

THE COINAGE OF THE SUEVIC PERIOD

H. V. Livermore

The fall of the Roman Empire in the west dates from the end of the year 406, when barbarian armies, after intense fighting, forced their way across the Rhine. They overran the Gauls, and in September-October 409 crossed the Pyrenees into the Iberian Peninsula, where they were soon afterwards assigned land. The Sueves received the *Conventus Braccarensis*, which included the cities of Oporto and Braga, and were the only ones of these first invaders to remain permanently where they settled. Unlike the nomadic Alans and the destructive Vandals, they were Germanic peasants who had been established near the borders of the Empire. Like other barbarian peoples, they were illiterate and pagan (¹). Their kingdom lasted a little more than 170 years, until 586, when it was suppressed by Leovigild, that is to say, not much less than half as long as the four centuries of the Roman Empire itself. Its most enduring monument is the intense concentration of Germanic toponyms in the Minho, unparalleled in any other part of the Iberian Peninsula (²). That these toponyms are recorded only later is immaterial: they could not have existed without the Suevic settlement.

The written records of the Suevic monarchy are sparse and external. Orosius saw their arrival, but left to join St Augustine in Africa and St Jerome in the east. Hydatius, a native of the city of the Lemici and bishop of Chaves, has left annals

(¹) Hydatius states expressly that Hermeric's son Rechila died a pagan. Reinhart's supposition that some may have been Christians is based solely on the statement (in the life of St Ambrose) that a Marcomannic queen named Fritigil had embraced Christianity and persuaded her husband to make peace with the Romans. Its relevance must be considered doubtful.

(²) J. M. Piel has established the number of Germanic toponyms per 100 square kms. as 195 in Oporto, 185 in Braga, 100 in Viana do Castelo. Southward it falls sharply to 50 in Aveiro and 11 in Coimbra. Eastward, it falls to 23 in Vila Real and 6 in Bragança. Northward, it is 40 in Pontevedra, 48 in Coruña and 20 in Orense. In Leon it is 1.8 and in Salamanca 0.

until 469, which may have been the year of his death. Between then and about 550, nothing is known of the Suevic state: St Isidore says that there were several, or many, Arian kings, whom he does not name ⁽³⁾. From 550 until its overthrow, the Suevic monarchy is known chiefly from Gregory of Tours (d. 594) and John of Bicláro, who, though born at Scallabis (Santarém), was bishop of Gerona: he wrote in the first or second decades of the following century. The account of St Isidore, also of this time, adds little to what is in Hydatius. The great figure of the later period, — and one of the greatest of his day, — was St Martin of Dume, who converted the Suevic rulers to catholicism and organized the church in the old Roman province of Gallaecia: he was a teacher and churchman, not a historian, and his mission was to tell King Miro what he ought to do, not to record what he did ⁽⁴⁾. Given the paucity and indirectness of the written sources, the evidence of the coins as documents preserved from the period without the intrusion of copyists or commentators is of outstanding importance.

Any study of these coins must take as its point of departure the work of Wilhelm Reinhart, whose first essay, 'Die Münzen des Schwebenreiches', appeared in the *Mitteilungen* of the Bavarian Numismatic Society, vol. LV, for 1937, and whose later book, *El reino hispánico de los suevos*, was published at Madrid in 1952 ⁽⁵⁾. The book, as the title implies, attempts to bring together the numismatic and other information in a general account of the Suevic state, but Reinhart was an engineer and collector rather than a historian or philologist, and his more general remarks require to be read in conjunction with J. M. Piel's *Hispanogotisches Namenbuch* (Heidelberg 1974). Reinhart's predecessor in these studies was Aloïs Heiss, who had published his 'Essai sur le monnayage des suèves' in the *Revue numismatique*, 1891, 146-163. Heiss, working in Paris, probably obtained much of his information by correspondence. He was responding, after a lengthy interval, to what must have been the first publication on the subject, that of Eduardo Allen and Nunes Teixeira, which had been printed in the *Revue numismatique*, N. S. vol. X, 1863 ⁽⁶⁾.

⁽³⁾ A late document refers to a Theodemund, after Remismund, he is only a word.

