pippin's went on circulating alongside Charlemagne's pre-reform coins.

⁵ Only 100 coins were described, of which 63 or 64 were of Pippin: see below.

La Tour-de-Peilz 1989 (Vaud, CH) ⁶	5	5	Auxerre? (4); Dorestad (1)
Seiches-sur-le-Loir pre-2002 (Maine-et-Loire, FR) ⁷	4	1	Angers
Wijk bij Duurstede II 1972 (Utrecht, NL)	25	25	Dorestad (24); Sint-Truiden (1) ⁸
Wijk bij Duurstede V 2015	3	3	Dorestad (3)
Wijk bij Duurstede VI 1973	4	4	Dorestad (4)

*Figure 1 – Coin hoards containing coins of Pippin III
(Coupland, 2011: nos. 1-2, 9, 16; Coupland, 2014a: no. S1;
Coupland, 2020: no. S27; Coupland, forthcoming a).*

The hoard from Imphy in Nièvre is clearly the most significant of Pippin's hoards, but all the major reference works contain errors concerning its contents. The original publication of 1858 described 100 coins; the following year Louis de Coster wrote that a further 40-50 coins had turned up in the interval, but gave no details (de Longpérier, 1858; de Coster, 1859).⁹ One of the 64 reported coins of Pippin was subsequently reattributed to Charlemagne (de Longpérier, 1858: pl. XI·11; Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 1: pl. I·16; Serrure, 1884: 151-152),¹⁰ making 63, but in some astute detective work Nikolaus Schindel revealed that one of the additional coins of Pippin must have been a third denier from Ste Croix in Orléans (Schindel, 2017). Gariel mistakenly listed four deniers of St Peter rather than three, and omitted and/or confused several other coins (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 1: 54-56 and pl. I·II).¹¹ Völckers also referred to four deniers of St Peter, despite describing only three, and listed one coin of Verdun with a small cross whereas the original publication recorded three (Völckers, 1965: 124-125, nos. I·25 and I·30; compare de Longpérier, 1858: 225, 240).¹² Kluge repeated both these errors, and listed four deniers of Ste Croix (Kluge, 2014b: 51). The breadth of coins

⁶ Geiser, 1990.

⁷ Collin, 2010.

⁸ Van Gelder 1980: 215, nos. 23 and 24 are mules (that is, coins struck from two obverse dies) which can be attributed to Dorestad. See the discussion below.

⁹ Völckers appears to be the only author who cited de Coster's article, but made no mention of the additional 40-50 coins.

¹⁰ Kluge, 2014b: 51 and 110 suggested that a complete coin of this type in the Berlin collection also belonged to the hoard. This is possible but not certain, as it came from the collection of Ponton d'Amécourt, who according to de Coster acquired the extra 40-50 coins from Imphy.

¹¹ No. 28 in Gariel's list was illustrated as no. 30, no. 29 as no. 28, and no. 30 as no. 31. No. 29 was illustrated but not listed; three coins of Verdun with **VIRDVN** around a cross were omitted entirely. Both types were however included in the second volume and correctly listed as from Imphy: Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 60 and pl. II·38; 84 and pl. IV·77.

¹² Völckers also mistakenly included a coin of Charlemagne from Saintes which did not form part of the hoard: 128, no. I·51.

present at Imphy underlines how the discovery of another sizeable hoard in another region might transform our understanding of Pippin's coinage.

While hoards are invaluable for showing what coins were circulating together at any one time in any one place, single finds can reveal circulation patterns across a much wider area. They can also give a clearer picture of the importance of the various mints across the kingdom, since they come from so many more find spots: the 175 single finds listed here come from 129 locations compared with just five in the case of hoards. It is important to recognise, however, that the number of single finds from a particular region may be affected by a range of modern factors. These include local laws on metal detection, population density, land accessibility, the type of soil, whether archaeological excavation has taken place, and the level of detector interest and co-operation. These must be taken into account when citing the number of finds in particular areas.

One point which must regrettably be made in relation to the coins of Pippin III is that their scarcity and therefore collectability has resulted in a large number of forgeries being produced, especially in recent years. The most notorious example is the so-called 'trésor mosan', offered for sale by the Belgian dealer Jean Elsen & ses Fils in 2007 (Elsen, 2007; Elsen, 2008; many examples are illustrated in Depeyrot, 2017), but other forgeries regularly appear on auction sites, some of them of remarkably high quality. As a result, some scepticism was expressed concerning the authenticity of the coins in this new discovery, though there is reliable evidence that they are genuine coins of Pippin III.¹³

A unified royal currency

There is much that is unclear about the coinage of the 8th century, making the study of Pippin's coinage especially challenging. Complicating factors include the following:

- It succeeded and replaced three different types of coinage: Merovingian deniers, early silver northern pennies, generally called 'sceattas', and transitional deniers (Lafaurie, 1974: 31-34).
- There is uncertainty over whether Pippin reformed the coinage in the 750s and, if he did, over the scope of that reform (Breternitz, 2020a: 116-120, 152-153).
- Many of the inscriptions, monograms and symbols on Pippin's coinage are difficult to interpret.
- The small number of hoards makes it hard to identify possible developments over the course of the reign.
- Previously unrecorded types turn up regularly (as this new find demonstrates) so that any survey of the coinage is out of date as soon as it is published (in-

¹³ I am very grateful to Jos Benders for liaison with the finder and background information about the discovery.

deed, my becoming aware of the coin illustrated in figure 3 necessitated a substantial rewriting of sections of this article at proof stage, and I am very grateful to the production team for their forbearance).

Despite these difficulties, it is clear that Pippin's coinage marked a significant change from the past, being broader, heavier, and more regular in appearance than the coins it replaced, and almost invariably bearing the king's name on the obverse, which is in historical terms the most significant innovation (Kluge, 2014b: 24).

Looking first at the coinages which Pippin replaced, publication of the Combrailles hoard in 2020 included a helpful review of the Merovingian coinage circulating immediately before his accession (Schiesser, Parv rie & Op den Velde, 2020). The find contained sceattas alongside deniers, similar to but different from another recently published hoard from Cothen (Utrecht), which consisted primarily of sceattas but also included deniers. While Merovingian deniers were undoubtedly produced on the Continent, and many can be attributed to known mints, it is widely accepted that sceattas were minted both on the Continent and in England, though precisely where is much debated and rarely clear. The publication of the Cothen hoard analysed the circulation patterns of the two coinage types (Op den Velde, 2015; cf. Op den Velde & Metcalf, 2014). The third group of coins appears to have been minted by Carolingian mayors of the palace before Pippin, including deniers of Troyes (Adam, Vandenbossche & Manteaux, 2016) and perhaps Chappes and Marseille (Adam, Vandenbossche & Manteaux, 2017; ALDE 2009: no. 47). As Patrick Breternitz rightly emphasised, no hoards of Pippin include any of these earlier issues, so there is no evidence to support the thesis that minting of sceattas continued in Frisia after Pippin's accession (Breternitz, 2018; Breternitz, 2020a: 114–115).

The establishment of a single royal coinage throughout the kingdom was a remarkable achievement. As Jean Lafaurie wrote: 'P pin le Bref a cr   une monnaie nationale, et c'est un t moignage indiscutable de sa puissance, d  s le d  but de son r  gne' (Lafaurie, 1970: 121). This must have been a centrally planned development, even if no legislation has survived to reveal how it was carried out. There are later capitularies recording how Charlemagne and Charles the Bald implemented a recoinage, but the one reference to coinage in a decree of Pippin makes no reference to a nationwide replacement of the coin stock, let alone how this was to be accomplished. It stated simply: 'Concerning money, we decree that there shall not be more than 22 *solidi* in a pound by weight, and that of those 22 *solidi* the moneyer shall keep one, and shall give the rest to the lord to whom they belong'.¹⁴

¹⁴ *De moneta constituimus, ut amplius non habeat in libra pensante nisi XXII solidos, et de ipsis XXII solidis monetarius accipiat solidum I, et illos alios domino cuius sunt reddat.* Pippini regis Capitulare c. 5: Boretius, 1873: 32. Often incorrectly referred to in numismatic

We shall return shortly to the interpretation of this text, but first it is important to consider the nature of this new coinage. It was not uniform in design. Both obverse and reverse took several different forms, so although the mints must have been told to include the king's name and title, no explicit instructions can have been issued about how these should be reproduced, nor what should appear on the reverse. Most coins read **RP** (presumably for *rex Pippinus*) or **R&F** (*rex Francorum*), but some bore other titles, such as **DOM PIPI**, **PIPINV R**, **ΠΙΠΙ** (see below), **PI R FR**, and at one mint – perhaps Quentovic – a royal portrait in the Merovingian tradition (Foucray, 2018: 206-207).¹⁵ The reverses of the coinage also display considerable variety. Some continue designs from the preceding Merovingian and Frisian coinages: St Chéron at Chartres, for instance, or an anchored cross at Paris (Kluge, 2014b: 89, nos. 10-11; 97, no. 30). A few have obvious place-names, such as **CAMU-RACO** or **VIRDEVN** for Cambrai and Verdun (Kluge, 2014b: 89, no. 8; 105, nos. 54-55), or a saint's name: **SCII FIRMII** or **SCO STEF**, for St Firmin and St Stephen (Kluge, 2014b: 101, no. 40; 103, nos. 45-47). On numerous coins the inscriptions are unclear, however, particularly those consisting of monograms, while even when the letters can be read, many remain enigmatic, such as **BṖ** (figure 2) or **XPI**, which will be discussed below. This means that there is considerable uncertainty surrounding the attribution of many of Pippin's coins, as is reflected in the discussion which follows. Several identifications are made here for the first time, some more tentative than others. One helpful factor is that there was often an evident continuity of minting between reigns, so that coins minted under Charlemagne can help with the identification of coins of similar design struck by his father (figure 3: see discussion below).



Figure 2 – Denier of unidentified mint, **BṖ**. Ville de Grenoble, bibliothèque municipale.¹⁶



Figure 3 – Mule (denier struck from two reverse dies) of Charlemagne from Sint-Truiden. Guido Cornelissens.

literature as the Capitulary of Ver (or Vernon) this is a confusion with the following text in Boretius, 1873: see Breternitz, 2020a: 1-43.

¹⁵ The coin was reportedly found near Épernay: <https://www.la-detection.com/dp/message-27541.htm> (accessed 9.1.2025).

¹⁶ I am immensely grateful to all who have given permission for the reproduction of coins illustrated in the article. The coins are illustrated larger than actual size (c. 150%).

At a few places coins were produced in the name of a local authority rather than the king. These include **GVN** for Gunthar, abbot of St Aubin in Angers (Collin, 2004), **LABF**, an as yet unidentified individual from Reims, sometimes suggested as an otherwise unknown count Lambert, and an ecclesiastical establishment whose identity is uncertain and which will be discussed below (figures 4 and 8).