⁽⁴⁾ The *Opera omnia* of St Martin are excellently edited by C. W. Barlow, New Haven 1950. Dr. A. J. Miranda has recently provided a convenient account of the saint's teaching with coloured illustrations of some of the coins in *Um tratado de higiene mental do s. VI*, Santo Tirso 1989.

⁽⁵⁾ The quality of the photographs in 1937 is much better, but by 1952 Reinhart had changed some of his views and eliminated some defective or doubtful material.

⁽⁶⁾ The first collection to boast these coins may have been that of the Bishop of Oporto, Magalhães de Avelar, whose famous library became the basis of the Oporto Public Library. He had been banished by the ex-Emperor Pedro IV in 1833 and died in his native

Heiss had made two important and misleading conclusions. Among the pieces known to him were more than one bearing the toponym Emeri, Imeri, which he correctly read as Mérida. Since the capital of Lusitania had been occupied by the Sueves under King Rechila (438-448) and held for only a few years, he supposed that the coins were of this period and devised the classification 'Premières émissions lusitaniennes': the other coins he divided between Galician and 'later' Lusitanian issues. His other error was in explaining the appearance of single letters on some coins. He deduced these to be mint-marks, and having recourse to the Antonine Itinerary, identified L as Lamego, R as Rusticana, and finding no A, concluded that it was an inverted V, and opted for Viseu. Reinhart pointed out that one coin had different letters on the two sides. But Heiss' mistake was in confining his search to what he supposed to be Suevic territory. It is probable that the letters are indeed mint-marks, and that L may stand for León. But since many of the coins are copied from earlier coins, the moneyers have followed older mint-marks, R being perhaps Ravenna and A Arelate (Arles). The case of the different marks on the two sides of one coin could be explained by the copying of two different coins, which might give this result. But the method is faulty, and we should ignore the single letters unless there is a cogent reason to accept them. The list given by F. Mateu y Llopis in 'Nombres de lugar en el numerario suevo y visigodo' (*Analecta sacra tarraronensia*, XV, 1942, 23-28) should be amended accordingly.

The whole legacy of these coins falls into two separate and unequal parts: 1) the silver *siliquae* of King Rechiarius, and 2) the gold coins of different groups. The silver *siliqua* is a coin showing the Emperor Honorius (394-423) with the mint-mark Br, for Braga, and the legend IVSSV RICHIARI REGES, 'by order of King Richiarius'. The only specimen then known was acquired at a sale by the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris in 1864. Since Honorius had been dead a quarter of a century when Rechiarius began his reign, Reinhart was inclined in 1937 to reject it as spurious. But the discovery of a broken coin of the same type *in situ* by Carlos Teixeira in excavations at Lanhoso in 1940 forced him to change his mind (?).

This publication caused the Spanish numismatist Pío Beltrán to write 'Parece indudable que fueron acuñadas monedas con el nombre y busto de Honorio por

Lamego in 1836. The coins are said to have been 'sold in England', but no trace of Suevic issues is known in England at this period. It is possible that they passed to the Allens, a catholic family of English origin domiciled in Oporto, and so to the Oporto Museum.

(?) The identification, by F. Bouza Brey, was published in *El Museo de Pontevedra*, 1946.

mandado del rey suéxico Hermerico, su hijo Rechila y nieto Rechiario' (8). But no such coins have appeared, nor are they likely to do so. The minting of coin was a jealously-guarded prerogative of the Emperors, and no other barbarian king appears to have dared to put his name on a coin in the first half of the fifth century. If the catholic Rechiarius did so, it was to proclaim that Honorius had granted legal recognition to the kingdom of the Sueves. When the Emperor Valentinian III was murdered, he was at the mercy of the Arian Visigoth Theodoric, whose daughter he had married. Whilst the Sueves continued to recognize the house of Theodosius, whose ladies fled to Byzantium, the Visigoths adhered to their *foedus* with Rome. Theodoric invaded the Suevic kingdom, captured Rechiarius in Oporto, and had him executed at the end of the year 455. The circumstances in which the siliquae were issued were therefore unique.

The remaining coins attributed to the Suevic period are of gold. They may be divided into two groups: those in imitation of coins of the Roman or Byzantine Emperors, often with the ruler's name garbled or misspelt, and those with legible inscriptions. The garbling of names, sometimes reduced to sequences of meaningless strokes, may be due to the ignorance of the moneyers or, more probably, to the fact that forging was a capital offence and that the prerogatives of the Emperors were well known. Reinhart attempted to wrestle with the problem, and to decide which pieces to attribute to the Sueves, but with considerable doubts. More recently, Wallace J. Tomasini has classified the tremisses produced in the west, using the methods of the historian of art: he leaves the Suevic problem unresolved (9).

The other group of gold tremisses or trientes is that which bears inscriptions, and notably the Latina Moneta series, some with a toponym and some with the two words in reverse order. Although Reinhart looked for a distinction, none of any significance has been established. Both kinds are extremely rare. In 1952 Reinhart illustrated only 22, with twelve different toponyms (10).

It is now possible to trace a number of coins not known to Reinhart, some of them discovered since his time. But the total is still small. The number of Visigothic coins known to and described by George C. Miles in his *Coinage of the Visigoths of Spain* (New York 1952) was 3,461, and Professor Grierson has estimated the number of new arrivals at a thousand or more. No similar expansion has been recorded for the Suevic issues. An experienced dealer in the

(8) «Las primeras monedas suéxicas», *Caesaraugusta*, 7-8, 1957, 115-119.

(9) W. J. T., *The Barbaric Tremissis in Spain and Southern France Anastasius to Leovigild*, New York 1966.

(10) His list of toponyms does not quite correspond to the coins shown.

United States informs me that he has never handled one: his most recent catalogue (November 1989) has eight Visigothic pieces, but no Suevic.

It is perhaps relevant to ask if these coins are Suevic at all, and, if so, in what sense. The series under discussion bears no Germanic word, except one, the name of a ruler. It does bear the words *Moneta Latina*, so that its makers could be only Sueves who had intermarried with the indigenous population or had adopted the Roman language and/or religion. Indeed, the term Suevic so applied arises from a misunderstanding. When Luis Joseph Velásquez de Velasco, Marquis of Valdeflores, a colleague of Enrique Flórez, the compiler of *España Sagrada*, published his *Congeturas sobre las medallas de los reyes godos y suevos*, Málaga 1759, he was able to identify the names of Visigothic kings on the coins known to him. He also came across pieces bearing the letters CVRRV. Since no Visigothic king of this name existed, he inferred that it belonged to one of the 'lost' Suevic rulers. There is no proof that Valdeflores ever saw an authentic coin of the *Latina Moneta* series. It was the belief that, as the coins were 'Suevic', those marked Mérida must belong to the period of Suevic occupation, which misled Heiss into inventing his 'Premières émissions lusitaniennes'.

It had occurred to both Heiss and Reinhart that some of the *Latina Moneta* and associated issues might be late, that is, of the final phase of the Suevic monarchy. But the proof was made by Professor Grierson in an article published in *Estudios de Castelo Branco* (1962) and reproduced in his *Dark Age Numismatics* (London 1979). A coin of the Suevic series was formerly in the Archaeological Museum in Madrid, until it was stolen during the Spanish Civil War. It had been read by Heiss, by Arthur Engel and by Pío Beltrán, with rather differing results: DEODIAZCAREIGESONAI or OCODIACCAREIGESONAI. Beltrán saw that it contained the word REIGES, and supposed that the last letters ONAI denoted a 'lost' Suevic king. But *rex* is placed after the proper noun: Oedipus rex, Rechiarus rex. Grierson saw that the only known ruler whose name could appear was Audeca, Audiacca. In Germanic texts *aud-* and *o-* are interchangeable, and although the King's name is sometimes read Andeca, the best edition of Juan of Biclario (Pe. Julio Campos, Madrid 1960) prefers Audeca. Since this ruler seized the throne from Miro's son and married his widow before being captured and shut up in a monastery at Beja by Leovigild in 584-585, we have a precise date for the coin.