*Figure 4 – Denier of uncertain mint, perhaps St Amand?
Single find from Wijk bij Duurstede. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,
Münzkabinett 18245610, Lutz-Jürgen Lübke (Lübke und Wiedemann).*

Breternitz argued that the first two could have been minted before Pippin's accession, as was demonstrably the case with coins of Bishop Milo of Trier (Breternitz, 2016; Breternitz, 2020a: 112–113, 127–130), but this is unlikely given the sizes of the coins in question. Merovingian deniers, Frisian sceattas and the transitional coins were almost all 11–13 mm in diameter, whereas virtually all of Pippin's coins were 14–18 mm.¹⁷ This is apparent from the plates in Kluge's catalogue of the coins in the Berlin collection: at 13 mm, the coin of Troyes now attributed to Charles Martel is significantly smaller than those of Pippin pictured around it (Kluge, 2014b: 61). The coins of Bishop Milo are similarly between 11 and 12.7 mm (Breternitz & Schiesser, 2020). By contrast, the denier of Gunthar is 15 mm in diameter, and that of Lambert in Berlin 17 mm, as is a coin of the same type from Saint-Mard-lès-Rouffy (Marne) (Collin, 2004: 7; Kluge, 2014b: 60, no. 33; Coupland, 2018a: 432). The third coin type, which has the name of a saint but not that of the king, has a diameter of 19 mm (Berlin: Kluge, 2014b: 60, no. 36) and 17 mm (Broekhuizenvorst). A coin in the Rodez hoard which has been attributed to Bishop Deodefridus of Paris in the 750s is by contrast definitely Merovingian, having a diameter of just 12 mm (Geneviève & Sarah, 2010: 488–489). A denier of Berincarius of Sens is less clear: at 14 mm it could belong to the earlier or later period (Schiesser, 2013; Perrugot, 2023). The coin bears a greater stylistic similarity to Anglo-Saxon coinage than anything from Pippin's realm, and the lack of any connection between a Berencarius and Sens at this time means that a date in Pippin's reign is possible but by no means certain.¹⁸ At least one magnate, perhaps two, and an abbey were thus named on

¹⁷ There is an exceptional group of large-flan Merovingian deniers from Touraine, minted c. 675, but they were a short-lived local phenomenon: Sarah & Schiesser, 2013.

¹⁸ See the reservations expressed by Breternitz, 2020a: 125–126.

the obverse of coins of Pippin's reign, and as we shall see, others were named on the opposite face, with the king's title appearing on the obverse.

A reform of the coinage under Pippin III?

A key question regarding Pippin's coinage is whether the reference in the Royal Capitulary of 754/755 cited earlier signalled a change in the nature of the coinage or simply codified existing practice by placing Pippin's stamp upon it, as upon the coins themselves.¹⁹ A first indicator that it was the former is the change in the size of the coins, as was just noted. The coinages minted before Pippin's accession were consistently 11-13 mm, with a few exceptions reaching 14 mm.²⁰ By contrast, the smallest undamaged deniers of Pippin are 14 mm in diameter.²¹ There is therefore no doubt that one change introduced by Pippin was an increase in the size of the coinage. What cannot be determined from the evidence currently available is whether this took place in 751, at the start of Pippin's reign, or 754/755, when the Royal Capitulary was promulgated.

Did Pippin also increase the weight of the denier? Patrick Breternitz concluded that there was insufficient evidence to determine the weight standards of the immediately preceding coinages, and thus to establish the extent of any possible reform (Breternitz, 2020a: 102-120). By contrast, Philippe Schiesser agreed with Völckers, Lafaurie and Kluge before him that Pippin's decree represented a deliberate and effective move to restore the denier weight to the standard of c. 1.24 g which had been established at the beginning of the 8th century but not maintained (Schiesser, 2017: 36; Völckers, 1965: 31-33; Lafaurie, 1970: 124-127; Lafaurie, 1974: 35; Kluge, 2014b: 23-25). This was therefore a reform of the coinage but not of the weight standard. The wording in the capitulary: 'there shall not be more than 22 *solidi* in a pound by weight', that is, that no more than 264 deniers should be minted from a pound of silver, therefore addressed the minting of underweight coins which had become widespread, and ordered a reversion to, rather than a change from, earlier practice.²²

Establishing the intended weight of the coins struck by Pippin is not straightforward. Only whole specimens should be included, but many coins are damaged. Moreover, damage may not be obvious because it has occurred through corrosion and leaching rather than fragmentation. This accounts for the unusually low

¹⁹ The dating of the capitulary is discussed at length in Breternitz, 2020a: 1-43.

²⁰ Apart from the broad-flan 7th-century deniers from Tours noted in n. 17 above. Deniers attributed to Charles Martel were 10-13 mm, with an average of 11.6 mm (Adam, Vandenbossche & Manteaux, 2016); those of Milo all under 13 mm: see above.

²¹ E.g. coins of Trier: see below. The only exception I know is a coin of Angers of 13 mm (Schindel, 2019: 218). The attribution to Pippin of a small imitation denier supposedly of Sens is unconvincing (Schiesser, 2010: 232; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 917B).

²² As n. 14 above.

weights of many coin finds from Domburg (Op den Velde & Metcalf, 2003: 47) and is also true of the coins in the 1972 hoard from Wijk bij Duurstede (van Gelder, 1980: 214). If only the finest surviving specimens are analysed, however, this can lead to the opposite error, namely overstating the original target weight. It seems that in his chart of Pippin's denier weights Depeyrot did not exclude damaged coins, since the catalogue makes no reference to condition, so any average weight based on his histogram would be an underestimate (Depeyrot, 2017: 77).²³ Even so, it supports the hypothesis of a restoration of the denier weight by Pippin, as the majority of the coins weigh between 1.15 and 1.35 g.

This again raises the question over whether this increase was introduced by Pippin in 751 or only in 754/755, and in this instance a piece of incidental evidence suggests that it may have been during the reign rather than at the start. When Nikolaus Schindel analysed the pre-reform coins of Angers by counting the number of points in the reverse design, he found that those with a larger number have a smaller diameter and lower weight than those with fewer points, creating two distinct groups. Schindel concluded that the smaller coins of Pippin, which are all under 1 g in weight, were minted before the others, most of which are heavier (Schindel, 2019: 209–212). It is therefore possible that the lighter coins were struck in the first four years of the reign. This includes a hitherto unique and previously unpublished obole of Angers, struck to the same design as the denier and virtually intact but 14.5 mm in diameter and only 0.52 g in weight.²⁴ It has 16 points on the reverse, putting it Schindel's early group. The coin of Gunthar also fell into this early group, suggesting that it was among the first to be minted under Pippin (Schindel, 2019: 218).

The find

The coins were found by detectorist Robert van Eerde in Broekhuizen in Limburg early in 2022, and four of the five were offered for sale at auction by MPO Auctions (now Heritage Europe) on 14 November of that year.²⁵

The coins were in remarkably good condition, apart from the fact that one of them was broken into five pieces, with part of the coin missing. The first is a denier of **Lyon** (figure 5): this attribution was first made in 1839 by Fougères and has been accepted ever since (Fougères, 1839: 96); the same abbreviation, **LVG**, is

²³ For instance, the weights of the coins of Pippin from Domburg were included without comment: Depeyrot, 2017: 327.

²⁴ https://www.cgb.fr/pepin-ier-dit-le-bref-obile-ttb-,bca_545422,a.html (accessed 18.2.2025). I believe a bracteate obole of Angers should therefore be attributed to Charlemagne rather than Pippin: Coupland, 2025: 106, *contra* Schindel, 2019: 216–217.

²⁵ Heritage Europe (formerly MPO Auctions), IJsselstein, Auction 76, 14.11.2022: nos. 6521–6524. The broken coin was not included in the sale.

found on Merovingian coins of Lyon.²⁶ Although comparable deniers of Carloman (768-771) (Völckers, 1965: no. XVII·1) and Charlemagne (Völckers, 1965: no. XXIV·14) have turned up in hoards, this is the first coin of Pippin to occur in such a context. A single find is also known from Antweiler (Ahrweiler, Rheinland-Pfalz).



Figures 5-9 – Broekhuizenvorst hoard.

The second coin, which has on the reverse an interlace pattern or rosette instead of a mint-name (figure 6), has traditionally been attributed to **Maastricht**, as has an important group of sceattas with the same design (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 60-62; Völckers, 1965: no. I·17; Kluge, 2014b: no. 24). This identification has been questioned: Grierson and Blackburn argued for an origin in the lower Rhine-

²⁶ For the attribution see Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 59-60 and pl. II·36-37; Prou, 1892: 626; Kluge, 2014b: nos. 22-23; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 517. Even Morrison and Grunthal listed it as one of only 14 mints of Pippin they felt able to identify: Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 24 (and 59, 'indeterminate').

land, while Op den Velde and Metcalf proposed somewhere in Belgium, probably the upper Meuse valley (Grierson & Blackburn, 1986: 508, 634; Op den Velde & Metcalf, 2014). A new coin which has recently turned up reveals that in fact these coins were almost certainly minted at **Sint-Truiden** (French: Saint-Trond), a city located less than 40 km west of Maastricht, also in Limburg. The denier in question bears on one face the interlace pattern but on the other the unambiguous mint-name **SCI TRV-DO** (figure 3). Given the proliferation of forgeries mentioned earlier some might question the coin's authenticity, but the fact that the face with the mint-name was struck from the same reverse die as a Sint-Truiden denier of Charlemagne found at Domburg proves that it is genuine (Middelburg, Zeeuws Genootschap 3767: Völckers, 1965: no. II·46). This also explains a coin from Imphy which has **TR** above a cross on one face and the interlace pattern on the other (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: pl. II·38; Völckers, 1965: pl. F, no. I·16): the letters **TR** are short not for *Traiectum* (Maastricht) but *Trudo*. A second type minted by Pippin at Sint-Truiden is known from a single coin bearing a mint-name which can be read as **SCI TRUD**, with an unbarred **D** above the **TRU** (figure 20 below). Depeyrot read the inscription as **SCI GAU** and attributed the coin to St Géry in Cambrai, illustrating it under that mint in his fourth edition, but this reading is not tenable (Depeyrot, 2017: 275, no. 235). Deniers of Charlemagne which depict on the reverse a very similar **T** and **R**, but also an additional **I** and **G** (or **e**?), should not however be ascribed to Sint-Truiden but rather Maastricht, *Traiectum* (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: pl. II·39; pl. VIII·74; Völckers, 1965: pl. G, no. XXII·14; Kluge, 2014b: no. 117). The stylistic similarity is not surprising given the proximity of the two towns: it is perfectly feasible that the same die-cutter worked for both mints. This incidentally reveals that the Imphy mule with the interlace and **TR** could be a coin of Pippin or of Charlemagne: with our current knowledge it is impossible to judge.