Another piece described in the nineteenth century has the inscription PAX GALLICA, or 'peace with Gaul'. Since we know that King Miro, in his attempt to fend off Visigothic aggression, made treaties with Merovingian allies, and that a Frankish fleet intervened, but was driven off by the superior Visigothic navy, this coin celebrates the alliance or invokes it. In this connection, it is worth noting

that the historian Procopius, writing half a century later, differentiates between the Sueves in Pannonia, with whom he is concerned, and those whom 'subject to the Franks' (*hoi Phrangkon katekooi, Wars, V xv, 26*) ⁽¹¹⁾.

One of the coins described by Reinhart (his No 37) reads LEONES MONETA CLARA. Leon was, of course, the ancient garrison-town of the Seventh Legion. *Clarissimus* was the style given to the highest rank in the Roman administrative nobility: *clarus* in Christian terms meant 'firm in the faith' or 'distinguished for services to religion'. Of leading churchmen it is said '*clarus habetur*'. There is no mention of Suevic rule extending so far as Leon. But two more coins from Leon exist. One is in the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge, from Professor Grierson's collection, and appears in his monumental catalogue, *Medieval European Coinage* (I, Cambridge 1986), as LEIOIA COTIS MVNITA. The other is in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, and was published by D. M. Metcalf and F. Schweitzer in their 'Milliprobe Analyses' (*Archaeometry* 12, 2, 1970, No 153), as LEIOIA COTISMVNITA. The two specimens are of the same issue but from different dies, and an enlargement of the Cambridge coin shows clearly that the words are A GOTIS. We have therefore coins from Leon both before and after the Gothic occupation. This probably occurred during Leovigild's campaigns of 574 and 575 ⁽¹²⁾.

Perhaps the only one of these pieces to have come to light outside the western part of the Iberian Peninsula ⁽¹³⁾, is one found in an otherwise Visigothic hoard by J. Cabré Aguiló at the church of Reccopolis, now Zorita de los Canes, east of Toledo, in 1945. The contents of the treasure are summarized by Xavier Barral (*La circulation des monnaies*, Munich 1976, 86-92), who gives the date at which the treasure was hidden as 576-579, though 579 in fact is only the earliest date at which the treasure could have been deposited ⁽¹⁴⁾. Leovigild founded Reccopolis for his son Reccared in 578, perhaps to allow the continuation of

⁽¹¹⁾ The sea-route between northern Portugal and Gaul is marked by toponyms Suevos, Suegos. These occur, two near Coruña, two more on the north coast of Galicia, and the Monte Suevo, near the Cantabrian coast.

⁽¹²⁾ Juan of Biclario, ed. Campos 84, 85. Leon itself is not named, but Amaya was taken in the first campaign and the Montes Aregenses in the second. However, an earlier occupation cannot be excluded.

⁽¹³⁾ Unfortunately, many of the pieces are of unknown provenance, especially those discovered in the nineteenth century, when the place of discovery was not thought worth recording.

⁽¹⁴⁾ He makes the latest datable coin a Visigothic *iriens* bearing the legend '*inclitus rex*' of the 'cross on steps' type, introduced at Byzantium by Tiberius II in 578, so that an imitation made in Spain could hardly occur before 579.

Arian worship at court, but more specifically to defend the approach to Toledo from Byzantine Cartagena. The coin could have been seized on any of Leovigild's western campaigns, including that in which he pillaged the treasure of Audeca, though the dates of the Visigothic coins point perhaps to an earlier expedition ⁽¹⁵⁾.

The inscription on the coin is ILATINA MVNITA II, with no toponym. The two strokes are unexplained, but I would suppose both the initial stroke and the two final ones to be a form of punctuation.

One other coin appears to be of late date. It appears in the Catalogue of the Garrett collection (Vol ii, p. 129, No 619) and reads LATINA MVNITA VINC +. The cataloguer has attempted to treat this as a toponym, and has suggested Ventosa. But VINC is clearly an abbreviation of *Vincitur* (or another part of the verb) and the cross stands for *In hoc signo*, the phrase, with its Constantinian echo, representing a profession of Catholic faith in the face of Arian domination ⁽¹⁶⁾.

The evidence provided by the inscriptions on these coins suggests that, if Suevic, they were of late date: that is, after the conversion of the monarchy to the Catholic version of the Christian faith. The religious symbolism of the coins, a Latin cross within a wreath, the latter often stylized or simplified to concentric circles or rings of dots, is always the same, and should thus be either Arian or Catholic: since in some cases it is clearly Catholic, it is probable that all the coins are 'Catholic'. This remains to be proved, but at least the onus of proof is on any who wish to demonstrate the contrary. Some pieces (that from Leon) may postdate the Visigothic annexation, but probably not by long.

The general standard of workmanship of the coins is very uneven. In some cases the lettering is excellent, and comparable with the best inscriptions on monuments: in others it is poor. This variation is not to be explained by loss of standards in a single royal mint, but by varying levels of craftsmanship in various places, not necessarily over a long period of time. The rarity of the coins may be due to the systematic seizures of treasure practised by Leovigild, but the production of the coins may have been quite small, and the absence of hoards implies that this is the case. Some, at least, of the coins were made with a political end in view, rather than for general use as a means of exchange.

⁽¹⁵⁾ John of Biclara: 'regno privat, Suevorum gentes, thesaurum et patriam in suas redigit potestates' (ed. Campos, 96). Leovigild's conquests were in fact piratical expeditions, and the seizures explain the large quantity of gold coined under Leovigild and Reccared.

⁽¹⁶⁾ The provenance of the Garrett coin is given as the collection of A. A. Carvalho Monteiro, Lisbon 1926. On my visiting Santo Tirso in October 1989, Dr A. J. Miranda showed me another specimen of the same coin from his remarkable collection.

Any conclusions to be drawn from the toponyms themselves must necessarily be provisional, since the number of known coins with a place of minting is small, and others may exist which would modify our opinions. Several of the coins discovered in the nineteenth century are either difficult to read or yield readings difficult to explain, and the task would be facilitated by the emergence of better specimens. But it is at once striking that none of the coins bears the name of Braga or Oporto or any place in the original Suevic heartland, though this does not prove that none were made there. The toponyms (where legible) on the coins known to Reinhart are: No 23 TVDE Tuy; Nos 24-26 IMERI EMERI Mérida; Nos 27-28 IVLI; No 29 GATII; No 30 BENE Benavente; No 32 IARI; No 34 ATEI; No 35 O(PPIDVM) MVRELENSE Maurelos; No 36 SENAPRIA Sanabria; No 37 LEONES León; No 38 O(PPIDVM) BERISIDENSE Beriso; Two pieces from the Archeological Museum at Belém are unidentifiable: Reinhart's No 39 is read LMENIVSEIB.TII, into which he has read Viseu (implausibly, I think). His No 40 he has read ACVEVINO EIIITEIA. His No 41 NTINA CDP.TANI MVNIT, from the Nieport collection, now owned by Dr. A. J. Miranda, contains the words *Latina Moneta*: what is between them may be *Egitania*.

Reinhart's list, deduced from this, runs: Braga, Beriso, Emerita, Laura (?), Leon, Maurelos, Puebla de Sanabria, Pax Julia (Beja), Tuy, Viseu and Verenganos, 'without counting those deduced from single letters'. From this list we should deduct: Braga, which is represented only by the silver coin of Rechiarius, Viseu, unless Reinhart's reading of No 39 is substantiated; and Verenganos, which does not appear. In IARI the first sign is probably the ligature LA, giving Lara, the Laura or Labra of Visigothic coins. It seems doubtful if IVLI is indeed Beja.

To Reinhart's list we may add: PALLANTIA Palencia, from an unpublished specimen in the possession of the Hispanic Society of America, on loan to the American Numismatic Society; and a coin read LATINA CATTIC MVNI in the *Catálogo* of Pinto de Magalhães (Porto 1963).

It will be seen that these places are either peripheral to the Suevic heartland, or annexed to it after the conversion by St Martin: Tuy, Sanabria, Benavente, Beriso, Laura (?). Atei may have been the place recorded at Attei, now Porriño, near Vigo, a pre-Roman and Roman site.