Two coins similar to that from Broekhuizenenvorst were present in the Imphy hoard (Völckers, 1965: no. I·17 (two coins); Kluge, 2014b: no. 24; Hamburger Auction, Frankfurt, 6 November 1912, no. 4), but the report of a supposed find of an obole of the same type at Wijk bij Duurstede is incorrect, as the coin in question is actually a sceatta (van Es, Verwers & Isings, 2015: 421; Coupland, 2025: 105).²⁷

The third coin has in the past been ascribed to **Ghent** (figure 7). The one previously recorded example was found during excavations at Thier d'Olné (Liège) (Rocour, 1992; Dengis, 2010: no. 67, referring to the find spot as 'Engis'; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 440B ['Ombret-Rawsa']). Jean Lafaurie read the place-name as **GAVIDE** which he interpreted as Goyencourt (Somme); Jean-Luc Dengis, followed by Depeyrot, read it as **GANDE** and attributed it to Ghent. This interpretation demands reading a three-pronged symbol (€) as an **N**, whereas it most

²⁷ I am very grateful to the staff of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden who tracked down the coin and photographed it for me.

resembles a letter **E**. On early Carolingian coins letters do often take strange forms, but this would be unusual. Nevertheless, the fact that both finds come from the Meuse valley suggests that an origin in this part of the Carolingian world is probable, and no other locality which might have hosted a mint under Pippin is an obvious candidate.

The fourth coin is of a type known from a 19th-century single find from Wijk bij Duurstede which ended up in the Berlin collection (figures 4, 8, from different dies) (Völckers, 1965: no. III·8; Kluge, 2014b: no. 36). As noted above, it lacks the king's title on the obverse, reading **SEI** with an abbreviation mark, doubtless for *Sancti*, but the reverse inscription is profoundly enigmatic. Gariel questioned whether this really was a coin, or perhaps an ornament; Morrison & Grunthal excluded it as 'not Carolingian', and Kluge suggested it might be Ottonian (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 82 and pl. III·71; Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: 416; Kluge, 2014b: 98), though its presence in this new hoard confirms that it was indeed a coin from the reign of Pippin III. Kluge and Gariel proposed Cologne as a possible mint, while Depeyrot opted for Ste Marie in Laon (Depeyrot, 2017: no. 493). The latter interpretation was based on reading the inscription as **SCA-MARIA**, though the obverse is clearly the masculine **SEI** and the reverse something like **MAÑ·ŲIƷ**. The reverse opens with a long-stemmed cross, and there are lines – potentially abbreviation marks – above and between the two lines of the inscription. The fourth letter is particularly obscure, though it is unfortunately missing from the new find. The mint was clearly a religious foundation, and the finds from Limburg and Wijk bij Duurstede suggest it lay in the north of the kingdom. There is no obvious candidate among the limited number of monasteries and cathedrals known from the period if the initial letters are **MAÑ** or **MAh**. A very tentative suggestion is the Abbey of **St Amand**, which was an important foundation at this time (Breternitz, 2020a: 200-201), since it is possible to read the fourth letter as an inverted letter **D** (**Ų**). Even though the abbey was generally referred to as *Elno*, it was also described in contemporary texts as *abbatia sancti Amandi*.

As for the final denier in the hoard (figure 9), it has an epigraphical reverse unparalleled on any other Merovingian or Carolingian coins. However, there are Merovingian coins with a not dissimilar design, which represents an **E**, though on those coins it is usually paired with an **R**. There are different interpretations of their origin, and they appear to have been struck at different mints. Clairand and Téreygeol have proposed that most were produced at Melle, while Marc Parvérie has made the case for Limoges, a theory first put forward by Lafaurie (Clairand & Téreygeol, 2009; Parvérie, 2020). On this coin the letters **L** and **M** can be discerned springing from the large **E**, and while **MEL** would be unusual for Melle, which is referred to as *Metolo*, *Medolo* or *Medolus* at this time, **LEM** was precisely the form of mint-name used on Charlemagne's pre-reform coins of **Limoges**. Moreover, the town was one of Charlemagne's more productive

mints between 768 and 793 (Coupland, 2018a: 436).²⁸ Pippin captured the town in the final years of his reign, so the attribution is not only possible but probable, given that only one specimen is known.

This discussion incidentally highlights the astonishing absence of **Melle** from the list of Pippin's mints.²⁹ Silver was mined at Melle from the 7th century onwards and used to produce Merovingian coins (Sarah, Bompaire, Gratuze & Téreygeol, 2012). Under Charlemagne it would become Francia's most prolific mint (Coupland, 2018a: 436, 447), so where are the coins of Pippin from Melle? Could one of the unattributed types perhaps have been minted there? In fact, the paucity of recorded finds of Pippin's coins of any type in Poitou-Charentes (just two,³⁰ compared with fourteen of Charlemagne's pre-reform coins, including ten from Melle) strongly suggests that there was no minting at Melle during his reign. Pippin seems to have gained control over the region by 762, so it is a mystery why no coins were struck in his name at Melle.

Other mints and minting

The uncertainty surrounding the identity of many of Pippin's mints is in part due to short inscriptions and ambiguous monograms, but also the small numbers of finds, giving few clues to the location of the various mints. There is nonetheless widespread agreement over the attribution of many coins. One helpful factor is continuity with preceding or succeeding coin types; another is our knowledge of which locations were more likely to strike coinage in the Carolingian period.

The following table lists the likely mints in the first column (there is a map at figure 24 below). There is not room to discuss every attribution: where there is agreement, no commentary is needed, or where a convincing interpretation has been proposed by others, this is referenced in a footnote. Where there is uncertainty, disagreement, or a new hypothesis is proposed here, an asterisk indicates that the attribution is discussed in the following pages. The second column reports the number of coins found in hoards/as single finds.³¹ The third gives the references to the type in Morrison & Grunthal's 1967 catalogue (MG), Depuyrot's fourth edition of 2017 (D) and – where relevant – Kluge's catalogue of coins in the Berlin collection (K).³²

²⁸ Coins of Ebroin with a similar large E are also stylistically similar to coins of Limoges: Clairand & Téreygeol, 2009: 35–36.

²⁹ I am unconvinced by the theory that late Merovingian coins of Melle reading 'RCAF' can be attributed to Pippin: Seguin, 2023.

³⁰ An obole of Angers and a denier of Reims.

³¹ This includes finds outside the former Carolingian empire – figures correct as of 18.7.2024.

³² MG 28 has been omitted as no examples are known: see Gariel, 1883–4, vol. 2: 86 and pl. iv–83. The terrible condition of MG 32 (National Numismatic Collection, Amsterdam, BM-17486, formerly in the Koninklijk Penningkabinet with the same reference number) makes identification impossible, and without a reference number MG 48A cannot be traced in the National Numismatic Collection.

Mint-name	Number in hoards/as single finds	References
Amiens ³³	0/1	MG –; D 27B
Angers, denier	1/7	MG 42; D 40; K 1
obole*	0/1	MG –; D –
Angers, Gunthar ³⁴	0/2	MG –; D 46B
Auxerre?* – AVTTRΔNO	31/13	MG 47; D 892, ‘St Denis’; K 4-6
Avignon?* – AV	0/0	MG 45; D 325 (‘Clermont-Ferrand’)
Besançon ³⁵	1/0	MG 80; D 143; K 7
Bourges* ³⁶	0/0	MG –; D –
Brioux-sur-Boutonne?*	0/0	MG 34; D 1204; K 57
Cambrai	1/0	MG 2; D 229; K 8
Chalon-sur-Saône	1/0	MG 48; D 254; K 9
Chartres (two varieties) ³⁷	1/2	MG 38; D 269-270, 270B; K 10-11
Clermont-Ferrand* – AR/ARo	0/4	MG 44, 46; D 452-453, ‘Herstal’
Condé-sur-l’Escaut	0/2	MG 52; D 360; K 13
Dax – AGS ³⁸	0/0	MG –; D 387A
Dorestad*	32/51	MG 25-27, 30-31, 54; D 408-409, 431; K 14-17
ELI-MOSI-NA*	1/0	MG 53; D 47 ‘Angoulême’; K 18
ERODBERT (Robert?) ³⁹	0/0	MG –; D 431B
Ghent?* – GΔEDE	1/1	MG –; D 440B
GR? (George?) ⁴⁰	0/0	MG –; D 447B
Laon	1/0	MG 43; D 477; K 2
Le Mans?* – CINMAD	0/3	MG 50; D 409A, ‘Dorestad’; K 12
Limoges*	1/0	MG –; D –
Lyon*	1/1	MG 24; D 517; K 22-23

³³ ALDE 2009: no. 47.

³⁴ Collin, 2004; Schindel, 2019: 209-211.

³⁵ Lafaurie, 1974: 38 pointed out that if the S is read twice this could be a coin of Soissons.

³⁶ Meziane & Gagnant, 2025.

³⁷ Foucray, 2023: 29-30. Prou, 1892: 923 is not from Imphy as it was described by Cartier in *RN* 1846: 123 and pl. vii. Prou, 1892: 924 belonged to Ponton d’Amécourt according to Gariel, but was not said to be from Imphy: Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 51 and pl. I.24. Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: pl. iv.80, a single find from Wijk bij Duurstede, is also from Chartres, but pl. iv.81 is not, and is discussed below.

³⁸ Hourlier, 2000; ALDE 2009: no. 53.

³⁹ Crinon, 2009; ALDE 2009: no. 54.

⁴⁰ Chwartz & Crinon, 2009; ALDE 2009: no. 55.

Maguelone? [*] – MAGA	0/1	MG –; D –
Mainz	0/3	MG 66; D 571-572; K 25
Marseille [*] – MAS	0/0	MG –; D –
Meaux	0/1	MG 61; D 590; K 26
Namur [*] – NAMVC	0/0	MG –; D –
Nantes? ⁴¹	0/1	MG 41; D 680
Narbonne – NAR, NR ⁴²	0/2	MG 64; D 687; K 27
Noyon	0/0	MG 14; D 711, K 29
Paris	0/4	MG 35; D 756; K 30
Quentovic (two varieties?) ⁴³	4/10	MG 69; D 796; K 31-32
Reims (three varieties) ⁴⁴	11/9	MG 70; D 824-825; K 34-35
Reims, Lambert? ⁴⁵	0/2	MG 15; D 826; K 33
Rennes? ⁴⁶	0/1	MG –; D –
Sens – ECL-SEN ⁴⁷	0/1	MG –; D 917C
Sens [*]	1/2	MG 22-23; D 935-936, ‘Soissons’; K 48, ‘Soissons? Sens?’
Sint-Truiden (two varieties) [*]	4-5/0	MG 33; D 539?, 540; K 24
St Amand? – SCI/MAN-912 [*]	1/1	MG –; D 493, ‘St Marie, Laon’; K 36
St Cirgues, Clermont ⁴⁸	3/0	MG 73; D 337; K 39
St Firmin, Amiens	0/1	MG 10, 51; D 35; K 40
St Géry, Cambrai (two varieties)	0/2	MG 74-75; D 235-235B; K 41-42
St Martin, Tours [*] (five or six varieties)	1/7	MG 12, 19-20, 76A; D 1047-1048; K 44
St Peter [*]	3/0	MG 11; D 365, both ‘Corbie’, K 45

⁴¹ Crinon, 1998.

⁴² For coins reading **NAR** see *e.g.* Jean Elsen & ses Fils Auction 127, Brussels, 5 December 2015: no. 645.

⁴³ Foucray, 2018: 206-207.