Leon and Palencia are places outside the Suevic area, but within the extended Roman province of Gallaecia, as it existed under the later Empire. IVLI, clearly read on several coins, cannot, I think, be Pax Julia, which is always Pax, with the adjective *Pacensis*, giving the Arabic Bajja and modern Beja. I suggest Juliobriga, near Reinosa at the headwaters of the Ebro, which is mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as the place to which Roman troops were removed from Brigantia (La Coruña), probably as a result of the barbarian settlement (*nunc*

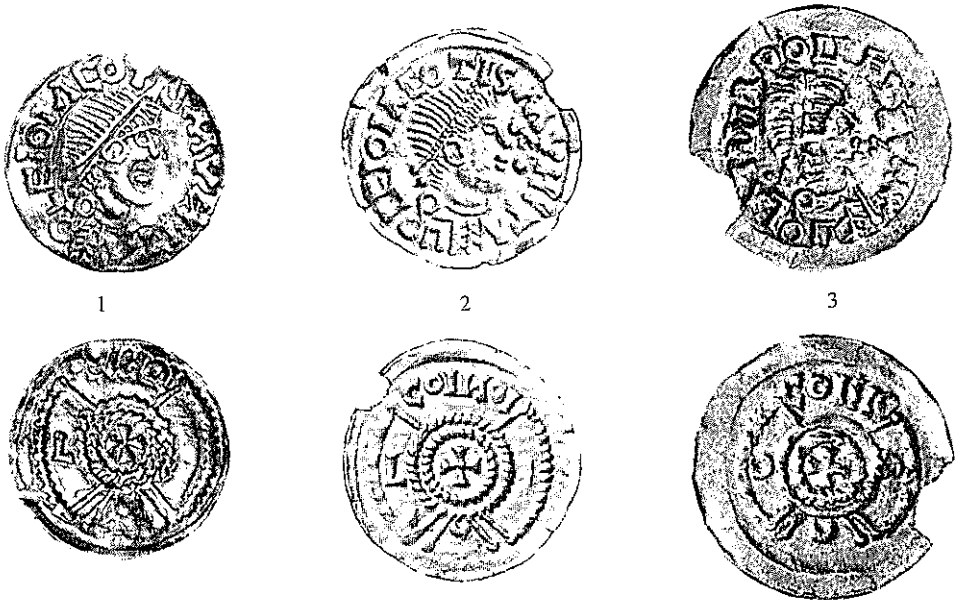
Iuliobriga)⁽¹⁷⁾. In the light of our present knowledge, this would be the eastern limit of the area on which these coins were produced.

The existence of *LATINA MONETA* coins from Mérida, the capital of Lusitania, is particularly significant. As we know, St Martin of Dume had died in 579, before the crisis in the Suevic state. The great figure of the church in the following years was Massona of Mérida, whose defiance of King Leovigild led to his temporary removal and banishment, whilst the king endeavoured to establish an Arian diocese in the city. We know from the *Vitas patrum emeritensium*, a unique record of the spiritual life of a Peninsular city at this period, that the bishops of Mérida, as metropolitans of the province, were far wealthier than the provincial nobility, and that their wealth permitted them to build churches, a hospice and monasteries in and around the capital. We need not doubt that among the prerogatives enjoyed by Massona, and hotly disputed by Leovigild, was the power to authorize the issue of gold coin, which, if not in everyday circulation in the market-place, was necessary to gain the adhesion of local leaders. For King Leovigild, what was at stake was not so much the Arian religion, as the ability to reward his followers. If the king had his way, his son Reccared both accepted the religion of the majority and retained his gold. During the Visigothic period, Mérida probably issued more gold coins than even Toledo, and remained a leading military centre. It was not the fall of the city of Toledo, but the siege of Mérida that determined the victory of the Muslims in June 713.

The impact of Leovigild's victory over the Sueves was perhaps less than has been imagined. Neither Ibero-Suevic society nor the adventurers ruled by Leovigild were yet a nation in the modern sense. In the sixth century, one's *natio* was one's birthplace or tribe: that of the Ibero-Suevic society was the Minho of to-day, that of Leovigild the Visigothic residue established in Gothic Gaul after their defeat by the Franks. His object was to enlarge his army with the troops he defeated and to seize the resources to pay and feed them. The annexation of the Sueves was probably sufficient to tip the scale of religion in favour of catholicism and against Arianism, and to precipitate the abandonment of Arian traditions by his son Reccared, three years after his own death. Ibero-Suevic society, as shaped by St Martin and Miro, continued little modified until 660, when the dioceses of Lamego and Viseu which had been annexed from Lusitania were restored, not without much resistance, to Mérida. Even later, the separate existence of the Suevic territory was recognized, when the Visigothic realms were

(17) O. Seeck *Notitia Dignitatum*, Berlin, 1876, 216. In Callaecia, the prefect of Legio VII was at Leon, with cohorts at Paetaonio, C. Gallicam, Luco and 'Brigantiae, nunc Iuliobriga'.