⁴⁴ As well as the most common type, reading **†R†**, deniers are known with **REM** on the reverse (Crinon & Dhénin, 1992: 350-352) and – an as yet unpublished type – with **PIP REM** on the obverse: <https://www.la-detection.com/dp/message-131121.htm>, accessed 9.1.2025.

⁴⁵ Crinon, 2004.

⁴⁶ Crinon, 1998.

⁴⁷ Schiesser, 2010. Study of the coin’s subsequent appearance at auction showed that it reads **ECL-SEN**: CNG, Triton XVIII, New York, 7 January 2015: no. 1369. As noted above, the attribution of an imitation to Pippin (D 917B) is unconvincing.

⁴⁸ Guillaume Sarah, following Olivier Bruand, suggested an attribution to Saint-Cyr de Nevers as more likely (Sarah, 2008, vol. 1: 261; vol. 2: 21), but Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 70-71 correctly noted that the church at Nevers was not dedicated to St Cyr until the early 9th century.

St Stephen, Bourges ⁴⁹ (three varieties)	1/4	MG 77; D 212; K 46-47
Ste Croix, Orléans ⁵⁰	3/0	MG 36, 76; D 738, 1207; K 37-38
Ste Marie, Laon ⁵¹	0/1	MG 13, 79; D 492; K 43
Strasbourg	2/3	MG 1; D 952; K 49-50
Thionville – TEU ⁵²	0/0	MG –; D 972B
Tours*	0/1	MG –; D 1030B
Trier* (denier: four varieties)	0/5	MG 3-7; D 1058-1060; K 51
obole	0/2	D 1061
Troyes	1/4	MG 21; D 1081; K 52-53
Valenciennes – VAL	0/1	MG –; D 1104
Verdun (three varieties) ⁵³	4/3	MG 8-9, 57; D 1117-1118; K 54-55
Vienne?* – VIEN	1/0	MG 58; D 446, ‘Geneva’; K 19
Zurich?* – hAΘ	1/0	MG 29; D 1161; K 20
Unidentified* – B¶	0/0	MG –; D 170 ‘Bo’
Unidentified* – GADDO	0/0	MG 55; D 440
Unidentified* – IAP(T?)	0/0	MG 56; D 52, ‘Arles’; K 3, ‘Arles’
Unidentified* – LIICO-ΘS	0/0	MG 81; D 1109, ‘Vénasque’
Unidentified* – MAR	0/0	MG –; D 564, ‘Marsal’
Unidentified* – MARCS	0/0	MG 60; D –
Unidentified* – NE	0/0	MG 63; D 697, ‘Nevers’; K 28
Unidentified* – RA(N)TAI?	0/0	MG 71; D 889, ‘Rufach’
Unidentified* – RP/RF	0/8	MG 68; D 5B, ‘faux’
Unidentified* – SCOPVIIV	1/0	MG 49; D 1110, ‘Vénasque’; K 56
Unidentified* – SCS-†AO	0/1	MG 78; D 887, ‘St Ouen’
Unidentified* – XPI	0/1	MG –; D –
Unidentified* – hexagram/A	0/2	MG 40; D 454, ‘Herstal’
Unidentified* – hexagram/cross	0/1	MG 40; D 454, ‘Herstal’
Unidentified* – cross/symbols	0/1	MG 37; D 1205
Unidentified* – figure/axe	0/1	MG 39; D 1206

Figure 10 – Mints of Pippin III (see figure 24 below).

⁴⁹ Schiesser, 2012.

⁵⁰ Schindel, 2017.

⁵¹ Morrison & Grunthal, 1967 accidentally included a single coin in Berlin twice: no. 79 should be deleted.

⁵² Chwartz, 2009; ALDE 2009: no. 66.

⁵³ In addition to the varieties in the Imphy hoard there is a third with a circle between the letters of the mint-name.

The best represented mint among hoards and single finds is **Dorestad**, with 32 coins present in hoards and 51 recorded single finds. The first figure is almost entirely accounted for by the discovery of three hoards at Wijk bij Duurstede, the site of the port (figure 11).



Figure 11 – The three coins of the Wijk bij Duurstede V hoard, 2015, all Dorestad deniers of Pippin III. Simon Coupland.

The number of finds is undoubtedly also swelled by the high level of detection in the Netherlands, excellent networks of detectorists, and the ease of reporting and publication of finds through the websites NUMIS and PAN.⁵⁴ Having said that, 20 of the single finds occurred in the 19th century at nearby Domburg – more than three times as many as the six from Wijk bij Duurstede (Coupland, forthcoming b). Other Dorestad coins have been found far from where they were minted, in France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Denmark, and England (five) (Coupland, forthcoming a, with details).⁵⁵ Evidence of the port's involvement in trade with the Baltic during this period comes from single finds at Groß Strömkendorf, the location of Reric, and near Ribe in Denmark. At the site itself, the single finds of Pippin's coins reveal a web of connections to Chartres, Clermont-Ferrand, Le Mans, Paris, Reims, Sint-Truiden and as yet unidentified mints (figures 15, 22).⁵⁶ The numismatic material thus offers valuable insights into an economic network extending across Francia and beyond which can be securely dated to Pippin's reign.

⁵⁴ NUMIS: <https://www.denieuweschatkamer.nl/geldcollectie/munten-vinden-reinigen-en-laten-onderzoeken/numis/>; PAN: <https://portable-antiquities.nl/pan/#/public> (20.4.2025).

⁵⁵ There was no find in Cologne, *contra* Depeyrot, 2017: no. 409 and Breternitz, 2020b: 98, as is clear from Quarg, 2000.

⁵⁶ A coin previously listed as from Ste Croix (Coupland, 2002: 228) is in fact from an unidentified mint, the penultimate entry in figure 10.

Among the many coins minted at Dorestad there is a variety of designs (figure 11). The two principal groups are those reading **RP** and those with **R̥F**, which are fairly evenly distributed. Thus, among the 30 coins of Dorestad in hoards, 16 read **RP** and 14 **R̥F**, while among the 42 single finds which can be deciphered, 25 read **R̥F** and 17 **RP**.⁵⁷ There are also six known mules, that is, double-headed coins, reading **R̥F** on one face and **RP** (or **ERP**) with an axe on the other (figure 12). These can confidently be attributed to the port on the basis of the inclusion of an axe and the find distribution, as three were found at Wijk bij Duurstede (van Gelder, 1980: 213, no. 24, illustrated as no. 23; van Gelder, 2009: 257; NUMIS 1033476) and two at Domburg (Völckers, 1965: no. 11·22-23, pl. O).⁵⁸



*Figure 12 – Denier of Dorestad with **R̥F** and **RP**. Wijk bij Duurstede II hoard, 1972. Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden / Arent Pol.*

A small number of the regular coins reading **RP** and **ΠΙΠΙ** have small marks near the rim which de Coster interpreted as **DVRSTA** (de Coster, 1859: 217; followed by Völckers, 1965: no. 11·5 and Depeyrot, 2017: no. 408). Closer examination of the coin cited by de Coster (figure 13) and better preserved deniers of the same type which have come to light since, albeit from different dies (figure 14), shows that this was an imaginative reconstruction which does not stand up to scrutiny.⁵⁹ The symbols are not letters, but odd marks such as appear in numerous forms on Pippin's Dorestad coinage, including crosses, hooks, circles, and even a swastika (e.g. Völckers, 1965: no. 11·8, pl. N; 11·19 and 11·21, pl. O).

⁵⁷ This corrects Breternitz, 2020a: 140-141, who was citing Depeyrot, 2017: no. 409 in the mistaken belief that the latter was listing the two titles separately.

⁵⁸ The fact that several coins read **ERP** on the face with an axe means that the fragmentary Domburg find Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: pl. iv·82 = Völckers, 1965: no. 11·22 = Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 54 = Depeyrot, 2017: no. 431 can be identified as of the same type, even though the part of the coin depicting the axe is missing. Where the sixth coin was found is unknown.

⁵⁹ See also Princes Risborough find, EMC 2008.0321: <https://emc.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/full-record/20080321> (accessed 13.3.2024).



Figure 13 – Denier of Dorestad with additional symbols. Single find, Domburg. National Numismatic Collection, Amsterdam, MA-00532.



Figure 14 – Denier of Dorestad with additional symbols. Jean Elsen & ses Fils, Auction 127, Brussels, 5 December 2015: no. 644.

One symbol which appears on virtually all Pippin's Dorestad coins, preceding the royal name **PIPI**, has been variously read as **M** (Depeyrot, 2017, nos. 408-409) or **N** (Grierson & Blackburn, 1986: 204), but resembles neither of those letters, but rather a Greek pi: **Π**. One possible explanation is that it has morphed from an original **Ω**, which is how the letter **R** is reproduced on Pippin's coins of St Cirgues (e.g. Kluge, 2014b: no. 39). This would give the title **RPIPI**, which would make sense, though it is difficult to see how the letter was then so consistently misunderstood and incorrectly reproduced. The correct interpretation remains uncertain. Several Dorestad coins also have a letter **T** between the **R** and the **P** of the king's title, but on others there is a cross in this place, suggesting that the **T** is simply an incomplete cross rather than a letter (figure 11)⁶⁰.



Figure 15 – Denier of uncertain mint (Dorestad? Utrecht?) with figure. Single find, Wijk bij Duurstede. National Numismatic Collection, Amsterdam, BM-17485.

⁶⁰ So also Völckers, 1965: 129. A letter **T** is found in a similar place on coins from Chartres, Ste Croix and St Gély: Prou, 1892: 924; Kluge, 2014b: 99, no. 38; 101, no. 42.

A unique coin found at Wijk bij Duurstede reading ΩPIPI above an axe is much more puzzling (figure 15). The reverse portrays a man carrying a cross staff and crozier, but the style of the figure is very different from that of St Chéron on coins of Chartres. Next to it is a meaningless inscription, IIONII or the like, and line drawings of the original coin, before a large piece became detached, show that this was replicated to the left of the figure (Völckers, 1965: no. III·3, pl. B with the mistaken caption III·1). Again, in this respect it is quite unlike the coins attributable to Chartres, and it cannot plausibly be interpreted as a Frisian imitation of those (Völckers, 1965: 54). There are no obvious parallels to the figure among Continental sceattas or Merovingian deniers.⁶¹ Was this coin one of the first to be minted at Dorestad under Pippin? Or, given that the figure holds a cross and crozier, did it perhaps originate in Utrecht as the local bishopric, despite the lack of other Carolingian coin production there? Or did one of the other northern mints portray an axe, as some did under Charlemagne?⁶² With our present knowledge it is impossible to say.

It has been suggested that the inclusion of the axe on Dorestad's coins was intended to send a message of Frankish military strength to the Frisians (Breternitz, 2020a: 141-142; Breternitz, 2020b). During Pippin's reign, the land beyond the Lauwers still lay outside Frankish control, while Central Frisia between the Vlie and the Lauwers had only recently been conquered. Two factors make this interpretation unlikely. The first is that the axe was no longer used by the Franks as a weapon after the 6th century, so that by the beginning of the 8th century the *francisca* was not even remembered as a weapon (Bachrach, 2001: 84-85). The second is the distribution of Dutch single finds, which indicate that there was little penetration of Pippin's coins into Central Frisia, let alone the as yet unconquered east. Under Charlemagne, Frankish coins would reach the northern Netherlands, but from Pippin's reign there is just one single find from the province of Friesland and none from Noord-Holland, Groningen, Drenthe or Overijssel. Multiple finds occur only in the southern provinces of Gelderland, Utrecht, Zuid-Holland and Zeeland (Coupland, 2022b: 118).⁶³

The significance of the two principal obverses, RF and RP , has been the subject of much discussion. Hans Hermann Völckers proposed that RP with its reference to Pippin by name could have been intended for an internal Frankish audience, while RF – denoting the King of the Franks – was used by outward-facing mints such as Dorestad, Maastricht and Quentovic (Völckers, 1965: 37).

⁶¹ My thanks to Rory Naismith, Wybrand Op den Velde and Philippe Schiesser for their comments. The first two both drew attention to a similar figure on a joint issue of King Eadberht of Northumbria and Archbishop Ecgberht, dated 737-758: <https://www.cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=223680> (accessed 23.3.2024).

⁶² Including perhaps Bruges and Boulogne: Coupland, Meijns & de Clercq, forthcoming.

⁶³ Since then, one additional find from Gelderland has been recorded.

The argument was not presented forcefully, however, since Völckers knew that the Dorestad mint used both forms. Jean Lafaurie proposed that the **RP** title preceded the **R̄F** form chronologically, based primarily on a coin from Chartres in the Berlin collection whose die appears to have borne the title **RP** but then been re-engraved with **R̄F** (Lafaurie, 1974: 36-37).⁶⁴ He suggested that this transition took place throughout the kingdom, perhaps in 755. As Breternitz has pointed out (Breternitz, 2020a: 131-137), coins of Narbonne with **RP**, which can only have been struck after Pippin's conquest of the region in 759, demonstrate the weakness of Lafaurie's case (Breternitz, 2020a: 134),⁶⁵ as does the large number of coins with the title **RP** which are now known. Breternitz also argued that the Chartres die had not been re-engraved but rather a single coin restruck, but whichever is correct,⁶⁶ the coin proves only that **RP** was replaced with **R̄F** at this particular mint at this particular time, not that this was a process followed across the kingdom. Indeed, the wide variation in the forms of the royal name and title on Pippin's coins suggests that these had no particular significance. The important point was that the king was named (or in one case, pictured), not how his name and title were rendered (cf. Breternitz, 2020a: 131-137). As a result, certain mints almost certainly struck coins with **RP** throughout the reign while others used only **R̄F**, and a third group used a variety of forms over the years.

This is particularly evident at Trier and St Martin in Tours, where the greatest number of different obverse and reverse designs are found. Both mints have been studied in detail, though several years ago, meaning that further types have come to light since. The coins of Pippin from **Trier** were discussed in 1988 by Raymond Weiller, who was able to identify no fewer than four distinct obverse inscriptions (Weiller, 1988: 266-269). The first read **Δ-N-PI-PI** (presumably for *domnus noster Pipinus*) in the four angles of a beaded cross, and **PTREFER** in a rough circle on the reverse.⁶⁷ Certain coins of this type were almost certainly oboles, a rarity during Pippin's reign (Coupland, 2025: 105).⁶⁸ A second denier type reads **PIPINVR** in a circle, and a third **PIPIR**, both bearing similar reverses

⁶⁴ The coin is Kluge, 2014b: 89: no. 10.

⁶⁵ Depeyrot, 2017: no. 687 includes one coin reading **R̄F** (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: pl. II.45 = Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 64 = Kluge, 2014b: no. 27) and two reading **RP** (ALDE 2009: nos. 56-57 = OGN 2269 and 2270).

⁶⁶ The reader can judge for themselves: <https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?lang=en&id=1820248323> (accessed 18.2.2025).

⁶⁷ As Weiller's plate shows, his types 15 and 16 are essentially the same, with two letters reversed. This is also true of Depeyrot, 2017: nos. 1058 and 1058B, which have largely incorrect obverse and reverse legends.

⁶⁸ The Trier museum reportedly acquired two identical oboles of this type, one of them from Domburg (Weiller, 1988: 17.1 and 17.2; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 1061), but either one of the two is now lost or there was only ever one coin, which is now damaged. A further coin is said to have been found in Gelderland in 2005, 14 mm in diameter and weighing 0.61 g: personal communication Jan Pelsdonk.

(Weiller, 1988: nos. 18-19). The fourth type is most similar to other coinages minted by Pippin, reading **R̄F** and **TREFR** (Weiller, 1988: no. 20). As Bernd Kluge pointed out, Pippin's deniers of Trier are particularly light, weighing only 0.94 g, 1.13 g, 1.18 g and 1.20 g, and some are small: just 14 mm in diameter (Kluge, 2014b: 62, 104; the weights are from Weiller, 1988). The latter might have been the earliest to be minted but there is currently no way of determining that.

St Martin in Tours is even more remarkable in that there are at least five and possibly six known variants, as well as a town mint striking Pippin's coinage (Garnier & Luger, 1997). Of the five variants definitely attributable to St Martin, the first has as its obverse **PĪPI REX**, and on the reverse **SCI MARTINI** around a raised globule in a beaded circle; the second has **R̄P** on the obverse and on the other face the mint-name around a letter **S** in a beaded circle (Crinon, 1997: 57).⁶⁹ These two reverse designs follow well-known Merovingian precedents (Schiesser, 2017). A third type is a variation of the first, with the obverse legend **R̄IF** and on the reverse **SCS MRAT** around a beaded globule. I know of two coins of this type, struck from different dies, in private collections, both reportedly found in Indre-et-Loire. The fourth and fifth types are each known from a single specimen: the obverse of both reads **PĪR̄FR** and the reverse **SCIMAR**, but on one coin the mint-name is in a single line, while on the other it is in two lines, with a line between (ALDE 2009: no. 62; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 1048B). The latter reverse is shared by the sixth type, which has the more common title **R̄F** on the obverse. It was represented at Imphy, and while Pierre Crinon originally attributed it to St Martin, following Lafaurie, he has since expressed doubt that one mint could have produced so many different variants and proposed St Marcel or St Martial, as has Bernd Kluge (Crinon, 1997: 57, no. 3; Lafaurie, 1976; cf. ALDE 2009: no. 62; Kluge, 2014b: 100-102, no. 44). A recent single find of a Merovingian denier from England supports an attribution to Tours, however. The coin has on one face **SCI MAR** and on the other **SCO MR** and thus appears to be a mule of St Martin and St Maurice in Tours.⁷⁰ In that respect it is similar to a coin in the Savonnières hoard, demonstrating that the two monasteries shared a single mint (Schiesser & Sarah, 2018: 219).

Another mint which deserves close attention produced the next largest number of finds after Dorestad, and has been variously linked to Antrain (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 42-44, pl. 1-2-4), Saint-Denis (Metcalf, 1965; Depeyrot, 2017, nos. 892-893), or an otherwise unknown individual named Autramnus (Völckers, 1965: 35;

⁶⁹ Crinon knew only an incomplete drawing of the second type and was uncertain whether it was of St Martin or St Maurice, but coins which have come to light since show the mint-name is definitely St Martin: e.g. https://www.cgbfr.com/pepin-ier-dit-le-bref-denier-ttb-tb-bca_344191.a.html (accessed 11.4.2024).

⁷⁰ From Monkton Deverill, Wiltshire. EMC 2015.0184. <https://www.spink.com/lot/16005002087> (accessed 13.1.2025)

Lafaurie, 1974: 42).⁷¹ Antrain can be ruled out because it relies on reading the inscription as INT-TRA-N◇, whereas the first letter is clearly an A (figure 16).⁷²



*Figure 16 – Denier of ‘Auttramno’ (Auxerre?)
MDC Monaco Auction 10, 13–14.10.2022: lot 289.*

Others have recognised this and read the legend as **AVTTRAMNO**, a personal name, though there is no letter **M** and the supposed second **A** is different from the first, being larger and always closed at the base, whereas the upper **A** is generally left open. In fact, as Michael Metcalf pointed out in 1965, on any other coin it would be read as a Greek delta (Δ), as for instance on the coins of Trier mentioned a moment ago. It also has an abbreviation mark above it, implying that certain letters are missing at this point, though there is no such mark at the top of the coin. The inscription is therefore **ANT(or AVT)-TR Δ -N◇**. Philip Grierson dismissed this attribution as ‘wholly fanciful’ (Grierson & Blackburn, 1986: 634), but it has since been given apparent confirmation by the discovery of a lead trial piece at St Denis bearing the imprint of both faces of the coinage (Héron & Meyer, 1991). However, this discovery is by no means as conclusive as some have believed: a lead weight is known from Wijk bij Duurstede bearing the imprint of a coin of Charles the Bald from Paris, so it is quite possible that the trial piece was brought to St Denis from elsewhere (Völckers, 1965: no. III-202; photograph in Willemsen, 2009: 121).

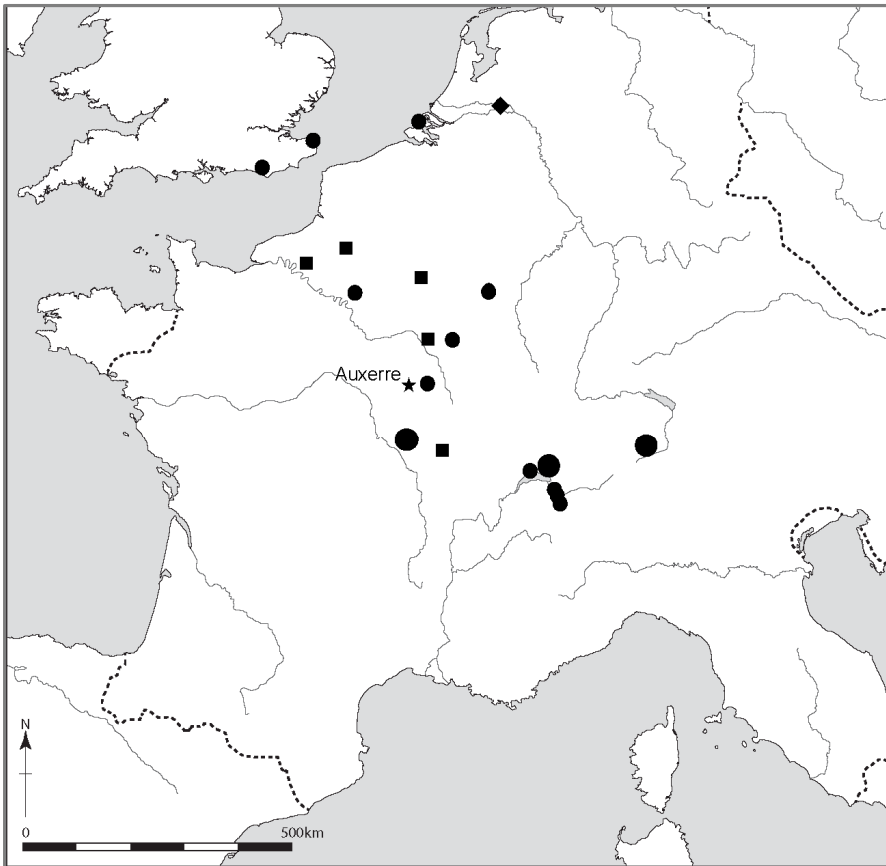
The find distribution unquestionably points away from St Denis, instead having a strong eastern concentration (figure 17), with twenty deniers in the Imphy hoard, seven at Ilanz in Graubünden and four from La Tour-de-Peilz in Vaud. There are also a large number of single finds with a similar eastward spread, most of them unpublished: Brienne-le-Château (Aube); Gran San Bernado (Ferrero 1889); Lausanne (Vaud); Luzarches (Val d’Oise – Depeyrot, 2017: 532); Manston (EMC⁷³ 2018.0174); Schouwen (Zeeuws Genootschap 3674, not in Völckers 1965); Sea-ford (EMC 2001.0900); Stanstead Abbots (EMC 2024.0025); Tonnerre (Yonne);

⁷¹ Kluge, 2014b: 86–88 (nos. 4–6) reserves judgement.