Gallia, Spania and Galicia. But for historians and numismatists, the Visigothic expansion poses new problems. Under the successors of Leovigild and Reccared gold tremisses were minted in a variety of places, some provincial capitals and some doubtless the seats of *duces* and *comites*. They were gradually reduced until by the reign of Wamba the only mints were in the provincial capitals. When G. C. Miles compiled his *Coinage of the Visigoths* (1952), he was able to name no less than 79 different minting-places, with a production of 3,461 specimens known to him. But of these places no fewer than half, or 37, are in Roman Gallaecia, with a total production of only 146 coins (or 2.4 per cent of the total). The reason for this proliferation of small and ephemeral mints still awaits a sufficient explanation.



Scale 2 : 1

Of the Latina Moneta series, only four specimens are known in England and one in the United States. The two in the British Museum are illustrated in Miguel Barceló, 'Las monedas suevas del British Museum', *Acta Numismatica* IV, Barcelona 1974, 165-171. They are read, LATINA IVLI (M)VN I and LATINA MVNITA BENE. Both are known from other specimens, shown in W. Reinhart, *El reino hispánico de los suevos*, Madrid 1952, Plate V, Nos 27-28 and 30. BENE is surely Benavente (Leon), originally spelt like the Italian place after which it is named. IVLI has been read Pax Julia, or Beja. But this is doubtful, since Pax Julia is always so named, giving the adjective Pacensis, used of its bishops in the seventh century. The Arabic form Bajja and the modern Beja could not have arrived

at if the P had been lost. The most probable alternative is Juliobriga, near Reinosa at the headwaters of the Ebro, a military station to which troops from Brigantium, Corunna, were withdrawn after the barbarian occupation of Gallaecia, as is shown from the entry in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (c. 423), 'Brigantia, nunc Juliobriga'. Excavations have revealed few remains of the Christian period from Juliobriga, but an inscription shows that it had a deacon, perhaps subordinate to Palencia.

Two of the pieces illustrated here are from the city of Leon. The first, at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, has been examined and published by D. M. Metcalf and F. Schweizer in their article 'Milliprobe analyses of some Visigothic, Suevic and other gold coins' (*Archaeometry*, 12, 2, 1970, N° O.153, p. 178). It is read LEIOIA [OTISMVNITA. The other is in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge and forms part of the generous donation of Professor Philip Grierson. It is published in his *Medieval European Coinage*, I, Cambridge 1986, where it is read LEIOIA COTIS MVNITA (p. 80). The enlargement shows clearly that the word is Gotis, the C on these coins being a smooth curve, whilst G has corners. The L on the reverse must be a mint-mark for Legione.

The date of the Visigothic occupation of Leon is not given by John of Biclara, but the place must have been used for Leovigild's campaigns in the Cantabrians in 574 and 575. The Niepoort-Miranda coin reading LEONES MONETA CLARA (Reinhart, *El reino hispánico*, Plate V, No 37) would refer to the period before the occupation. The third coin shown here is from the Hispanic Society of America, lodged with the American Numismatic Society. It reads LATINA POLLENTIA or POLLENCIA. The use of a punch for the vowel O is common, and it sometimes replaces other vowels. The name Palencia (Leon) is found with double LL and even PANL- and is so indexed by Robert Grosse, *Fontes Hispaniae Antiquae*, IX.

The three coins (like those of Mérida and Juliobriga?) are from places outside the heartland of Suevic monarchy, but within the province of Gallaecia as extended in late Roman times, and incorporated in the Catholic church of St Martin of Dume and his successor Mausona of Mérida.

The photographs are by courtesy of Dr D. M. Metcalf and the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Dr T. Volk and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; and Dr A. Stahl, and the American Numismatic Society Photographic Studio.