⁷² Or see https://www.cgbfr.com/pepin-ier-dit-le-bref-denier-spl,bca_314317,a.html (accessed 14.1.2025).

⁷³ As note 59.

Val d'Aoste (Geiser, 1990: 96); Val de Bagnes (Valais); Verdun (Meuse); Wijk bij Duurstede (Völckers, 1965, no. III-1). The only eastern Carolingian mint with a mint-name resembling this inscription is Auxerre, which is reproduced as **AVTSIODERO** on Merovingian coinage and **AVTISIODERO** on that of Charles the Bald (Vandenbossche, forthcoming; Prou, 1892: nos. 582-583). At certain of Pippin's mints just the first three letters of the name are reproduced, such as **LVG** for Lyon, so **AVT** could certainly represent Auxerre. What is more, the city is just 100 km from Imphy, and the twenty coins of this mint present in the hoard made it the best represented: only Bourges is closer among Pippin's mints.



*Figure 17 – Finds of coins of Pippin III with mint-name **AVTTRDNO** (round symbols), **RP/RF** but no axe (square symbols) or both (diamond). Large symbols indicate a hoard.*

Looking at the rest of the inscription, the abbreviation mark above the first letter of **ΔNO** suggests that it may mark the start of a new word, and **DNO** is extremely common in Carolingian manuscripts, signifying *domino* or *domno* – to the Lord or lord. This leaves the letters **TR** needing explanation. The bishop of Auxerre between 763 and 771 was Teodrannus (Théodran: Waitz, 1881: 395). Could this be a reference to him? The fact that a small number of pre-reform coins of Charlemagne are known with the same reverse (Gariel, 1883–4, vol. 2: pl. v.8; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 893; Kluge, 2014b: no. 81) is not inconsistent with this, as Teodrannus’ episcopacy continued for three years after the change of ruler. The evidence is far from conclusive, but the hypothesis fits with the find distribution and Auxerre’s later significance as a mint.

Another enigmatic inscription presents no problems of legibility, clearly reading **ELI-MOSI-NA**. As Nikolaus Schindel has recently written, this cannot plausibly be interpreted as Angoulême, as Depeyrot proposed, but undoubtedly refers to almsgiving, as was understood by all previous commentators (Schindel, 2023). Coins were frequently given in alms in the Carolingian period, particularly by royalty (Coupland, 2014b: 286–287), and a later parallel is known from the reign of Alfred the Great (Valci, 2021: 207–211). Where Schindel ventures into implausible territory is in his suggestion that **AVTTRDNO** is a corruption of *Eli-mosina* and can be linked to St Denis. His supposed stylistic parallels are weak, and where this hitherto unique coin was minted remains uncertain.

Coins reading **AR** and **ARo** are here attributed to **Clermont-Ferrand** rather than Herstal or Arles, based on three factors (*contra* Depeyrot, 2017: nos. 452–453; Kluge, 2014b: 41; Depeyrot himself attributes a coin of Carloman with the mint-name **AR** to Clermont: Depeyrot, 2017: no. 326). First, the city minted Merovingian coinage bearing the mint-signature **AR**, as Maurice Prou noted in the 1890s (Prou, 1892: iii). Second, pre-reform coins from the city in the names of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious read **ARVR-NIS** (Depeyrot, 2017: nos. 327, 329). Third, two of these coins of Pippin have been found in the Auvergne (one reading **AR**, one **ARo**).⁷⁴

By contrast, a unique coin reading **AV** which Depeyrot and Kluge ascribed to Clermont is here attributed, more tentatively, to **Avignon** (*contra* Depeyrot, 2017: no. 325; Kluge, 2014b: 42). The reason for this is the existence of pre-reform coins of Charlemagne reading **AVINIO** which are universally accepted as from Avignon (Gariel, 1883–4, vol. 2: 101 and pl. v.17; Prou, 1892: no. 851; Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 190).⁷⁵ This makes Avignon a more likely candidate for the origin of the coins of Pippin reading **AV** than Aosta or Autun, the

⁷⁴ The finds were reported in 2013 and 2017 on internet sites for identifying coins which have since been taken offline.

⁷⁵ Depeyrot, 2017: no. 109 contains errors: the coin sold by Elsen is from Uzès (and the image of the reverse of the coin inverted); the second coin illustrated is of a different type (ALDE 2009: no. 74).

alternatives suggested by Gariel, or Clermont-Ferrand, as proposed by Depeyrot (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 52; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 325).



*Figure 18 – Denier of VIIEN (Vienne?). Musée d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève, CdN 2021-0054. Purchased in 2021 with the help of Numismatica Genevensis SA
© Musée d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève, photograph: Flora Bevilacqua.*

Another type has formerly been ascribed to Geneva, but is here attributed to **Vienne**. Only one provenanced coin is known, from Imphy, but two have turned up at auction (figure 18) (Depeyrot, 2017: no. 446).⁷⁶ De Longpérier read the reverse inscription as **GENII**, but as Gariel commented, the first letter more closely resembles a **V** (de Longpérier, 1858: 235-237; Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 52). Once this is recognised, parallels with similar pre-reform deniers of Charlemagne become apparent. More of these later coins, reading **AVENI**, are known, and more have a provenance: one from the Krinkberg hoard and single finds from Gard, Haute-Saône, Nord-Isère (two), and Rhône (Hatz, 1985: 127-128; Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 101).⁷⁷ Although the type was ascribed to Avignon by Gariel and Depeyrot (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 101 and pl. v.16; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 108),⁷⁸ other pre-reform coins of Charlemagne from Avignon are known with a very different reverse design (see above), and deniers reading **VIENNA** are known in Charlemagne's monogram coinage and Louis the Pious' Class 2 (Depeyrot, 2017: nos. 1139, 1139A, 1140). The combination of letters, the find distribution and the evidence for subsequent minting all make Vienne a more probable origin for Charlemagne's pre-reform type and consequently also for the coins of Pippin, which can indeed be read as **VIIEN**. Charlemagne's pre-reform coinage of Geneva, by contrast, bore the quite different inscription **GENE-VA** (Depeyrot, 2017: no. 447).

⁷⁶ Völckers, 1965: no. 1:13 and Kluge, 2014b: no. 19 make the attribution with a question mark; Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 52 and pl. II:27 suggests Vannes as an alternative. Numismatica Genevensis, Auction 2, Geneva, 18 November 2002: no. 1194, now MAH CdN 2021-0054; Jean Elsen & ses Fils, Auction 143, Brussels, 7 December 2020: no. 690 (a fragment).

⁷⁷ The single find from Rhône is still on the internet: <https://www.la-detection.com/dp/message-98798.htm> (accessed 9.1.2025). Others have been removed.

⁷⁸ Kluge, 2014b: no. 82 expressed reservations.

One type which was described by Gariel, Morrison and Grunthal, Depeyrot and Kluge as from an indeterminate mint depicts on its reverse a circle with a point at the centre and a splayed cross springing from it, with points in its quadrants (Gariel, 1883-4: vol. 2: 85 and pl. IV-78; Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 34; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 1204; Kluge, 2014b: no. 106). Just two genuine specimens are known⁷⁹ (and a variety of forgeries). Surprisingly, none of these authors cites the connection made by Prou with the Merovingian deniers attributed to **Brioux-sur-Boutonne** (Prou, 1892: iii), which have an identical reverse (Clairand & Téreygeol, 2009: 33).⁸⁰ That identification remains possible but unproven, though as yet no other has been proposed, and the deniers of Pippin were undoubtedly produced at the same mint.

One type which has traditionally been ascribed to **Le Mans** was reassigned to Dorestad by Depeyrot and to Cologne by Kluge (Depeyrot, 2017: 327, no. 409A; more tentatively: Kluge, 2014b: 88-90, no. 12; cf. Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: pl. II-34; Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 50). Depeyrot's case rested on the supposed find distribution, but although one was found at Wijk bij Duurstede (Völckers, 1965: no. III-5), no find was made at Cologne, as he claimed, and there are single finds from Loiret and Marne.⁸¹ Kluge's reading of the coin as a form of *Colonia Agrippina* is highly implausible, meaning that for the present Le Mans remains the most likely, if uncertain, attribution.

In the light of new evidence, coins with the mint-name **VESSION** are here attributed to **Sens**, not Soissons, as I have previously argued.⁸² The case for Soissons has been made by Michel Hourlier and Michel Dhénin (Hourlier & Dhénin, 1998: 256-257; Dhénin & Hourlier, 2000: 238). Gariel was uncertain whether to attribute to Neuss, Sens or Soissons (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 64-66 and pl. II-46-47); Kluge left the question open between Soissons and Sens (Kluge, 2014b: no. 48), while Depeyrot followed Hourlier and Dhénin and opted for Soissons (Depeyrot, 2017: nos. 935-936). Two coins of Pippin were known at that time, one from Imphy and another in the Sens museum collection. In 2020, Éric Vandenbossche revealed that the latter had been found at Chéroy (Yonne), and he published a new type, possibly of Carloman, in an old private collection in Sens,

⁷⁹ One in Berlin – Kluge, 2014b: no. 106 – and Jean Elsen & ses Fils Auction 128, Brussels, 12 March 2016: no. 608, *ex* Rollin & Feuarent, Paris, 6-11 June 1910, Du Lac Collection Part 2: no. 468. The two coins share the same obverse die.

⁸⁰ See *e.g.* https://www.cgbfr.com/briossvs-vicvs-brioux-deux-sevres-denier-a-la-croix-et-aux-globules-tb-ttb-,bmv_298652,a.html (8.4.2024).

⁸¹ The coin of Le Mans illustrated in Quarg, 2000 was not found in Cologne but cited for comparative purposes. The same is true of two other coins of Pippin, neither of them from Cologne, *contra* Depeyrot, 2017: nos. 409 (p. 327) and 1118 (p. 612). The Loiret coin is unpublished; Marne (sud): <https://numismaticom.forumactif.com/t3886-pepin-le-bref-variante-cinma> (accessed 10.1.25)

⁸² Numismatik Lanz, Auction 162, Munich, 6 June 2016: no. 87, with reference to a coin of Charlemagne.

which had also reportedly been acquired locally (Vandenbossche, 2020). These two finds from the Sens region, coupled with the ambiguity of the legend, suggest that the coins should all be attributed to Sens rather than Soissons. The Imphy hoard is consistent with that, as it is 271 km from Soissons but only 140 km from Sens. A further unpublished coin of Pippin was found near Troyes, 132 km from Soissons but only 60 km from Sens. The coins are consequently ascribed here to Sens.

The three coins of **St Peter** in the Imphy hoard are still the only provenanced coins of this mint, making its identification uncertain.⁸³ De Longpérier assumed the mint was Saint-Pierre-le-Vif in Sens on the basis of the city's proximity to Imphy (de Longpérier, 1858: 240-241). Gariel proposed Corbie due to its later activity as a Carolingian mint, but recognised that it lies a long way from the find-spot (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 81 and pl. III-70, followed by Morrison & Grunthal, 1967, no. 11 and Depeyrot, 2017: no. 365). Völckers followed Bordeaux in ascribing the coins to Trier because later coins of St Peter in Trier are known (Völckers, 1965: no. 1-25 with references). Without further evidence it is impossible to make any confident attribution, so here the question is left open.



Figure 19 – Denier of Namur, private collection. Guido Cornelissens



Figure 20 – Denier of Sint-Truiden, private collection. Guido Cornelissens

Several mints are included here for the first time in a reference work, including deniers attributed to **Namur** and **Bourges**. The first is represented by a coin sold at auction by Elsen in 2008 (figure 19),⁸⁴ and the attribution to Namur seems

⁸³ The coin from Imphy illustrated by Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: pl. III-70 was sold by Münzen & Medaillen GmbH (Germany), Auction 28, Stuttgart, Dr. Bernhard Schulte collection, 30.10.2008: no. 11. It weighs 1.57 g. It had been sold with three other Berlin doubles from Imphy in Hamburger, Frankfurt, 6 November 1912: nos. 1-4. The coins were of Verdun, St Peter, St Cirques and Maastricht respectively; no. 3 is ALDE 2009: no. 61.

⁸⁴ Jean Elsen & ses fils, Auction 96, Brussels, 14 June 2008: no. 583.

beyond doubt, as the mint-name, **AN-IVM** (= **NAMVC** retrograde), is not dissimilar to the pre-reform coins of Charlemagne from Namur (Prou, 1892: no. 100; Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: pl. v.15; Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 235; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 672). The second has recently been published: it reads **BET** (retrograde) and belongs to a private collection in the Bourges region, where it was presumably found. Coins of Pippin from the ecclesiastical mint of St Stephen have long been known (Schiesser, 2012), as has a pre-reform denier of Louis the Pious with the legend **BETORC**, making the proposed attribution of this new coin entirely plausible (Meziane & Gagnant, 2025).

Compared with the cities, ports and abbeys named on Pippin's coins it may seem unlikely that the tiny island of **Maguelone** in Hérault should have housed its own mint. However, excavations on the island unearthed a hitherto unique coin which appears to bear the inscription **MGA** or **MAGA**, so that a local minting, perhaps on a single occasion, seems the most probable explanation.⁸⁵ There was a local bishopric, even if it had to relocate to Substantion as a result of attacks from Arab raiders. The theory that this coin was minted on Maguelone is consequently strengthened by the fact that pre-reform coins of Charlemagne are known with the mint-name of **SVSTANTIO** (Ahlseil de Toulza & Savès, 1979: 172, 180).⁸⁶



Figure 21 – Denier of Marseille, private collection. Simon Coupland.

As for a coin of **Marseille**, the reference in figure 10 is not to a coin sold at auction in 2010 bearing a large letter **M** on one face (typical for Marseille) and **P+P** on the other face, which is not definitely a coin of Pippin III.⁸⁷ Rather, it denotes an unpublished coin in a private collection which has the usual obverse **RP** and on the reverse the mint-signature **MS** (= **MAS**). Even though it is unlike the Merovingian coins preceding it or the possible coin of Charles Martel mentioned earlier, Marseille is the likely mint, given that Charlemagne's pre-reform coins bore the mint-name **MASS** in the corners of a cross (Depeyrot, 2017: no. 566).

⁸⁵ <http://www.identification-numismatique.com/t4828-denier-de-ppin-le-bref-identifier> (accessed 10.1.2025).

⁸⁶ I am indebted to Marc Bompaire for this information, as the coin is not listed in any of the principal reference works.

⁸⁷ Numismatica Genevensis, Auction 6, Geneva, 30 November-1 December 2010: no. 416.

The final mint which is identified here is **Zurich**, though with some uncertainty. The two known coins are from different dies and have always been read as **HAD** (more literally **hAΘ**), even though the last letter could be read as a letter **G** (**6**) (Kluge, 2014b: no. 20; BnF CAR-1477, formerly Prou 925a).⁸⁸ As Gariel noted, there is a clear abbreviation mark above the letter **h**, so this cannot refer to a moneyer named Had or the count of that name who died serving Charlemagne in 798 – the late date giving another reason for doubting the identification (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 55; *contra* de Longpérier, 1858: 214 and Stiennon, 1960). The letters are placed beneath the king's name **PIP**, and the fact that a coin of Reims is now known with the letters **REM** in the same position indicates that this may be a place-name rather than a person⁸⁹. Later coins of Louis the German from Zurich are known reading **HADTVRECUM**, so the attribution is undoubtedly a possibility, if still uncertain.

A number of coins are described here as from unidentified mints, including some which have in the past been associated with particular locations. This is true of Depeyrot's attribution of two types to Vénasque, a proposal rejected by Gariel, Völckers and Prou, and even questioned by its originator, de Longpérier. One, for which there is a parallel coin of Charlemagne, reads **SCO CIVIIV** (or **CIVIN**), or, because it is circular, **IVSCO CIVI**, and could thus potentially refer to a saint or a town, or represent a mint-name (Depeyrot, 2017: no. 1110, cf. no. 1111 of Charlemagne; Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 83-84 and pl. IV·74; Völckers, 1965: 125, no. 1·31; Prou, 1892: lxxiv; de Longpérier, 1858: 241-242; Kluge, 2014b: 104, no. 56). No attribution is suggested here. Only one specimen is known, which was found at Imphy. The second unique coin Depeyrot ascribes to the same mint has a very different inscription which includes a strange symbol (Depeyrot, 2017: no. 1109; Prou, 1892: no. 929; Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 81). Although Prou read the opening of the mint-name as a letter **U**, high resolution photographs suggest it may be the two letters **LI**.⁹⁰ This gives the legend **LIICO-ΘS**, which bears little resemblance to **SCO CIVIIV** and remains a mystery.

A coin in the Berlin collection has been variously read as **IAR** (Morrison and Grunthal), **IARTE** (Gariel), **ART** (Kluge) or **ARTEI** (Depeyrot), and confidently ascribed by all but the first to Arles (Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 56; Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 44-45 and pl. 1·6; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 52; Kluge, 2014b: no. 3). In fact, the coin reads **IAP**; the possible **T** in the field may be an incomplete cross, as at Dorestad, and the supposed **E** at the base is in fact a decorative mark very similar to one found on a coin of Pippin from Trier (Weiller, 1988: pl. II, no. 20·1). Gariel and Depeyrot also both record the obverse as “**PRXF**” when it is the usual **RF** monogramme. There is absolutely nothing to connect it with *Are-latium* (which bore the mint-name **ARDIS** on pre-reform coins of Charlemagne:

⁸⁸ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10413738k> (accessed 10.1.2025).

⁸⁹ See note 44 above.

⁹⁰ <https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb419617922> (accessed 10.1.2025).

Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 99-100 and pl. v·10-13; Kluge, 2014b: nos. 79-80) and the mint should presumably be sought somewhere in the vicinity of Trier. There are no known finds to provide help with locating the mint.

Although a unique coin reading **NE** has understandably been linked with Nevers (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 66 and pl. II·48; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 697; Kluge, 2014b: no. 28, though with a question mark), its absence from the Imphy hoard, discovered only 10 km from the town, makes the attribution doubtful. As Kluge points out, Nevers is also not known to have housed a mint under Charlemagne or Louis the Pious. There is a possible **C** beneath the ligatured **NE**.

An ascription to Rufach of another unique denier (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 70 and pl. III·57; Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 71; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 889) is even more problematic, as Depeyrot noted. Gariel's reading of **RVFIANA** is implausible, but there appears to be more to the inscription than Morrison and Grunthal's rendering, **RAIA**, as there is a possible **N** and a mark springing from the **R** similar to what is a **T** at St Peter. No interpretation is offered here in the light of so many unanswered questions.

A coin in the Chwartz collection reading a stylised **MR** (= **MAR**) (ALDE 2009: no. 58; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 564B) may perhaps be an abbreviation of *Marsallo vico*, but the absence of any immediately preceding or succeeding types makes the attribution far from certain. It is stylistically very different from a coin known only from a sale catalogue of 1926,⁹¹ which reads **MAR-C** (with the **S** couché), potentially originating in a St Marcellus or Marcellinus (Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 60, not included in Depeyrot, 2017).

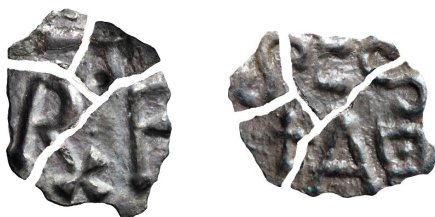


Figure 22 – Denier of unidentified mint. Single find, Domburg.
National Numismatic Collection, Amsterdam, MA-00534.

Although Jean Lafaurie confidently attributed a coin found at Domburg to the monastery of St Ouen at Rouen (Lafaurie, 1978; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 887), this rests on weak foundations. The coin is very damaged, and while previous scholars read it as **SES-+AO**, with a point in the **O** (Völckers, 1965: no II·2; Prou, 1892: lxxiv; Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 78), Lafaurie interpreted the saint's name as **AVD** for *Audoenus*. His assertion that the letters **A** and **D** meet is not supported by the coin itself, however (figure 22: the coin has not suffered further

⁹¹ Adolph E. Cahn, Auction 55, Frankfurt am Main, Ashurst Bowie collection, 2.3.1926: no. 1.

damage in the meantime), so an attribution remains uncertain. It could read **SES-+AO, AD, AP** or even **AR**.

Three different coin types of Pippin all appear to have their origin in one and the same mint, since they bear iconographical designs which appear on a single group of 8th-century sceattas known as the ‘Herstal type’,⁹² though the link with Herstal is no longer seen as reliable (Op den Velde & Metcalf, 2014: 10, 13-15). Two of the types depict a hexagram (described in older literature as a ‘Seal of Solomon’), one with an **A** at the centre, the other a cross, a variant listed by Völckers but overlooked by Morrison & Grunthal and Depeyrot (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 55-57 and pl. II-32; Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 40; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 887; Völckers, 1965: nos. IV-2 and V-1). The type with a letter **A** is known from single finds at Liège (Völckers, 1965: no. V-1) and Wageningen in Gelderland (NUMIS 1032644), the latter from a single find at Bonn (Völckers, 1965: no. IV-2). The third type bears the design found on the other face of the sceattas, namely a series of radiating lines around a cross (Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 85 and pl. IV-79; Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: nos. 32 and 37; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 1205; Völckers, 1965: no. III-10). One example was found at Wijk bij Duurstede in the 19th century, but cannot unfortunately be found in the National Numismatic Collection;⁹³ another was sold online in 2018 (figure 23). The sceatta finds indicate a northern mint, perhaps in Belgium or a little further north (Op den Velde & Metcalf, 2014: 15); the few finds of Pippin’s coins are consistent with this, but no specific mint can currently be identified.



Figure 23 – Denier, uncertain mint. CGB Numismatique, online auction, Paris, 4 December 2018, bca_511284.

As for a unique denier reading **GADDO**, for Prou this represented a personal name, probably of a moneyer; for Gariel, it was not a moneyer, but a count; for Depeyrot and Breternitz it could equally denote a place (Prou, 1892: xlvii, no. 5; Gariel, 1883-4, vol. 2: 53-55 and pl. II-28; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 440; Breternitz, 2020a: 124; Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 55; Völckers, 1965: 37; Kluge, 2014b: 49). No specific individual of this name has yet been discovered from Pippin’s reign, though earlier characters are known, and no plausible place-name has yet been identified. Attribution thus remains uncertain.

⁹² E.g. <https://www.cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=350500> (accessed 11.1.2025).

⁹³ I am grateful to Paul Beliën of the National Numismatic Collection for searching the collection for me: it is not BM-17486 (the reference given in Völckers) which is a different, illegible coin.

The same is true of coins reading RP on one face and R̄F on the other which do not include an axe in the design (Morrison & Grunthal, 1967: no. 68; Depeyrot, 2017: 189, no. 5B, ‘faux’; ALDE 2009: no. 49; as was noted earlier, those with an axe can be attributed to Dorestad). There are a surprising number of finds from different parts of France, including Aube, Breteuil (Oise), Reims, (Marne, all unpublished), Bibracte (Saône-et-Loire: Dumas, 1977) and two from Rouen,⁹⁴ as well as Wijk bij Duurstede (NUMIS 1033588). This distribution, mapped out in figure 17, makes it unlikely that these coins were minted at Dorestad, like those featuring an axe, and they were certainly not minted at Aachen since it had not yet become a royal residence (Coupland, 2018a: 439). It is theoretically possible that they were struck at a number of mints, but the style of the coins found in different regions is remarkably consistent. Until further evidence emerges their origin cannot be established.

Finally, two mints with abbreviations on the reverse were mentioned earlier as prime examples of the sometimes insurmountable challenge of attributing Pippin’s coinage. Both are represented by a single coin, one reading B̄P, with a ring of small points (figure 2: Grenoble, 1976: no. 15; Depeyrot, 2017: no. 170 [‘Bo’]); the other XPI, a single find from near Wijk bij Duurstede which is paralleled by a pre-reform coin of Charlemagne (Coupland, 2014b: 276). With this abbreviated form of ‘*Christi*’, it was undoubtedly minted at a religious foundation of some sort, but whether that was a cathedral or an abbey and where it was located remains a mystery.

The Coinage of Pippin III: overview

Despite our best efforts at attribution, several mints consequently remain unidentified, and doubtless further previously unknown coin types will emerge in the future. Even so, plotting those which have been listed here – some with greater confidence than others – reveals a spread of mints across Pippin’s kingdom (figure 24), which indicates that coin production at these sites could have provided the coin stock needed to meet the needs of the entire realm.

Analysis of the distance between single finds with definite find spots and their mints of origin shows that coins of Pippin did not travel as far as those of Charlemagne. Excluding finds from Wijk bij Duurstede, which experienced a remarkable localised economic expansion in the late 8th century, the average under Pippin is 153 km, for Charlemagne’s pre-reform type it is 278 km, and for the monogram type 489 km (Coupland, 2018b: 218–219).⁹⁵

⁹⁴ <http://www.la-detection.com/dp/message-103537.htm> (accessed 9.1.2025), judged false by Depeyrot, 2017: 189, no. 5B, but without explanation.

⁹⁵ Pippin III: 79 coins; Charlemagne pre-reform: 141 coins; Charlemagne monogram: 126 coins.



Figure 24 – Mints of Pippin III. Less confident attributions are indicated by a star.

The silver content of Pippin's coins was analysed by Guillaume Sarah, who found that it was impressively high, between 85 and 95 per cent, with an average value of 92 per cent and little variation from this. As Sarah observed, the consistently high quality of the coinage is a further indication of Pippin's control over coinage production (Sarah, 2008, vol. 1: 309-312). A recent study of the origin of the silver contained in early medieval coins unfortunately only included one denier of Pippin, from Dorestad, and it is to be hoped that further analyses may be undertaken which reveal more about the sources of the silver used to make his coinage (Kershaw, Merkel, D'Imporzano & Naismith, 2024).

One subject which has been of particular interest among previous authors is the degree of control exercised by the king, the magnates and the Church over the

process of minting and, linked with that, the question of who gained the profits to be derived. For Rory Naismith, the magnates, both ecclesiastical and secular, undoubtedly continued to occupy the key position they held in Merovingian times, meaning that Pippin III must have relied on winning consensus from them to put his royal title on the coinage, since they were striking it in his name (Naismith, 2023: 297–301). Breternitz, by contrast, downplayed the role played by secular magnates, offering alternative interpretations or dates for most of the coins which appear to bear a personal name. Instead, he emphasised the role of the Church, highlighting the large number of saints' names on the coins, denoting bishoprics and abbeys (Breternitz, 2020a: 122–130, esp. 128), something which Naismith and Kluge similarly mentioned (Naismith, 2023: 299–300; Kluge, 2014b: 24–25). Looking at Figure 10, there are 17 types which are definitely or almost certainly ecclesiastical in origin.⁹⁶ In at least seven of these cases, however, there is also coinage bearing the name of the local town, and while it is possible that both were produced in the same ecclesiastical workshop, it is equally possible that the latter were struck separately or subsequently by the secular authority.⁹⁷ Breternitz cited Angers as an example of the importance of the Church, since coins of abbot Gunthar bear the same reverse as coins with the town name, **ANDE** (Breternitz, 2020a: 129–130). However, if Gunthar's coins were minted first, as Breternitz proposed and Schindel's insights suggest (see above), their replacement by the 'secular' coinage could equally demonstrate the removal of the mint from the abbey to a location under the authority of the local count. We know that the count was certainly responsible for overseeing coin production under Charlemagne and later in the Carolingian period. What is more, these 17 ecclesiastical mints feature in a list of some 62 different locations (figure 10), so are very much in the minority overall. It is thus a considerable exaggeration to regard coin production under Pippin as predominantly the work of the Church (*contra* Breternitz, 2020a: 128; cf. Kluge, 2014b: 25).

As for the influence of the magnates compared with that of the king, Naismith is clearly right to say that Pippin must have relied on them to implement the dramatic changes which he introduced (Naismith, 2023: 297–299; *contra* Breternitz, 2020a: 128). These included the increased size of the denier, the restoration of the weight standard, the maintenance of the silver content, and the inclusion of the king's title on virtually every coin. Because the magnates controlled the mints in their locality, it can only have been with their agreement that Pippin's reforms were implemented across the kingdom. And yet the breadth and effectiveness of the reform unquestionably reflects the exercise of royal

⁹⁶ St Firmin, Amiens; Abbot Gunthar, Angers; St Stephen, Bourges; St Géry, Cambrai; St Chéron, Chartres; St Cirgues, Clermont; **ELI-MOSI-NA**; Ste Marie, Laon; Ste Croix, Orléans; **ECL-SEN**, Sens; **SCI/MAN-912** (St Amand?); St Peter; Sint-Truiden; St Martin, Tours; **SES-†A□**; **XPI**; uncertain mint with episcopal figure and axe. **GR** is less certain, Lambert and **MARCS** as yet unidentified.

⁹⁷ Amiens; Angers; Cambrai; Clermont; Laon; Sens; Tours.

power and authority. Jean Lafaurie concluded: ‘C’est une révolution monétaire qu’a effectuée Pépin le Bref, il est le premier roi qui a légiféré sur la monnaie, qui a su imposer la sienne, a reconquis le monopole de la frappe’ (Lafaurie, 1970: 121). Lafaurie assumed that the Royal Capitulary signified that the *solidus* retained by the moneyer covered the cost of manufacture and the seigneurage due to the king, though it is possible that the latter was shared between Pippin and his local clerical or lay representative.

Despite the many questions that remain, it is therefore clear that the coinage of Pippin III represented a significant step forward in the transformation of the West European monetary system towards what would become the medieval penny. His son Charlemagne would take it much further (Coupland, 2018a; Coupland, 2018b), but Pippin’s achievements should not be overshadowed by his more celebrated son. The replacement of three earlier coin types with a royal coinage bearing his name united a kingdom and literally stamped his authority in a way not seen since the end of Roman rule. The increase in the size and weight of the denier and the maintenance of a high silver content ensured that the coins were trustworthy and led to their use not only across his kingdom but also in markets outside Frankish territory. These were small beginnings, it is true, but they marked a vital transitional stage in the creation of a Carolingian coinage and indeed in the development of the medieval silver economy.

Catalogue⁹⁸

1. Pippin III, Lyon. NUMIS 1163475. 1.2 g, 15 mm. MG 24; Depeyrot 517; Kluge 22-23.
Obv.: R•P beneath abbreviation mark
Rev.: LVG
2. Pippin III, Sint-Truiden. NUMIS 1163479. 1.4 g, 15 mm. MG 33; Depeyrot 540; Kluge 24.
Obv.: R•P beneath abbreviation mark
Rev.: Rosette with point at centre and three points in a triangle between each arc
3. Pippin III, Ghent? NUMIS 1163477. 1.2 g, 15 mm. MG –; Depeyrot 440B.
Obv.: R•P beneath abbreviation mark, points after/below each letter
Rev.: GÆDE

⁹⁸ MG: Morrison & Grunthal, 1967; Depeyrot: fourth edition (2017); Kluge: Kluge, 2014.

4. Reign of Pippin III, St Amand? NUMIS 1163476. 1.2 g, 17 mm. MG – (‘not Carolingian’); Depeyrot 493 (‘Ste Marie, Laon’); Kluge 36 (‘Cologne? Post-Carolingian’).
Obv.: SEI beneath abbreviation mark, point above the I and three points in a triangle below the C
Rev.: † MΔN (or MΔh) beneath abbreviation mark, rest of inscription missing
5. Pippin III, Limoges. NUMIS 1163478. 1.4 g, 15 mm. MG –; Depeyrot –; Kluge –.
Obv.: R•P• beneath abbreviation mark
Rev.: LEM monogram with points beside and within

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Biographical note

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